

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE MEETING

4/15/2025

Present: Barbara Carulli, Pat Duffy, Apple Ahearn, Ken Kahn, Dan Levine

Note: Julie Shively resigned from committee prior to this meeting, and Jennifer Thornton was absent

Possible new members of committee attended to observe:

Fay Zipkowitz

Kimberly Van Wagner

Fay: Is Interested in AH as a long term effort in town and particularly in developing senior housing. Needs more background as to what's been going on.

Kimberly: Has lived in Leverett for 5 years. She works remotely (teaches at elementary school?) and is on Planning Board.

Meetings and time (digital equity~ new setup)

Barbara: approval of minutes, only minor corrections (spellings)

Minutes accepted as amended.

Website: no minutes on website

Two families that want to use the AH funds. The trust has to subordinate the loan in order for people to get the bank work done. HRA is contract manager, GSB, back and forth, and Barbara didn't want to be in the position as a neighbor/resident to dig into personal finances. She asked HRA to do it; but that person has never had to deal with this, so B. had to explain it to her. Barbara then started to connect the dots between the agencies and the applicant. HRA needed to hear from the individual themselves.

Approving a home equity loan, not an adjustable rate.

Ken: if they can get an 80% loan previously, , they could afford it; not creating houses to be 'piggy banks.' 80% loan to value is important.

Barbara: the amount the person wanted to borrow, home value, mortgage, previous home equity loan, house appraised at (around) \$400,000. Purchased at \$225,000. B. tells the bank that the house has a deed restriction and so the equity is not necessarily available. It's based on area median income. A lot of other requirements like HUD inspection (information is on the deed restriction)

2nd program:

Downpayment assistant program: 5% and no deed restriction.

Barbara wants HRA to deal with this, rather than this committee.

Raising limits on housing programs, HRA create new flyer to reflect new guidelines.
HRA then sent new guidelines to add to the flyer (it should mention the date these guidelines came about)

Housing coordinator position; maybe share a position with council on aging navigator. To find one person to have those skills, that's a unicorn.
Funded by CPC funds, can only be working on projects for people at 100% AMI, can't do mixed types of housing (e.g. market rate); need another funding source.
If there's a developer that comes into the community, and we get 20% of the development, if we had a housing coordinator, those funds could only go to design, etc. for the affordable houses.
Kimberly: what is the housing coordinator doing if not working on this kind of project.

Some had a conversation with Shutesbury CPC; they have one person who works on AH, but not committee. Additional land next to library, but no affordable housing committee.
Our trust has over \$400,000

Talking to HRA: They said talk to someone at FRCOG. They liked the idea and asked for what Barbara has been doing. (all her work) She drafted her ideas of what duties the coordinator should have. FRCOG sent out a survey to 7 towns have CPC, only 2 out of all Franklin county have affordable housing trust.
Barbara reads survey; discussion about the value of having someone in this position and what they would be doing.
FRCOG would hold the position and the other towns could contribute their share.

Someone has a property over 3 acres and could subdivide, and option to buy adjacent property. 8 acres. One home on it. What would the town like to see there? He seemed to be thinking about adjoining the 8 acres, making it maybe 10 acres. 3 wells on the property.
Next step? Some of us go out and look at the property. Main paved road. Part is cleared; part is wooded. Feasibility study, give them a deposit or something, buy time.

Regular time to meet: Thursdays at 7:00 with a large amount of notice time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Realtor.com two duplexes say price is \$800,000; could we do rental assistance, could we have 4 affordable units. Somebody would have to manage it.
Barbara asked questions about it; HRA said they would not be interested in managing a rental.
Property: Richard Gallo, 113 Long Hill Rd (and 119 Long Hill Rd) Rt 63

