Affordable Housing Trust Meeting August 2026
Thursday, August 27, 2026
7PM, at Leverett Town Hall
Montague Road, Leverett

In attendance: Ken Kahn, Apple Ahearn, Pat Duffy, Barbara Carulli, Kimberly VanWagner, Dan Levine

Guest: Mariah Kurtz, Regional Housing Coordinator

Not in attendance: Fay Zipkowitz, Jen Thornton

Agenda:

1. Approve minutes from last meeting
   A. 4/16/2026: approved 5-0-1
   B. 7/15/2026: approved 5-0-1

2. Kimberly will take on the role of representative to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) from Apple; thank you so much, Apple, for all your service!

3. Feedback from 8/13/2026 discussion with Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA or FRHRA)
   A. The two housing programs (Down Payment Assistance & Homeownership Assistance) are not being used because the relief offered cannot meet the market costs of housing in Leverett; the programs are confusing when advertised to first time homebuyers in the region because they are only for Leverett houses; the programs are not being used; in Leverett, the homes that may be affordable and therefore eligible do not qualify for mortgages because of disrepair; very limited housing stock and extremely rare affordable stock

   B. HRA want to revise the contract to eliminate new purchasers from using the products and just monitor current users (5 properties); HRA sees no other solution

      a. Affordable Housing Trust members discuss the opportunities and challenges
         i. We can always revisit and revive if market conditions change
         ii. No other administrators for this program
         iii. We can use this as a pivot to focus on other ideas, such as identifying building sites or purchases as the trust

4. We can use this moment to revisit properties that owners had approached us about, and now we have Mariah's expertise
      1. We can get grants to build roads
      2. We can consider manufactured homes if the current pilot that the State is launching proves viable

3. Can we pool our funds with other towns to build houses? Mariah says yes, but Leverett would not receive affordable housing "credits" toward the Housing Choice Program (rural)
    a. Trustees recognize that these are Leverett taxpayer dollars
    b. Mariah encourages folks to think beyond building in Greenfield/Montague and instead focus on Leverett and take next steps to "Make Housing Happen!"

5. Brainstorm Session: Trustees want to send a town-wide mailing about what the Trust is and what we need to move forward with securing more affordable housing

A. Some ideas and discussion topics included: making a flier, sending a postcard, sending a letter as an invitation to a community forum about affordable housing
B. We need our own vision or goal of what the next few years could look like
    a. Ask Mariah to look up what the number of new building permits would get us to the Housing Choice program for additional support
    b. Is 10 new affordable houses in the next 3-5 years a doable goal?
    c. We need more information about Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) covenants and cash for deed restrictions against the assessed vale

6. Action Steps

A. Barbara:
    a. Ask Lisa for a dedicated Affordable Housing Trust email - we can use it on the flier and save Barbara's inbox, plus better for compliance with record keeping
    b. Will think about previous offers from property owners that may still be viable and will bring that information for consideration to the next meeting
    c. Will propose dates for the community forum
C. Mariah:
    a. Will send Whately Housing Plan
    b. Will help us understand the ADU covenants of other towns and the possibilities of deed restriction for cash options and how do we buy properties
    c. Will tell us the number needed for the Housing Choice Rural program status
    d. Will make slides about Leverett's current state of/need for affordable housing for community forum
D. Kimberly:
    a. Will draft flier for the mailing, outlining what we've done, new ideas needed, and inviting folks to the community forum to learn from each other (This is not home modification, but how to steer folks using flier)
    b. Ask Lisa about Housing Plan and the consultant from years past
E. Dan:
    a. Will figure out the pizza and drinks
F. Pat:
    a. Will ask Lisa and Tim Shores about bulk mailing process
    b. Will find out more about Open Meeting Law/deliberation definition