Leverett Affordable Housing Trust

Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2021

Members Present: Barbara Carulli (Chair), Justin Costa, Julie Shivley, Elizabeth Ahearn

Meeting convened at 5:40 p.m.

Minutes from our most recent meeting (3/25) were approved as amended.

Agenda reviewed- meeting was called to discuss a recent meeting that Barbara, Ken and Apple had with Megan McDonough Executive Director of Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity. (note: see further explanation in last month’s minutes)

Megan reviewed the projects that are presently underway in the small hilltown communities. She shared what each town was able to offer as their contribution to Habitat to make each project feasible. She was very encouraging about the potential to have a Habitat project in Leverett.

She shared the process that’s used by the Board of Directors to determine suitability of locations that are identified when applicants petition to the program.

The takeaway from this meeting was essentially that we should begin a very active process of seeking a suitable building lot in town that meets as many of Habitat’s criteria as possible. (Barbara has forwarded the list prior to this meeting)

A lengthy discussion ensued about how to move forward:

Location -- locating a lot that would be a strong candidate. The few lots that are on the market presently were discussed along with the idea that perhaps an existing homeowner in town would consider creating a lot from their property.

We discussed the issues with potential flood plain locations and the fact that new maps are being drawn that will be available next year, making it essential to stay away from properties in low-lying areas.

Financing – Prior to deciding what we can offer toward cost of the property and possibly infrastructure improvements we need to find out what existing funds may be available in the Trust and not previously earmarked for existing programs. Julie will check with Margie McGinnis to get this information and Barbara will check with Jason to confirm current balance in the account. If there are enough funds up and above what is earmarked, we may be able to proceed without making a new application to the CPC or need a Town Meeting vote.

Outreach – Barbara will write an article for the next newsletter as well as make an appeal on Leverett Connects both for leads on any potential property and donations toward the project. We also discussed a possible “Go Fund Me” campaign further down the road.

Looking toward the future we spoke about increased density and working with our planning and zoning boards to see if we can begin to look at options.

No votes were taken.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth (Apple) Ahearn