

Town of Ayer

Department of Community & Economic Development

Town Hall ♦ One Main Street ♦ Ayer, MA 01432 ♦ 978-772-8220 ♦ Ext.142



Minutes of September 24, 2021–Meeting of Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC)

Location: Select Board Room, Ayer Town Hall

AAHC Members Present: Janet Providakes, Ron Morrison. Ken Diskin and James Stephen

Also, Present: Alicia Hersey, AAHC Administrator, Ayer Community Development Program Manager, Lisa Gabree, Towns Accountant

Janet Providakes, called the meeting to order at 10:20 AM.

Approve Agenda: James Stephen made a motion to amend and approve the agenda to include a discussion with Town Accountant Lisa Gabree regarding Housing Trust funding, Ken Diskin seconded the motion. The amended agenda was approved. (4-0-0)

Minutes 8-25-21: James Stephen made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 25, 2021, joint meeting, Ken Diskin seconded the motion. The minutes were approved. (4-0-0)

Discussion With Town Accountant Lisa Gabree: Ms. Gabree was asked to answer questions committee members had on funds available for the Affordable Housing Trust and Affordable Housing in general. Ken Diskin asked Lisa Gabree if a line item could be added to the omnibus budget for Community Development and Housing Rehabilitation. Ms. Gabree explained that the Omnibus budget is for operating expenses. She also explained that an annual request could be made for funding special projects such as housing rehab on an annual basis. Lisa Gabree also mentioned that funding could come from UDAG (Urban Development Action Grant) and Economic Development/IDFA (Industrial Development Finance Authority funds). Ms. Gabree was unsure whether Cares or APRA funds could be used for housing but suggested it was worth researching. Ken Diskin recommended that the committee consider requesting a line item on FY23 omnibus budget to support Housing Rehab and Community Development.

Review Rental Assistance Ideas: The Committee confirmed that they were in agreement with earlier discussions held jointly between the AAHC (Ayer Affordable Housing Committee) and AAHT (Ayer Affordable Housing Trust) outlining an Ayer Rental Assistance program. The Committee agreed to support a rental assistance program that assists 5 families with \$500 a month of rental assistance for a term of one year. The Committee requested that Alicia Hersey prepare the first draft of the Ayer Rental Assistance Guidelines and present them at the upcoming October joint meeting of the AAHC and AAHT.

Ayer Commons Discussion: The Board discussed the upcoming Select Board presentation by NOAH, on the proposed 40B development, located at 65 Fitchburg Road. Janet Providakes had a question on whether there would be on site management. Ken Diskin wanted to know what the correct Select Board procedure was when dealing with a friendly 40B. He was interested to know whether a vote of support needed to be taken by the Select Board. Alicia Hersey explained that after speaking to the consultant it was the Town Manager's office understanding that at this stage no vote needed to be taken.

Remote Meeting Discussion: Janet Providakes announced that meetings would once again be remote, starting with the upcoming joint meeting with the AAHT on October 13th.

New Business: Janet Providakes asked all the members to check with Cindy Knox, making sure that their Town email address has been set up. The committee discussed the need to continue municipal engagement regarding the proposed 40B and our community need for more affordable housing.

Old Business: Ms. Providakes recommended that the proposed education initiative should be postponed to after the first of the year.

Meeting Adjourned

Ken Diskin motioned to adjourn, Ron Morrison seconded at 11:25 am. (4-0-0)

Janet Providakes

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