

Town of Ayer

Department of Community & Economic Development

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



Minutes of June 30, 2021– Ayer Affordable Housing Committee (AAHC)

Location: Select Board Room, Ayer Town Hall

Members Present: Janet Providakes, Ken Diskin & Ron Morrison

Also, Present: Alicia Hersey, AAHC Administrator, Ayer Community Development Program Manager,

Ayer Affordable Housing Trust Members: Cyndi Lavin, Jake Driscoll, Jennifer Cail, Geoffrey Tillotson, Colleen Krieser, Shaun Copeland. Also, present Cindy Knox

Janet Providakes, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM: Ms. Providakes read the Covid open meeting zoom requirements.

Agenda: Ken Diskin made a motion to approve the agenda, Ron Morrison seconded it. Unanimous vote to approve the agenda. (3-0-0)

Introduction of the Ayer Affordable Housing Committee and Ayer Affordable Housing Trust members. Janet Providakes gave an overview of the Ayer Affordable Housing Committee, and she reviewed the process for the Affordable Housing Trust as they set up their Board and the Affordable Housing Trust Board's policies and procedures.

Ron Morrison – Ayer Housing Statistics: Ron Morrison gave an in-depth report on the real estate market in Ayer, particularly the rental market. Mr. Morrison reported that the average renter in Ayer is spending approximately 42% of their salary on housing. Mr. Morrison reported that the average rent for one bedroom apartment in Ayer is \$1,093, a two-bedroom apartment average is \$1,507, a three-bedroom apartment average is \$2,233 and four-bedroom average is \$2,550.

A general discussion was had regarding the multiple issue around the high cost of housing in the State and the lack of inventory.

Alicia Hersey – Large “A” Affordable versus Little “a” affordable: Alicia Hersey gave a presentation on the difference between large “A” Affordable and little “a” affordable. Large “A” affordable is a unit of affordable housing recognized by the State as affordable, this is usually done with a deed restriction. The State set a goal for all Commonwealth Town's to reach 10% Subsidized Housing Inventory. Ms. Hersey reviewed the many ways the Town through its Planning and Development departments and the Affordable Housing Committee have been working towards this goal.

Janet Providakes – Workforce Housing / Housing that is Affordable: Janet Providakes spoke on the importance of changing the narrative on “Affordable Housing”. Ms. Providakes pointed out that affordable housing is really workforce housing. She

spoke on the image of the 40B. A discussion ensued on 40B's and "Local Option Housing". Ken Diskin spoke on the importance of the Affordable Housing Committee and the Affordable Housing Trust to incentivize the development of affordable housing.

Discuss Upcoming Projects –

MHP Training: Janet Providakes updated the Committee and Trust that she arranging for Shelly Gorman of MHP to come in and do training for the newly formed Ayer Affordable Housing Trust.

Rental Assistance: Alicia Hersey distributed examples of rental assistance programs from neighboring towns. The Board talked about the advantages of having a local rental assistance program, quicker and easier access being two advantages.

Request Funding from Town Meeting: Ken Diskin asked if the Board should be planning to go to Fall or Spring Town Meeting to request more funding for the Ayer Affordable Housing Trust. It was agreed that the AAHT needs to go to one of the upcoming Town Meetings too request additional funds for the Trust.

Calendar: The Trust agreed to meeting the 3rd or 4th Wednesday of the month for meeting. Next meeting was set the July 28th, 7 pm.

A request for educational train on being a board member of a Trust. Cindy Knox stepped up to point out the online town resources are listed on the Town website under the Town Manager's page called the Town Officials Toolbox, this is a good place to start your education. Janet noted that each member will receive their own town email address.

Geoffrey Tillotson request that copies of the Ayer Affordable Housing Trust Bylaw be distributed to members.

Meeting Adjourned

Ron Morrison motioned to adjourned, Ken Diskin seconded at 7:59 pm. 3-0-0

Janet Providakes

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