

Town of Southborough

Affordable Housing Consolidation Working Group

Minutes of Friday, August 2, 2024 10:00 a.m. Meeting

Location: Remote Only

Present: Lisa Braccio, Andrew Dennington, Paul Desmond, Al Hamilton, Doug Manz

The first meeting of the Affordable Housing Consolidation Working Group (the "Working Group") was called to order at 10:04 a.m.

The Working Group members discussed the current organization, format, composition, and legal structure of SHOPC and AHTFC. There was general agreement on the goal of merging the two entities, given the similarities between their mission statements (as found in Article 6-12 of the Town Code and Mass. Gen. Laws. c. 44, § 55C respectively). There was also agreement that the Select Board should no longer occupy the majority of the seats on AHTFC, as it currently does.

The Working Group discussed the current Declaration of Trust for the AHTFC on file at the Worcester Registry of Deeds.

As a potential gating issue, the Working Group agreed it was important to determine who legally has the authority to modify the terms of that Trust. Mr. Hamilton volunteered to speak to Town Counsel about this issue.

The Working Group also discussed the timeline for preparing a draft warrant article in time for the special fall town meeting scheduled for September 30, 2024.

The Working Group identified the following issues to discuss and agree upon as part of that drafting process:

1. Should SHOPC be "abolished" by simply repealing the SHOPC By-Law (Articles 6-11 & 6-12 of the Town Code), or should the SHOPC By-Law be amended to strike all its current provisions and insert in their place provisions regarding the new AHTFC?
2. Should more than one Select Board member be on SHOPC. Under state law, there must be at least one Select Board member on SHOPC.
3. Should a Town employee such as Town Administrator or Town Planner serve in an ex officio role on AHTFC? State law authorizes this.
4. Should the Trustees current powers be expanded in any way, to for example, pay stipends to Town employees who assist AHTFC?

- 47 5. What should the composition of the AHTFC be? As a discussion point, Mr.
48 Dennington suggested a committee comprised of 5-7 members, with one Select
49 Board member, and all remaining members at-large, but with a preference that at
50 least two (2) members have “experience in affordable housing, real estate
51 development, social services, finance, or government.” The group discussed the
52 pros and cons of that approach. There was consensus that the group should
53 have a mix of people with related experience and residents who did not
54 necessarily have related experience but cared about the issues and had good
55 judgment.
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57 The Working Group agreed that Town Counsel should be consulted about these issues,
58 and Westborough AHTFC’s current model should be considered.
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60 Ms. Braccio moved to nominate Mr. Dennington as Working Group Chair. Mr. Hamilton
61 seconded. The motion unanimously passed by roll call vote: Ms. Braccio (yes), Mr.
62 Dennington (yes), Mr. Desmond (yes), Mr. Hamilton (yes), Mr. Manz (yes) (5-0-0).
63

64 Mr. Hamilton moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Braccio seconded. The motion
65 unanimously passed by roll call vote: Ms. Braccio (yes), Mr. Dennington (yes), Mr.
66 Desmond (yes), Mr. Hamilton (yes), Mr. Manz (yes).
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69 The meeting adjourned at 10:53 am.
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72 Submitted By:
73 Andrew Dennington
74 Chair, Affordable Housing Consolidation Working Group
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