

Approved XXXX , 2024

**THE SOUTHBOROUGH HOUSING OPPORTUNITY PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE
(SHOPC)**

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 29th @ 8:00 AM

VIRTUAL MEETING/REMOTE PARTICIPATION

Members present: Jesse Stein, Tom Bhisitkul, Al Hamilton, Paul Desmond and Douglas Manz

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM.

Consent Agenda:

The meeting discussed the logistics of the next meeting and the Affordable Housing Trust Fund's (AHTF) request to transfer funds from CPA housing to the AHTF. The AHTF aims to streamline the process, which currently takes 7-19 months, by transferring funds directly. The AHTF has \$500,000 in unused funds and Al seeks support for the transfer. The committee debated the bureaucratic challenges of transferring funds through the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) versus the AHTF, emphasizing the need for a more efficient process. They also discussed potential changes to merge the AHTF with SHOPC and the implications for affordable housing projects.

Logistical Details and Meeting Setup

- Doug discusses sending three sets of meeting minutes for review at the next meeting and thanks Paul for doing the meeting minutes for June 6.
- The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 5, with a slight adjustment to the start time from 6:45 to 7:00 PM due to Zoom logistics.
- Doug apologizes for any confusion regarding the Zoom meeting time and mentions trying to amend the Zoom request.

Discussion on Affordable Housing Trust Fund

- Doug introduces the main topic: a discussion on supporting the Affordable Housing Trust Fund's request to transfer funds from CPA housing to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
- Al then provided an overview of the topic. The Affordable Housing Trust Fund is applying to move available balances from the community housing bucket to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund due to the cumbersome allocation process.
- The process of allocating funds through CPC takes 7 to 19 months, making it difficult to buy property in a timely manner.
- Al mentions that this practice is common in many communities in the Commonwealth and that CPC and CPC serve on CPC.

Challenges with Current Process

- Jesse inquired about how this is being approached given typically CPC does this on a project by project basis.
- Al explains the difficulty of identifying projects and making transactions within the extended timeframe required by CPC.
- The application for the transfer is not yet submitted, and Al is securing support for the application before submitting it.
- The committee is being asked to support the application, similar to the support given to the Select Board.

Annual Reporting and Fund Usage

- The committee discusses the annual reporting requirement for the use of funds and the importance of ensuring compliance with CPA rules.
- Al mentions that there have been no applications for the funds in over 10 years, and the funds have not been spent.
- The committee considers the possibility of making the fund transfer process more automatic, similar to other communities.

Potential Projects and Fund Allocation

- Al shares an example of a failed attempt to buy a home on South Belt Road, highlighting the need for funds to be available quickly.
- The committee discusses potential uses for the funds, including rental programs and housing subsidy programs.
- Al mentions that the application includes a broad description of the intended uses of the funds.
- The committee reviews the application and exhibits, ensuring they have all the necessary documents for consideration.

Streamlining the Fund Transfer Process

- Tom brought up the idea of streamlining the process to automatically transfer funds from CPC to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
- The committee discusses the challenges of the current process, including the need for multiple steps and approvals.
- The committee agrees on the need for bureaucracy reduction and the importance of getting funds to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund quickly.

Merging CPA and Affordable Housing Trust

- Al provides an update on a working group drafting articles to merge CPA and the Affordable Housing Trust.
- The proposed changes include making the Affordable Housing Trust a board with specific membership requirements.
- The committee discusses the potential benefits and challenges of the proposed changes.

Funding and Project Approval Process

- Doug discusses the complexity of going through CPC and the Affordable Housing Trust to secure funds for a project.

- Doug mentions a preference for a one-time transfer of funds from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
- The current structure of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund is seen as unlikely to allow for acquiring real estate in a normal market timeframe.
- Doug highlights the impracticality of waiting for a town meeting to acquire a parcel.
- A unique situation where the owner or family is willing to wait is necessary for acquiring real estate.
- The process of going to town meeting for a transfer of real estate is cumbersome and time-consuming.

Support for Affordable Housing Trust Fund

- Al makes a motion to support the application for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and is seconded by Paul.
- A roll call vote is conducted: Stein – Aye, Paul – Aye, Al – Aye, Tom – Aye and Doug Aye.
- Motion carries 5-0.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 5, 2024 at 7 PM.

ADJOURN: MOTION by Mr. Stein to adjourn. **Seconded by** Mr. Hamilton **ROLL CALL: Hamilton – Yes, Desmond – Yes, Stein-Yes, Bhisitkul - Yes, Manz - Yes. VOTE to Approve: Yes–5, No–0.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Douglas J. Manz
SHOPC Chair