

Approved XXXX , 2024

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

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 5th @ 7:00 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING/REMOTE PARTICIPATION

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

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Consent Agenda:

Administrative Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Doug calls the meeting to order.
- Doug thanks Paul for preparing the June 6th meeting minutes and notes three sets of minutes to be approved.
- Roll call for June 6, 2024, minutes: All in favor, Paul, Jesse, Al, and Doug
- Roll call for July 11, 2024, minutes: All in favor, with a correction noted by Paul (Vice Chair instead of Chair). All in favor – Paul, Jesse, Al and Doug
- Roll call for July 23, 2024, minutes: All in favor – Paul, Jesse, Al and Doug

Discussion on MBTA Communities Act

- Jesse provides an update on the MBTA Communities Act, mentioning public hearings and a special town meeting on September 30.
- The Planning Board is working on zoning changes to include higher density multi-family housing on 10 acres within a half-mile radius.
- Concerns from impacted residents and efforts to find a compromise between state law and resident interests.
- Affordable housing component with 10% of units deed-restricted.

Questions on Specific Parcels

- Doug inquires about the background of specific parcels, including the Fitzgerald site, general store, and McCarthy's pool site.
- Jesse explains the mapping sessions and resident consensus in determining eligible parcels.
- Discussion on the challenges of meeting the bylaw and the importance of resident input.
- Doug and Jesse discuss the difficulty of pleasing everyone and the need for a compromise.

Support for Planning Board's MBTA Communities Act Plan

- Al moves to support the Planning Board's plan for the MBTA Communities Act. Paul seconds the motion. Roll call: All in favor, Paul, Jesse, Al and Doug.

- Doug and Jesse discuss the importance of compliance and the potential risks of non-compliance.
- Jesse emphasizes the need for more housing, especially affordable units.

Future Approach to Chapter 61A Parcels

- Doug introduces the discussion on Chapter 61A parcels and potential future approaches.
- Jesse highlights the high cost of acquiring developable land and the limited funds available.
- Paul suggests exploring community land trusts and donations from well-off residents.
- Jesse mentions partnering with the Southborough Open Land Foundation and the Open Space Preservation Commission.

Challenges and Potential Solutions for Chapter 61A Parcels

- Doug and Jesse discuss the need for a map of all 61A parcels in Southborough.
- Jesse mentions the Atwood property as a potential site, despite lead contamination issues.
- Doug supports the idea of townhomes and lower-density affordable housing.
- Doug discusses the benefits of a 70% preference for town residents and employees in affordable housing projects.

Discussion on Reducing Zoning Barriers to Affordable Housing

- Doug brings up the cap on senior housing and ADUs in the Zoning Bylaw.
- Jesse advocates for removing the need for ADUs to go through a special permit process.
- Discussion on the potential impact of recent changes in ADU laws.
- Jesse mentions confusion with other boards regarding the recognition of ADUs as multi-family units.
- Jesse clarifies that the property in question is a single-family residence with an accessory unit, not a two-family home.
- Doug raises the issue of the cap on senior housing, questioning why it exists and suggesting it could be increased.
- Jesse explains that the cap is part of a special permit for major residential development, offering incentives for increased density.
- Doug and Jesse discuss the potential for removing or increasing the cap on senior housing at a future town meeting.
- Doug inquires about the status of the state's housing bond bill and its impact on ADUs, with Jesse noting some movement in the downtown district.
- Doug mentions the passage of the housing bond bill on July 31, allowing for increased allowance of ADUs.
- Jesse notes that the implementation of these changes is still uncertain and will require integration into town planning.
- Doug and Jesse discuss the cap on ADUs and the need for further exploration of increasing housing stock.
- Jesse suggests inviting Karina to a future meeting to provide more detailed information on zoning changes related to senior housing and ADUs.
- Doug agrees and emphasizes the importance of addressing both senior housing caps and ADU implementation in future discussions.

93

94 **Affordable Housing Trust Fund and SHAP Consolidation**

- 95 • Doug provides an update on the working group discussing the potential consolidation of
- 96 the Affordable Housing Trust Fund with SHAP.
- 97 • The group includes Andrew Dennington, Lisa Braccio, Paul, and Doug, aiming to merge
- 98 the two boards to streamline affordable housing efforts.
- 99 • Jesse highlights the complexity of the draft legislation and the need to finalize it before
- 100 the town meeting.
- 101 • Doug supports the merger, noting the current advisory role of SHAP and the need for a
- 102 more nimble board to handle affordable housing transactions.
- 103 • Jesse suggests reconsidering the makeup of the new board, recommending three at-large
- 104 members and one from the Planning Board for expertise in zoning.
- 105 • Jesse and Al discuss the need for a planning board member on the new board to ensure
- 106 proper zoning knowledge.
- 107 • Jesse, Paul and Al discuss the feasibility of a member from the planning department
- 108 • Doug emphasizes the importance of having a staff person assigned to the new board to
- 109 handle meeting logistics and support.
- 110 • Al and Doug discuss the potential use of AI assistants like Otter.ai for transcribing
- 111 meetings, with Al offering to explore this option further.
- 112 • Al makes a motion to recommend to Town Meeting support the merger of AHTF and
- 113 SHOPC. Seconded by Paul. In Favor: Al, Paul, Doug – Abstain: Jesse
- 114 • Jesse abstained given concerns over the make-up of the new AFHTF not having a Planning
- 115 Board member but is in favor of the merging of SHOPC and AFHTF.
- 116

117 **Potential Use of Affordable Housing Trust Funds for Rental Payments**

- 118 • Al introduces the idea of using the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to buy down affordable
- 119 rental payments on Chapter 40B projects.
- 120 • The committee discussed the potential benefits and challenges of this approach, including
- 121 the developer's incentive and the non-trivial sum of money involved.
- 122 • Doug suggests considering increasing the number of affordable units instead of reducing
- 123 rents, with both options being explored further.
- 124 • The board agrees to discuss the potential use of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for
- 125 down payment assistance on affordable housing units, with Al planning to reach out to
- 126 Mass Housing for examples and precedents.
- 127

128 **Affordable Housing Policy Discussion**

- 129 • The Committee discusses the necessity for the property to be permanently needed as
- 130 affordable and mentions that the owner of an affordable unit can still accumulate wealth
- 131 through modest gains.
- 132 • Further discussion on that the value creation is capped at 80% to ensure affordability and
- 133 that down payment assistance can be recaptured upon sale, although this varies by
- 134 community.
- 135 • The conversation highlights that the goal is to reduce barriers, not to provide a windfall,
- 136 and that the process varies by community, with Habitat for Humanity as an example.
- 137 • Discussion emphasizes the importance of quality shelter and community for raising
- 138 families, noting that this is valuable even if it doesn't result in significant profit upon sale.

- The group agrees on the importance of removing barriers and discusses the potential creation of a new affordable housing trust fund by the Select Board.

Scheduling Future Meetings

- Doug suggests scheduling another meeting, considering the upcoming town meeting might change the schedule, and proposes October as a tentative time.
- The group discusses potential dates for the next meeting, with 17th of October being selected as a tentative date.
- Jesse mentions the need to coordinate with the town planner and suggests an 8:30 AM start.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 17th at 8:30 AM.

ADJOURN: MOTION by Mr. Hamilton to adjourn. **Seconded by** Mr. Desmond **ROLL CALL:**
Hamilton – Yes, Stein-Yes, Desmond-Yes, Manz-Yes. VOTE to Approve: Yes–4, No–0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Douglas J. Manz
SHOPC Chair