

1 **Approved Oct. 31, 2024**

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

6 **MEETING MINUTES**

7 **Thursday, September 5th @ 7:00 PM**

8 **VIRTUAL MEETING/REMOTE PARTICIPATION**
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10 Members present: Jesse Stein, Al Hamilton, Paul Desmond and Douglas Manz

11 Absent: Tom Bhisitkul
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13 **CALL TO ORDER:**

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15 The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.
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17 **Agenda:**

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19 **Administrative Approval of Meeting Minutes**

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 - 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
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28 **New Business:**
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30 **Discussion on MBTA Communities Act**

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 - 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 of the MBTA station on Southville Rd.
 - Jesse spoke about 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.
 - Doug inquires about the background of specific parcels, including the Fitzgerald site, general store, and McCarthy's pool site.
 - Jesse explains the Planning Board held mapping sessions to seek resident consensus in determining eligible parcels
 - Members discussed 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.
 - Vote: 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.
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48 **Future Approach to Chapter 61A Parcels**

- 49 • Doug introduces the discussion on Chapter 61A parcels and potential future approaches.
50 • Jesse highlights the high cost of acquiring developable land and the limited funds
51 available.
52 • Paul suggests exploring community land trusts and donations from well-off residents.
53 • Jesse mentions partnering with the Southborough Open Land Foundation and the Open
54 Space Preservation Commission.
55 • Doug and Jesse discuss the need for a map of all 61A parcels in Southborough.
56 • Jesse mentions the Atwood property as a potential site, despite lead contamination
57 issues.
58 • Doug supports the idea of townhomes and lower-density affordable housing.
59 • Doug discusses the benefits of a 70% preference for town residents and employees in
60 affordable housing projects.
61

62 **Discussion on Reducing Zoning Barriers to Affordable Housing**

- 63 • Doug brings up the cap on senior housing and ADUs in the Zoning Bylaw.
64 • Jesse advocates for removing the need for ADUs to go through a special permit process.
65 • Discussion on the potential impact of recent changes in ADU laws.
66 • Jesse mentions confusion with other boards regarding the recognition of ADUs as multi-
67 family units.
68 • Jesse clarifies that the property in question is a single-family residence with an accessory
69 unit, not a two-family home.
70 • Doug raises the issue of the cap on senior housing, questioning why it exists and
71 suggesting it could be increased.
72 • Jesse explains that the cap is part of a special permit for major residential development,
73 offering incentives for increased density.
74 • Doug and Jesse discuss the potential for removing or increasing the cap on senior housing
75 at a future town meeting.
76 • Doug inquires about the status of the state's housing bond bill and its impact on ADUs,
77 with Jesse noting some movement in the downtown district.
78 • Doug mentions the passage of the housing bond bill on July 31, allowing for increased
79 allowance of ADUs.
80 • Jesse notes that the implementation of these changes is still uncertain and will require
81 integration into town planning.
82 • Doug and Jesse discuss the cap on ADUs and the need for further exploration of increasing
83 housing stock.
84 • Jesse suggests inviting Karina to a future meeting to provide more detailed information
85 on zoning changes related to senior housing and ADUs.
86 • Doug agrees and emphasizes the importance of addressing both senior housing caps and
87 ADU implementation in future discussions.
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89 **Affordable Housing Trust Fund and SHAP Consolidation**

- 90 • Doug provides an update on the working group discussing the potential consolidation of
91 the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee with SHOPC.

- The group includes Andrew Dennington, Lisa Braccio, Paul, and Doug. Its purpose is to develop an article for Town Meeting that would seek approval to merge the two boards to streamline affordable housing efforts.
- Jesse highlights the complexity of the draft legislation and the need to finalize it before the town meeting.
- Doug supports the merger, noting the current advisory role of SHOPC and the need for a more nimble board to handle affordable housing transactions.
- Jesse suggests reconsidering the makeup of the new board, recommending three at-large members and one from the Planning Board for expertise in zoning.
- Jesse and Al discuss the need for a planning board member on the new board to ensure proper zoning knowledge.
- Jesse, Paul and Al discuss the feasibility of a member from the planning department
- Doug emphasizes the importance of having a staff person assigned to the new board to handle meeting logistics and support.
- Al and Doug discuss the potential use of AI assistants like Otter.ai for transcribing meetings, with Al offering to explore this option further.

VOTE:

- Al makes a motion to recommend to Town Meeting support the merger of AHTFC and SHOPC. Seconded by Paul. In Favor: Al, Paul, Doug – Abstain: Jesse
- Motion passes 3-0-1
- Jesse notes he abstained given concerns over the make-up of the new AFHTF not having a Planning Board member but is in favor of the merging of SHOPC and AFHTF.

Potential Use of Affordable Housing Trust Funds for Rental Payments

- Al introduces the idea of using the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to buy down affordable rental payments on Chapter 40B projects.
- The committee discussed the potential benefits and challenges of this approach, including the developer's incentive and the non-trivial sum of money involved.
- Doug suggests considering increasing the number of affordable units instead of reducing rents, with both options being explored further.
- The board agrees to discuss the potential use of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for down payment assistance on affordable housing units, with Al planning to reach out to Mass Housing for examples and precedents.
- The Committee discusses the necessity for the property to be permanently deeded as affordable and mentions that the owner of an affordable unit can still accumulate wealth through modest gains. That value creation is capped at 80% to ensure affordability and that down payment assistance can be recaptured upon sale, although this varies by community.
- The conversation highlights that the goal is to reduce barriers, not to provide a windfall, and that the process varies by community, with Habitat for Humanity as an example.
- Discussion emphasizes the importance of quality shelter and community for raising families, noting that this is valuable even if it doesn't result in significant profit upon sale.

138 **NEXT MEETING:**

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

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142 **ADJOURN:** MOTION by Mr. Hamilton to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Desmond ROLL CALL:

143 Hamilton – Yes, Stein-Yes, Desmond-Yes, Manz-Yes. VOTE to Approve: Yes–4, No–0.

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145 Respectfully Submitted,

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147 Douglas J. Manz

148 SHOPC Chair

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150 Documents used:

151 None

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