

AGAWAM HOUSING COMMITTEE

Town of Agawam

36 Main St., Agawam, MA, 01001

(Draft) - Minutes – March 21, 2023

Members Present: Chair Rosemary Sandlin, Milly Potter, Paul Jenney, Michael DiLullo, Julie Warzecka, Corinne Wingard.

Members absent: Vincenzo Ronghi.

Others Present: Michelle McAdaragh, Senior Project Mgr., Wayfinders

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Roll call:

2. Approval of Minutes of October 18, 2022:

Motion to approve by Member Potter, Second by Member Jenney, all in favor.

3. Update on Rosewood Way:

Ms. McAdaragh stated the mission of Wayfinders is to create safe, decent, affordable housing with affordable options for all income levels. They are currently in the closing process on Rosewood Way, since October. Has issued 1st, 2nd, and 3rd notice to proceed, and today received building permit. The Funders have to o.k. contract before Ms. McAdaragh can sign contract. Mass Housing sent the file to HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) March 9, 2023. DHCD (Dept of Housing and Community Development) is leaving local preference up to HUD. Affirmative fair marketing and marketing plan has local preference in it.

Mass Housing is the permanent lender with state funds. HUD does second, final review of file. DHCD majority funder under tax credits, soft money. Since HUD received file March 9th, already have a couple of questions so now looking at file. Questions were not about tenant selection.

Will be an eighteen month build out from when issue notice to proceed.

Asked about 3 building lots in front of property, Ms. McAdaragh stated Wayfinders still has no plans and right now are being used for staging for construction.

Asked about marketing, she stated they start marketing six months before lottery. Will be lottery for all apartments. They like to do this three months before occupancy, so nine months. Will have information about applications on website.

They have rental vouchers for all 20 of the units at 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Tenants pay 30% of adjusted gross income.

Asked what rents will be, reported \$1,200. per month for 2-bedroom. Ms. McAdaragh will send Member Wingard a flyer with current income limits and rents to share with committee. Noted some one-bedroom units are on second floor.

Chair Sandlin stated has been asked many questions. Some residents of Pheasant Hill would like to know what rents will be, but Pheasant Hill has very deep subsidies, and some tenants only paying \$200. per month, so Rosewood Way may be too much more for them.

Chair Sandlin brought up property at Games and Lanes which may become a Chapter 40-R district and Ms. McAdaragh stated if 40-R in place, may incentivize developers. Also noted that 45 units work best for a development, for number of units that can be subsidized before max out on subsidies.

Ms. McAdaragh said that 586 Mill St. is now officially in Feeding Hills, with 01030 zip code. Asked about returning for an update, suggested updating in 6 month at the site and all agreed.

4. Review Governor Healy's Housing Plan and February 19, 2023 Report of Governor's Housing Working Group:

Chair Sandlin stated had read report and lot to review suggested table for next meeting. All agreed

5. Identifying land for potential future development of various types of housing:

Members Potter and Warzechka are most familiar with available land, and will report back at next meeting, keeping in mind to consider land for variety of types of housing. Other members also share any additional information about available land.

6. Housing Production Plan:

Chair Sandlin reported that the town received DLTA funds for a Housing Production Plan (HPP) to be done by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), at no cost to the town. Chair Sandlin, Planning Director Kerr, and Member Wingard held initial Zoom meeting today with Karen Martin, Senior Planner II of PVPC who will be doing the HPP for the town.

Planner Martin has been budgeted for 200 hours for the HPP, 50 hours until July and the remaining hours by the end of the calendar year, when HPP has to be completed. All agreed she will work off prior expired plan, and can re-shape recommendations, look at some different opportunities, shift focus, update numbers and inventory, work on background chapters in the plan, and do new data collection.

The first step is the Community Survey which Planner Martin will draft and send for review of suggested questions for fit for our community. 100 is considered a high number for responses, so will need to publicize widely as want maximum community participation.

Review results of Community Survey before get to next step of Community Engagement toward summer. This will include public meetings, focus group meetings, and online participation.

Need noted for Senior housing in Agawam and Planner Martin can include examples in HPP of where done successfully and potential resources to create in Agawam.

7. Next Agenda Suggestions:

Review Governor Healy's Housing Plan and February 19, 2023 Report of Governor's Housing Working Group.

Identifying land for potential future development of various types of housing.

8. Any other business that may legally come before the committee:

Chair Sandlin asked new Member Warzecka to be Secretary for Committee and Member Warzecka agreed. Will review how has been done and start with next meeting. Chair Sandlin pointed out that Housing Committee is not just for affordable housing, but all housing needs in town. Said Agawam in process of updating zoning. Shared information from zoning committee. Looking at fees, which are much lower than any area community and have not been raised in years. Many zoning issues.

Member Warzecka stated general public, if not looking for housing, has no awareness or understanding of housing. At this point very little inventory available and prices very high for ownership and rental units. Member Potter agreed. Chair Sandlin asked Members Warzecka and Potter to write press release about housing and they agreed.

Member Wingard reported that Pioneer Valley Regional Housing Committee is planning presentation on Chapter 40-R in June and noted Mass Housing Partnership Housing Institute will be virtual June 14 and in person June 15, Mass Fair Housing Conference will be April 11 -13. Also will work with Town Assessor to do a presentation on Agawam's Senior Property Tax Abatement program at the Senior Center in the fall. Member Potter suggested including an accountant for information about Mass senior circuit breaker tax credit- Member Wingard agreed.

Chair Sandlin set next Housing Committee Meeting for May 23, 2023.

Motion to adjourn at 7:34 p.m. by Member Wingard, second by Member Warzecka, all in favor.