

Bedford Municipal Affordable Housing Trust
Remote Participation Meeting -Zoom
May 2, 2022

PRESENT: Shawn Hanegan, Alice Sun, Christina Wilgren, Kylie Butler, Sarah Stanton

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey King, Liz Rust, (RHSO)

Ms. Wilgren opened the meeting at 5:03 PM via remote participation conference call.

A roll call occurred for committee members to announce that they were present. Mr. Hanegan- yes, Ms. Sun- yes, Ms. Butler -yes, Ms. Stanton- yes and Ms. Wilgren- yes.

Meeting Minutes

There was a discussion as to who would take minutes. There were no volunteers. Mr. King, Town staff to the Board, took the minutes. A permanent minute taker will be determined at the next meeting.

The meeting minutes of February 28, 2022 were reviewed. A few minor edits were requested. Ms. Stanton moved to accept. Ms. Butler seconded. Members were polled individually: Ms. Sun- yes, Ms. Butler- yes, Ms. Stanton- yes and Ms. Wilgren- yes. Mr. Hanagen abstained as he was not a member at the time of that meeting. The motion passed 4-0-1.

Small Grant Homeowner Grant Program

Ms. Wilgren introduced Ms. Rust to give an overview of the Small Grant Homeowner Program. Ms. Rust explained that the program is essentially the same as it has been in the last number of cycles. The only changes are different income limits and median assessed values. She also added some assumptions about application and award dates. Some minor edits were discussed including clarifying that the federal tax return date referenced be 2021. Ms. Sun also added that the property tax state should read ‘most recent date’.

Ms. Stanton stated that we could extend deadlines if needed. Ms. Rust she could make the application due in August and awards in October. Ms. Wilgren supported extending the due date to August 15, 2022 if that would be sufficient. She was concerned that applicants might give up if they felt they did not have enough time to submit an application because of a short deadline date. Ms. Wilgren asked how much should be allocated to the program. Ms. Sun added that looking at past minutes, it was \$40,00 for the cycle. Ms. Rust stated that in past years, everyone that applied was funded as requests have always come in quite a bit under the allocation, Generally around \$16- \$18,000 a cycle. Liz suggested a vote of the MAHT to open the program as it is not a continuous cycle. Ms. Wilgren asked for a motion to reopen the Small Grants Homeowner Program, with an application due date of August 15, 2022 and awards

made in October, with a program cycle funding allocation of \$40,000. Mr. Hanegan made a motion and Ms. Stanton seconded. A roll call vote was taken: Ms. Sun-yes, Ms. Butler-yes, Ms. Stanton-yes, Mr. Hanegan-yes, Ms. Wilgren -yes. The motion carried 5-0. Ms. Rust state that she made the edits requested so the program could be opened at any time.

RHSO Update & Carlisle Road Project

Ms. Rust then provided an update of the RHSO. They have sponsored a fair housing training that took place in April. They are also working on monitoring of various affordable housing projects. RHSO is continuing to administer the Bedford IRA (Initial Rental Assistance) Program. They have done a lot of outreach for this program. To date they have funded one applicant. Ms. Rust added that she doesn't think they will have spent more than \$5,000 on the program and there will be additional HOME funds left over that the board can think about how to use. RHSO is also meeting with the Bedford Housing Authority to talk about a HOME preservation project. Lastly, was a reference to a rather long presentation at the most recent BHP meeting of the Carlisle Road housing development that is being proposed. Ms. Rust stated that there is a possibility to subsidize additional units to create more affordable housing units before the developers submit their LIP affordable housing proposal.

Ms. Wilgren said that this was a good idea. Clearly it is possible to add more affordable units than we have done before including deeper subsidies that support even lower income levels. She asked how this process could work. Ms. Rust replied that it is a negotiation with the developer. Ms. Stanton added that it is still early in the process. We could invite the developers to a future MAHT meeting to discuss. Mr. Hanegan agreed that it is still early and that we can meet now or wait until there are more details. Ms. Wilgren supported meeting now before minds narrow. Ms. Rust thought that the developers are performing their underwriting now. Instead of coming to MAHT now, you could authorize staff to meet with the developers first. Ms. Stanton agreed. Ms. Rust added that the developer has some flexibility as what they can give to the town. For example, the town might want fewer units, or more green space, a different kind of driveway or deeper affordability. It is good to look at the overall project, so the Town can prioritize what their interests are.

Ms. Wilgren thought that affordable homeownership was an important element as tenants are always in fear of how much their rent may go up. Ms. Sun was concerned that there is too much emphasis on homeownership. Many do not have enough funds to pay a mortgage or are not ready to own a home. Ms. Sun added that we should make sure we identify the best way to spend our money cost effectively. Ms. Stanton stated that in the letter, we can state there is interest in both affordable rentals and homeownership. Ms. Rust added that of the current inventory of income restricted housing in Bedford, 90% are rentals and 10% ownership. Ms. Stanton stated that we could send a letter to the developer, stating that the MAHT board took a vote to invite them to meet with staff to look at the project comprehensively for affordability around both rental and homeownership units. Ms. Wilgren then asked for a motion on a meeting invitation.

Ms. Stanton made a motion. Seconded by Ms. Butler. A roll call was taken. A roll call vote was taken: Ms. Sun-yes, Ms. Butler-yes, Ms. Stanton-yes, Mr. Hanegan-yes, Ms. Wilgren -yes. The motion carried 5-0.

Ms. Barbehenn appeared on the screen. She asked if she was a voting member as a liaison from the Planning Board. Ms. Stanton stated that the Planning Board representative is only a liaison and not a voting member. Mr. Hangean asked if it would be possible for Ms. Barbehenn to apply for the current vacancy of the MAHT. Ms. Stanton said that she would look into it and get back to the Board.

Ms. Wilgren asked Ms. Rust about further fair housing activities. Ms. Rust stated that a fair housing testing initiative got delayed due to vendor being unavailable. She added that 75% of people with vouchers and black households looking for rental housing were discriminated against 75% of the time.

330 South Road update.

Mr. King stated that the Town received a letter from DHCD, that the 330 South Road project qualifies as a LIP project and many now seek a Comprehensive Permit from the Town.

Future Meeting Platform

Ms. Wilgren explained that Boards and Committees now have the option to meet in person or continue to meet online. Ms. Wilgren preferred to continue meeting online as Covid cases are still in the region. Mr. Hanegan agreed, adding that there is a bit of surge of Covid cases currently and to be on the safe side, he would prefer to continue meeting online for now. Mr. Hangan moved a motion to continue to meet online following the current Covid parameters from the state, until July 15, pending future guidance from the state. Ms. Butler seconded the motion. Members were polled individually: Ms. Sun- yes, Ms. Butler- yes, Ms. Stanton- yes, Ms. Hanegan yes, and Ms. Wilgren- yes. The motion passed 5-0-0

Next Meeting Date

Mr. Hanegan preferred a meeting time of 6-7pm as some members struggle to meet at 5pm. Ms. Stanton added that Mondays can be difficult but if it was at 6-7pm, a week where there is no Select Board meeting is preferred. Mr. King was asked to send out a Doodle Poll to establish a time for the next meeting.

Mr. Hanegan Sun moved to adjourn. Ms. Butler seconded. Members were polled individually: Ms. Sun- yes, Ms. Butler- yes, Ms. Stanton- yes, Ms. Hanegan yes, and Ms. Wilgren- yes. The motion passed 5-0-0.