

Town of Hubbardston  
Community Preservation Committee  
Affordable Housing Committee Joint Meeting

**MINUTES**

Meeting of December 10, 2015

Meeting Opened at 6:38 PM

Present:

Jassy Bratko – CPC Chairwoman / Open Space Committee

Tom Bratko – Planning Board

Barbara Carpenter – Historical Commission

Dennis O'Donnell – CPC / Affordable Housing

Susan Fox – CPC Member at Large

Vin Ritchie, CPC / Affordable Housing – \*Meeting Chair

Thomas Robinson – Planning Board

Danielle Arakelian – Member at Large

Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) Meeting attended by CPC members by specific invitation, is being held for the purpose of discussing the viability of using CPA funding to the advantage of the town's Affordable Housing plan. This topic was introduced at the October CPC meeting, with the idea that members would meet again once some initial fact-finding had been done. Vin Ritchie, Meeting Chair, advised that the AHC has spoken with Richard Heaton, a 40B housing consultant, and determined that he is willing to prepare an affordable housing action plan for the town for \$4000. Moosehorn has affordable housing, but additional housing is needed in order to attain a MA chapter 40B Housing exemption. Exemptions are determined based on a percentage of income in the community. The town currently has approximately 3% affordable housing using this model; 10% is needed. An exemption is preferable to allowing 40B housing development in the community. Once an exemption is granted, it is reviewed for renewal every few years.

Any contractor, profit or nonprofit can undertake a rehab project for this purpose. The CPC can help facilitate this plan by providing funding. Once a property has been identified, an application must be submitted and reviewed by CPC for guideline compliance. Once a project is approved by the CPC, a Town Meeting vote of approval can move the project ahead. The AHC, being an ad hoc committee, cannot make the application; they will explore the possibility of becoming a standing committee. The Planning Board may make the application.

There was some discussion of creating new housing to meet affordable housing exemption requirements, but it was generally agreed that it made more sense and would be more desirable to rehab existing properties.

A representative from Habitat for Humanity met with the Affordable Housing Committee and advised that they would be able to undertake projects for the town; they do have prerequisites for properties they rehab, such as working sewer system. Based on previous suggestion that properties obtained via tax title acquisition be rehabbed, Habitat for Humanity stated that once taxes were paid and the property was turned over to them, they would rehab, sell, and return seed money to CPC. It is not likely that the town will undertake legal action to obtain any properties however. Liens may be sold to collect delinquent taxes. Would the town be open to forgiving tax debts for any of these properties? What would be the mechanism for returning funds to CPC once project is complete and property sold?

Where to start? – deadline for inclusion of any project on warrant for town meeting is in the spring. Committee members are urged to collect a list of possible properties for rehab. Multiple properties should be included in the application(s) in order to speed up the process of exemption compliance. The goal is to have at least three properties approved and ready for town meeting vote in June.

The Affordable Housing Committee will meet again on January 14<sup>th</sup> and invites the CPC to attend. Consultant Dick Heaton is expected to be at this meeting and will present a draft of his action plan.

Next joint meeting of the CPC/Affordable Housing Committee will be January 14<sup>th</sup>.  
Next regular meeting of the CPC will be on January 20<sup>th</sup>. This will not be a joint meeting.

Motion: Dennis / Second: Danielle  
To adjourn meeting at 8:34 pm  
Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted: Sheila Chicoine, Clerk

Approved: January 14, 2016