

**Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
October 3, 2023**

A meeting of the Salem Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board was held on Tuesday, October 3, 2023, at a Remote Zoom meeting at 6:30 p.m.

**Members present:** Chair Filipe Zamborlini, Councilor Jeff Cohen, Council President Megan Stott, Councilor Caroline Watson-Felt, Vice Chair Chris Malstrom, James Willis, Lynda-Fairbanks Atkins, Jack Butterworth

**Members absent:** Mayor Dominick Pangallo

**Members arriving late:** None

**Members leaving early:** None

Staff present: Senior Planner Elena Eimert, Deputy Director of DPCD Amanda Chiancola

Chair Zamborlini called the meeting to order with a roll call at 6:31 p.m.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Presentation from Habitat for Humanity on its Critical Rehabilitation Program**

Ms. Eimert introduces Meegan O'Neil, Executive Director of the Essex County Habitat for Humanity, who is before the Trust to offer an informational presentation about the organization's work. O'Neil shares a presentation about Habitat's overall work, including as a developer of affordable homeownership units. She provides details about their Critical Rehabilitation program and examples of completed projects. She notes their clientele for this program is often elderly and disabled homeowners, and to be eligible must make under 60% Area Median Income.

Floor opens to questions from the Trust. There are discussions about the affordability restrictions attached to Habitat projects. There is discussion as to the financing of the Critical Rehabilitation program – O'Neil notes that homeowners contribute very little, funding comes from CDBG, charitable contributions, support of entities like the Trust.

**B. Review and vote on Support Letters for Home Rule Petition related to the proposed Condominium Conversion Ordinance**

As requested by the Board, staff have drafted Letters of Support, one to Salem's state legislators and one to the chairs of the Joint Committee on Housing, both concerning the Home Rule Petition (H.3722). These will be filed as part of the written testimony when the item is scheduled for a hearing in the Committee.

Ms. Eimert shares the draft letters for the review of the Trust. There is discussion as to if to add a reference to the legislature previously granting approval to the City of Somerville on a Home Rule Petition also concerning condominium conversion, establishing a precedent in allowing communities to respond their local conditions.

Councilor Watson-Felt asks that City Council be added as a CC on both letters.

Vice Chair Malstrom makes a motion to approve the letters, with the modifications discussed. Motion is seconded by Jack Butterworth.

Motion passes unanimously.

Chair Zamborlini notes that Trust members and members of the public can also submit testimony as individuals.

### **C. Future Items**

Chair Zamborlini would like to check in on Housing Roadmap goals and ascertain what progress has been made on what items, likely in late 2023 or early 2024.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **A. Discussion of Trust Funds**

#### **i. Remaining Funds**

Councilor Cohen states a desire to see funds set aside for tenant advocacy effort proposed by Neighborhood Stability Coordinator, Lori Stewart, at previous Trust meetings. Ms. Eimert advises she is in contact with Ms. Stewart and that she may appear as soon as November, as conversations with City Solicitor are ongoing.

Chair Zamborlini notes a desire to use ARPA funding for rental assistance programs.

There is a discussion concerning gap funding for administrative costs for rent stabilization efforts offered through the Salem Housing Authority. Councilor Stott notes this was previously covered by Community Preservation Act funding.

There is discussion as to what City rehabilitation programs exist and what funding they have currently. Amanda Chiancola, Deputy Director of DPCD, shares information with the Trust as to rehabilitation and rental assistance programs run through the City and by partner agencies supported by the City's allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. She notes that staffing issues have slowed City's rehab program – we have funds available but do not have a Housing Inspector, which we need to create the scope of work for each rehab project. RFP has gone out twice for this role but have yet to secure someone, hope to have resolution of this item by end of year. Amanda notes that while this program is similar to the rehabilitation work offered by Habitat for Humanity, she does not feel they are redundant efforts.

Chair Zamborlini notes desire to see a consistent funding stream established for the Trust, so they can continue to support housing efforts after ARPA funding is expended.

Ms. Chiancola gives further detail on rental assistance programs supported through the City. These are run by partner agencies that apply to the City for CDBG and Home funds. Some may be

filed under public services in the CAPER and so not captured in the housing section. These programs are varied, including Housing First (support at-risk homeless individuals), down payment assistance, and affordable housing development.

Councilor Stott asks if staff have recommendations on distribution of Trust's ARPA funding. Ms. Chiancola states that the Trust could put out a broad RFP for affordable housing and let organizations apply for the funds and let them articulate their needs.

Trust discusses pros and cons of moving more funding into construction grant program. It is clarified that the amount dedicated can always be increased by vote of the Trust.

Trust discusses the creation of second funding application, with fewer requirements, to be more open to the participation of smaller landlords and those undertaking rehabilitation projects.

Trust authorizes staff to draft and release a request for proposals for affordable housing programs. A motion is made by Vice Chair Malstrom and seconded by James Willis.

Councilor Cohen thanks James Willis for his dedicated service, noting this is James' final meeting with the Trust. Chair concurs.

Motion passes unanimously.

## **STAFF UPDATES**

### **A. Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) and update on housing programs supported through City's allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds**

Amanda Chiancola, Deputy Director of DPCD, speaks on this item. The City has finalized its Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) in accordance with 24 CFR Part 91.

The CAPER includes information on programs conducted and expenditures of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the period of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, including Economic Development, Housing, Neighborhood Improvements, Public Services and Planning and Administration activities. Information on housing programs starts on page vi. of the report. Amanda notes that some programs that offer housing support may also be listed in the public services category of the CAPER.

Amanda shares information with the Trust as to affordable housing efforts run through the City and by partner agencies supported by the City's allocation of CDBG and HOME funding, including the city's housing rehabilitation loan program, first time home buyer program, tenant based rental assistance, emergency rental assistance, rental down payment assistance, affordable housing development and admin costs related to managing said programs.

Amanda notes that this plan is updated yearly. The City will create an accompanying action plan in the spring and the next CAPER, which recaps accomplishments and expenditures, will be completed in Fall 2024. Amanda welcomes the future participation of the Trust.

**B. FY24 Community Preservation Plan – Request for Comment/Input**

Ms. Eimert introduced the item. The AHTF is being asked for its input as part of the development of the Community Preservation Plan for FY24. Staff prepared a letter for any commentary the Trust might wish to make.

Trust consensus is to advocate for as much funding as possible to be dedicated to affordable housing projects that come before the CPC, above the 10% statutory requirement. Chair expresses desire to open conversation about the possibility of CPC allocating affordable housing funds to the Trust in future years – several Trust members concur.

Motion is made by Councilor Cohen to approve the comment letter with modifications discussed. Seconded by Council President Stott.

Motion passes unanimously.

**C. Notice of Funding Application for ARPA Funds – update**

Ms. Eimert offers an update on the item. The item has the approval of the Finance department and we are waiting on Legal review. Staff are considering how best to amplify news of the grant when the application is live and ask the Trust for their input.

Staff are currently intending to:

1. Press Release and distributed on the website under City News
2. AHTF to share with their networks
3. DPCD staff to share with their networks

Trust is in support of the outlined approach.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

No action taken as the minutes from the September 12, 2023, Trust meeting are still under review. They, along with minutes from this meeting, will be available for review at the November meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No members of the public offered comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

James Willis offers a goodbye and well wishes to the Trust. Members of the Trust express their appreciation for his service.

Motion to adjourn made by Council President Stott, seconded by Vice Chair Malstrom. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Approved by the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board on X/XX/XXXX.

Respectively submitted,  
Elena Eimert  
Senior Planner

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