

MEETING, HELD VIA ZOOM AND LIVE-PARTICIPATION, MINUTES 3 FEBRUARY 2022

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE

Easton Affordable Housing Committee Minutes 3 February 2022

- A. Call To Order
 - a. Attendees: Phil Doremus, Glenn Chadler (Consultant), Ray Martin (Chair), David Bindelglass, Gordon Cliff, Jackie Kaufmann, Darrell Harris (Secretary)
 - b. Meeting called to order at 6:15 PM
- B. Discuss and approve 20 Jan 2022 Minutes
 - a. Minutes were considered and approved at 8:27 PM
- C. Review and discuss Outline of Possible Strategies for Affordable Housing Plan
 - a. State and Federal dollars are available. There needs to be an entity that receives the funding, and manages a project. Could be rental units, or it could be financed ownership units. Tenants would be either elderly, disabled, or lower-income candidates. Possible entities include:
 - i. Community Development Corporations
 - ii. Housing Authorities
 - iii. Church-Municipal Partnerships
 - b. Areas for need for AH
 - i. Gordon noted that we simply don't have any space for amenities that would need to support these AH facilities, much less room for AH itself, at least for now.
 - ii. Glenn: These are the big reasons why people – particularly the elderly – need to leave Easton, under the current housing situation:
 - 1. Taxes
 - 2. Lack of amenities in the town
 - c. Without the state 8.30g mandate, this subject would probably have not been discussed. According to Ray, this would ultimately have been done, even without the mandate.
 - d. Who can pay for this AH? There are ways where the financing does work.
 - e. Glenn: are there some types of housing that can work for members of the community (farm hands, the elderly, disabled, etc.). Is there anything that might be considered?
 - i. There were people that investigated managing some of the excess stock, but the market ended up clearing out the excess housing.
 - f. Should we have a housing authority?
 - i. Gordon didn't think that the town has an appetite for this.
 - ii. If a housing authority did move forward on this, a transportation and a social service infrastructure would need to be built
 - iii. Smaller houses, or smaller lots? Conservation Development has some say about this
 - g. Deed-restricted units – really set-aside development. If 10% of a development is set-aside for AH, in exchange for getting more units at the market rate in return, that could work.
 - i. Habitat for Humanity is a possibility

- ii. We could play around with the percentages of AH, to make sure something works for a developer.
 - iii. Glenn brought up the possibility of someone who got into a deed-restricted property, when it was at a certain price level, and over decades the property increased substantially in value, what happens to the 'profit' from the transaction? Alternatively, Jackie asked, what happens if the property loses value?
 - iv. Caretaker properties within the lot of a larger property. Jackie thought that this can be considered
 - v. Are there non-conforming features on a particular property (1.9 acres v. 2.0 acres), that can allow a subdivision, under certain conditions?
 - vi. FISCALLY PRO-ACTIVE solutions
 - 1. Tax increment financing vs. Tax abatement
 - a. Gordon: who pays and/or approves these deals? The BoS?
 - b. According to Ray, Stratford navigated this situation successfully, in at least one instance.
 - vii. Managed Residential Homes. Ray brought up this possibility. It could work in a scenario where there was excess inventory (pre-C-19), but in this current housing environment it doesn't work.
- h. C: Supportive Framework
 - i. Should we establish an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee?
 - 1. It could be an ad hoc Advisory Group, where representatives from different boards and commissions (P&Z, etc) participate in a meeting; perhaps quarterly.
 - i. Complicating Factors
 - i. Community Septic Systems Ordinance (2006) - this can be interpreted as exclusionary, preventing community expansion - not inclusive. One of the objections was that it applied to residential, but not commercial and church properties.
 - ii. Land Use Ordinance (2021). The voters have spoken on this, and it was passed to address town's concerns regarding BoS control over property disposition. This would need to be looked at, considering Affordable Housing priorities.
- D. Overview of public meeting scheduled for February 10, 2022
 - a. Glenn will run the presentation via PowerPoint.
 - b. 3m for questions from the public
 - c. Jackie asked the question of whether we as a committee can or can't answer certain questions that are posed by the public.
 - d. The public can submit questions and view the proceedings, but to ask a live question you must be attending in person
 - e. There are three opportunities for public engagement, so this 10 Feb 22 meeting is really a listening meeting.
- E. Process going forward
- F. Adjournment – meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.