

**MINUTES OF THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST  
FUND BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING ON  
TUESDAY, SEPT 12, 2023, AT 6:30 PM THROUGH A  
WEB AND PHONE MEETING**

Present for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board of Trustees: Ralph Blessing (Chair), Laura Burwick, Sharona Cowan, Frances Lane, Rob Roqueta, and David Stein.

Present for staff: Emily Gordon, Principal Housing Planner.

Chairman Blessing called the meeting to order at 6:46pm.

**1. Approval of May 9, 2023 Minutes**

Mr. Stein moved that the Board approve drafted minutes from the May 9, 2023 meeting. Mr. Roqueta seconded this motion which carried 6-0-0 (Blessing, Burwick, Cowan, Lane, Roqueta & Stein).

**2. Balance of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund**

\$3,140,640.82 is currently in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Account (\$2,131,265.95 in Linkage and \$1,009,374.87 in Zoning/Fee-in-Lieu).

The Board previously allocated \$375,000 to Pacific House and \$1,350,000 to the Housing Development Fund (totaling \$1,725,000), leaving \$1,415,640.82 unallocated in the account.

The Zoning Board approved two projects – 68 Seaview Ave and Landmark 3 – which include a total of \$13 million in fee-in-lieu payments that will be due when the projects apply for a building permit.

The AHTF funded Pacific House 36 Ann Street project broke ground in July.

When funds are being paid out to projects staff will prioritize spending the most restrictive funds (Zoning/Fee-in-Lieu) first if the project is eligible, and the most flexible funds last (Linkage).

Question for OPM and Law Department of whether the Fund can borrow from Linkage to be reimbursed when Fee-in-Lieu funds become available to allow for maximum flexibility in use of funds.

**3. Status of Projects**

61 units of affordable housing were developed recently across four projects, including 17 100% affordable family-sized units for very-low income residents at the David Martin Apartments. This project was funding using \$1.4 million of fee-in-lieu funds allocated prior to the creation of the AHTF.

165 affordable units are under construction, including three supportive housing units serving 11 individuals at 36 Ann Street. This project was funded in the amount of \$375,000 by the AHTF.

250 affordable units have been approved for development but are not yet under construction. These projects are required to provide the affordable units on-site, but could seek a special permit (before receiving their building permit) from the Zoning Board to provide fee-in-lieu as an alternative to meeting the requirement.

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The Smyth building provided \$4.4 million for the rehabilitation of St. John’s Towers. If those funds are not used in a certain period of time later this year they would come to the AHTF. St. John’s could also seek an extension from the Zoning Board to use the funds at a later date.

**4. Discussion on Use of Linkage Fees for Administrative Costs Temporarily to Fund Housing Coordinator and BMR Ownership Program Compliance**

The Land Use Bureau requested two positions for the 2023-2024 fiscal year and only one position was approved through the budget process.

There is a question of whether the unfunded position of Housing Coordinator should be hired temporarily by the AHTF using linkage fees (\$70k-80k) to kick-start the work, with the intention of including the role in the upcoming operating budget request.

There is hesitancy from members at this point to fund staff using AHTF funds and working outside of the typical operating budget process. There was confirmation that more staffing for housing programs is important as the City and its programs continue to grow.

Job descriptions for the Housing Coordinator and Principal Housing Planner will be circulated. Communication will be continued with the administration, Board of Finance and Board of Representatives on how to fund this position quickly.

**5. Update on Other Affordable Housing Initiatives: BMR Text Change, Senior Housing Text Change, Down Payment Assistance, Single Waitlist for BMR Program, Homeownership Rehab Program**

The Land Use Bureau is working with the Zoning Board on a proposed BMR text change that will likely be filed soon. The goal is to increase the number of BMRs, incentivize BMRs in smaller developments, lower the 80% AMI cap to 65%, encourage family-sized units, and encourage fee-in-lieu payments to target priority units not being built through on-site projects.

The Land Use Bureau is working with the Zoning Board on a proposed Senior Housing text change in order to allow Senior Housing as-of-right in most districts and provide zoning bonuses.

Staff has been working to understand the authority the City has to mandate a consolidated BMR waitlist and charge developers an administrative fee. Next steps will be to design the program and put out an RFP for an administrator. These costs would be charged back to the building owners. In addition, the BMR ownership program could use administrator as well to manage resales, foreclosures, and compliance communication. This could be funded through the AHTF

or the City's operating budget and the next step would be to put out an RFP for an administrator.

The City's Down Payment Assistance Program is funded through Community Development HOME funds and has supported 12 low-income home buyers over the last year. There may be opportunities to adjust the City's policies to improve the program, but the biggest challenge is the federal cap on the home sale price which basically restricts purchasers using the program to condos.

There previously was a Homeowner Rehab program in the City, however with dwindling Community Development funds and staff the program stopped. Staff has secured funding to restart but is exploring the most efficient way to do so and rethink program design to accommodate for limited funding and staff.

**6. Old Business**

None.

**7. New Business**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Lane called for adjournment of the meeting at 8:18pm, seconded by Ms. Burwick and carried on a vote of 6 to 0 (Blessing, Burwick, Cowan, Lane, Roqueta & Stein).

**NOTE:** These proceedings were recorded on video and are available for viewing through the City of Stamford's web page – [www.stamfordct.gov](http://www.stamfordct.gov).