

**Housing Committee
Town of Pelham
Meeting Minutes for March 2, 2021**

Meeting conducted remotely via Zoom

Approved: _____

Committee Members in Attendance:

Tilman Lukas, Ruth Elcan, Amy Spalding-Fecher, Gail Kenny, Jim Lumley, Barbara Cooper

Guests in Attendance : Jim Duda, John Trickey (partial attendance)

Meeting called to order at: 4:36 p.m. by Tilman

Minutes Approved:

Votes Taken:

Action Items: TL to give Jim number for Connie Kruger, Jim to call. Gail to get number for Doug Slaughter, pass to Barbara to call. TL to contact Rusty for discussion about Housing assistance needs.

Committee Discussion Topics:

Amethyst Brook Apartments:

Conservation Committee meeting 3.11.21 at 7pm – will hear first report from peer reviewer concerning project. Storm water management and wetlands issues seem to be main concerns.

Peterson House: Haven't heard anything from HCDI regarding MA Historical Commission (MHC) approval. Not getting approval will slow the project down, especially in terms of finding funding. Once project is in funding round, (Spring 2022), DHCD would hold off approving funding for the project until they have some sort of agreement from MHC

First round of funding will happen in fall of 2021. Funding will take a couple of years. The ZBA must complete the 40B Comprehensive Permit process before HCDI is allowed to submit a funding application. A number of factors influence the funding for this project, which makes it challenging.

State has high standards for construction materials and methods from the start so that 10 years down the road there are not a lot of repairs and renovations needed.

TL: When you hear that unit cost is close to \$400,000, then why spend this when you could buy a house? In reality, you couldn't buy 34 houses in Pelham because of the shortage of housing stock and available, buildable land. Low to moderate income families cannot

afford those individual homes or the long-term maintenance costs of an individual dwelling.

HCDI has filed a 40B application with the ZBA, first ZBA hearing scheduled for 22nd March 6:15. Not sure if the ZBA has hired a 40B consultant to advise them. Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) provides funding for these consulting services.

Housing support needs in Pelham:

BC report from CPC meeting: Cyd Ryman interested in a program similar to the one in Easthampton. Difficulty making contact with people and getting a reply. Waiting for a reply from Principal of Pelham Elementary School. Not a question of which program at this point, but a Needs Assessment comes first. How to determine who needs assistance with housing related costs in Pelham? Possibly contact MHP (Mass Housing Partnership) to find out needs?

JL: Would it make sense to get in touch with Connie Kruger?

Barbara: Would make sense to hire her if she is available.

TL: Could you contact her about possibly doing some work?

Gail: may have information related to other projects or could build on what she has done for us in the past. Will find number for Doug Slaughter, head of Council in Amherst.

TL: will look for Connie's number, give to Jim. This is well worth pursuing, as there surely is a need for housing related assistance in Pelham.

JL: Board of Assessors keeps track of who is having problems with taxes etc, but the knowledge is kept confidential. Rusty Rowell, Chairman of Board of Assessors, might be able to tell us an estimated number of families needing. Probably in the region of 8-10 assistance (for mortgage assistance)

RE: What is our function? Are we a conduit for the funding from various sources?

TL: We are talking about assistance with mortgage programs, not renovation projects.

Perhaps an email to Rusty: "Can you provide us with the number of people with housing related needs (owner occupied homes and renters), mortgage or rental assistance – no addresses, no names?"

Is it worth it to publicize what is available, rather than trying to develop a program that would provide assistance?

JL: There are programs that address this that we could tap into. Could start by talking to Donna Cabana at VCDC for references.

TL: Let's figure out first what the need is and then look at next steps.

BC: What are ways that funds are provided based on need?

TL: Organizations are geared to do this for rental and mortgage assistance.

Sidewalks:

This issue will come later down the line, no info on this now. Lots of discussion about the history of sidewalk discussion in Pelham over the years.

Language for sidewalk in Zoning bylaws but sidewalk projects are reliant on the properties being developed such as 8 Amherst Rd. and Amethyst Brook. Judy Eisenman mentioned that Pioneer Valley Planning Commission might have information on funding this.

Housing Committee Annual Report – submitted to Suzanna. Kudos to Barbara for writing.

Next meeting agenda items:

BC: Would like to have a discussion on agenda for next meeting to talk about getting sewers on S. Valley, Jones and Cadwell. With endorsements from HC and other boards funding would be a lot easier.

Meeting adjourned: motion to adjourn by Tilman, seconded Gail 5:55 pm

Next meeting April 6, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Spalding-Fecher

References:

ABA: Amethyst Brook Apartments (20-22 Amherst Road)
ANR: Approval not Required
CC: Conservation Commission
CDBG: (Community Development Block Grant)
CPA: Community Preservation Act
CPC: Community Preservation Committee
DHCD: MA Dept. of Housing and Community Development
HC: Housing Committee
HD: Highway Department
H4H: Habitat for Humanity
HCDI: Home City Development Inc .
MHC: Massachusetts Historical Commission
PVPC: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
PB: Planning Board
VCDC: Valley Community Development Corporation
ZB: Zoning Board