

**Housing Committee
Town of Pelham**
Meeting Minutes March 10, 2020

Approved: 

Members in Attendance: Ruth Elcan, Gail Kenney, Tilman Lukas, Barbara Cooper, Amy Spalding-Fecher

Absent: Jim Lumley

Guests in Attendance: None

Votes taken: Ruth made a motion to amend and accept minutes of Feb. 19th. Gail seconded. Approved unanimously. Meeting minutes Feb 19th

Action items: Three HC members will attend the COA meeting March 11, 2020. Tilman will present a report on the ABA project.

Committee Discussion Topics:

Ruth asked how we should discuss "local preference" for Pelham residents at ABA. Tilman said it's a Fair Housing issue. DHCD can allow up to 70%, but we need to document why the town needs this percentage. Ruth pointed out that Chpt. 40B documents say that local preference includes town employees, even if they are not currently living in Pelham. Tilman said local preference is only at the beginning of the selection process; once you go to the waiting list, you cannot apply a restriction for residents. Barbara said we may need to do a survey to find out who in Pelham would qualify or desire to live in affordable housing (i.e. ABA).

Tilman brought up the subject that there may be people in town who are "real estate rich but cash poor" who may want to sell their homes and move to more affordable housing in Pelham. It is important to know that proceeds from the sale of a home would not make someone ineligible for affordable housing, per se, as the criteria includes income but excludes assets – there is a formula. Tilman pointed out that since we are considered part of the Springfield area for purposes of calculating affordability, the area median incomes and their percentages are less than we might expect.

Can people on rental subsidies qualify? Yes, families receiving Section 8, Mass. MRVP, or other rental assistance are eligible to live at ABA. People who are not working may not be able to qualify. Students do not qualify. A single person who is not working full-time for at least minimum wage probably won't be able to afford to live here. We all need to get this message out to Pelham residents.

Committee next discussed, edited, and reviewed the outreach letter that the Housing Committee is planning on mailing out to all town residents.

Tilman made a motion for the meeting to adjourn at 6:10 P.M. Ruth seconded. Approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Cooper

References:

ABA Amethyst Brook Apartments (20-22 Amherst Road)

DHCD MA Dept. of Housing and Community Development

CPC Community Preservation Committee

ZBA Zoning Board of Appeals

PB Planning Board

SHI State Housing Inventory

COA Council on Aging