

**TOWN OF NORWELL
Remote Meeting
345 Main Street
Norwell, Massachusetts 02061
(781) 659-8000**

**Norwell Community Housing Trust
April 8, 2021**

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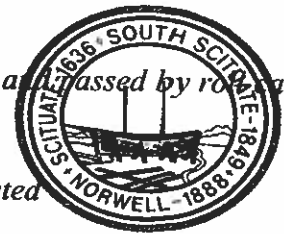
The Community Housing Trust was called to order by Gregg McBride, Chair at 7:03 pm. Also present were Liz Hibbard Vice Chair, and Board Members Peter Shea, Cara Hamilton, Ellen Allen, Leanne Walt and Rob Charest. The meeting was held remotely, as allowed under the Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, Gen. L. c. 30A §20 et seq. and 940 CMR 29.01 et seq.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Motion made to accept the Agenda of April 8, 2021 as written, seconded and passed by roll call vote 6-0-0.

Motion to approve the March 4, 2021 executive session minutes as circulated seconded and passed by roll call vote 6-0-0.

Motion to release the March 4, 2021 executive session meeting minutes seconded and passed by roll call vote. 6-0-0.



SILVER BROOK UPDATE

Watchman of Pembroke, MA was chosen to proceed with the full system for the water problem in the basement.

A section of the second floor exterior soffit was repaired by Carpenter Bill Connolly. Some soft spots on the floors in the bathroom have been detected and those will be replaced by Bill Connolly. Kennedy Carpet will be installing new linoleum flooring in the bathrooms.

A plumber is needed to fix some leaks and have toilet pipes capped in the basement. Also, we need an electrician to come and remove the wiring in the basement where the walls were removed.

We are in the process of getting bids to remove the unsafe laminate flooring in the upstairs bedrooms and hall and that will be replaced with a berber style carpet.

We learned this week that #42 Silver Brook 2 bedroom and 2 bathrooms would like to sell. Lynne Sweet is working with the owners on next steps.

Circulated before the meeting was a letter from a heartfelt prospective buyer. The Trust members felt it was worth a conversation with the prospective about the upcoming 2 bedroom unit vs. the 3 bedroom. Lynne Sweet thought it would be a better fit too, and more affordable.

Response to Advisory Board Information Request

On March 21st Trust Members received an email asking for clarification of a timeline given by the Chair of Advisory Board for the Wildcat Property. Liz Hibbard re-watched the meeting and it was decided the response should be had in open meeting as it may possibly be a violation of open meeting law to respond via email. The Advisory Board email asked that the CHT give a true and accurate timeline for the property (Wildcat). The email suggests that Liz's timeline presented at the Advisory Board Meeting last week differs from the timeline Gregg presented at Jan 13 BOS meeting and a later CHT meeting as well. After re-watching the AB meeting, Liz stated no timeline was presented, but she believes they are referring to when the Architect (Wyly Brown) came to the CHT. The Advisory Board were under the impression Mr. Brown came with a proposal project which Liz stated was untrue. The Architect came with examples of past projects and the CHT worked together with Wyly for months and months and much discussion took place.. It was not an accurate depiction the Architect came with a project and an RFP was formed. It was decided to provide Peter Smellie with minutes from Wyly's visits from 2-3 years back, with initial discussions beginning in 2017, and Mr. Brown being engaged in the project in Jan 2018. Donna Magnan will have the contract.

Brian Carroll- When Mr. Brown showed his first design on Wildcat was he engaged or not? Mr. Carroll would like to know.

Liz Hibbard – States she looked up Nov 2 2017 minutes and shared how they talk about the town owned land with Wyly and its potential. The minutes include conversations about options for this property ranging from mixed income to 100% affordable. Financing types were discussed during this meeting and then Mr. Brown was invited back to further discuss the topic at a future meeting.

Liz reiterates that no plans, designs, or concepts were in place at the initial meetings.

DISCUSSION OF TRUST'S MISSION

Leanne Walt would like talk about whether it would be productive to have a conversation with abutters and answering questions with the greater community about the projects we are trying to work on and where we are as a town. Leanne asks if there more that we can do to create more conversation with meaningful dialogue. Trust members discuss plans for the upcoming Saturday walk with Carleton neighbors.

Liz wanted to share she has been reaching out to see what is available throughout the State like CHAPA to see if there are options and/or resources for community engagement available to the Town. Unfortunately, CHAPA has a long wait list.

Ellen Allen says since the January BOS meeting when she invited Gregg to update the board and was trying to give this greater publicity she feels the Trust members are feeling under attack, and being accused of doing things behind closed doors, which is false. Ellen reiterates that the CHT has been providing information and asked for feedback and she states the Trust members are just trying to do what is required by the State, and that many town boards and planning strategies have long endorsed a plan to pursue small scale housing developments spread out

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throughout the town. However, when the CHT attempts to realize this plan by proposing such developments, the political environment becomes antagonistic, and a lot of misinformation gets out. The housing plan has other options and she is wondering what Trust members are up for.

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Gregg McBride states that there has been a failure to communicate and Norwell Social is not a good place to look. He knows when affordable housing is proposed in neighborhoods the neighbors are automatically angry. Gregg hopes open forums will help in the future.

Cara Hamilton agrees that people may support affordable housing in theory but not when it is close to where they live. She feels that the CHT is in a series of impossibilities and she isn't sure how to move forward.

Ellen Allen feels she hasn't heard that Habitat will work from neighbors. She feels we need to know what is acceptable? We finally have a concept and made safe harbor with it and we were asked to do this at Town Meeting last year and yet we are hearing about back room deals and it's all false and everyone knows how to come to our meetings and no one has. We learned that Simon Hill cannot be used as safe harbor. Safe Harbor can only be used once. Ellen feels there is so much misinformation out there. Ellen urges the public to make requests via emails and ask questions to get to the truth. Ellen feels Norwell Social has people posting many untruths and it's frustrating. St Helen's, for one, isn't available. They are not ready to sell. Rehoboth doesn't count and that has been looked into extensively.

Peter Shea is wondering if we should change our direction to senior housing and everything that has transpired since January is very unfortunate but not unexpected for affordable housing in the Town of Norwell. Peter thinks the Carleton Property Concept looks great. He is so disappointed to hear it isn't what neighbors want (Carleton). Peter says he feels badly for the neighbors facing huge developments.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Leanne Walt is talking about more intentional community outreach. She thinks we need to listen to what we are hearing and these projects aren't palatable right now. Leanne believes we need to change focus. Exploring Habitat for Humanity as an option and she thinks it works great in communities.

Liz Hibbard talks about all the angles she hears from people in the Town. She talks about struggling with the Select Board supporting the Housing Production Plan and then not supporting the current plans. What tools do we have to understand where we are as a community now? Liz

asks Ellen what resources the Trust members have to hear what the Town wants. Liz feels the Trust members need to keep their focus on the housing production plan. . Liz would like to hear from a broader group and not just abutters of the properties. Liz believes we were doing just what we were asked to do.

Rob Charest would like to make clear when he gets nasty texts he can explain why. If abutters oppose housing development at Town Meeting , he doesn't want the explanation in the future to be that things got too difficult, so the CHT stopped pursuing the Housing Production Plan.

Liz Hibbard explains she is working with the State on the SHI to count for Simon Hill. Liz believes we will not receive safe harbor for this project again. Rob explains we are doing the research on laying out the timing to be strategic on 40B.

Leanne Walt is wondering what information we can share prior to Town Meeting. Ellen Allen shares the history of Queen Ann's Corner and 40R has been put out over and over and it is failed at last Town Meeting (??). There is a Q&A form on the CHT Town Webpage to help answer some of these questions. Leanne asks what can we do differently? How can we do better?

Ellen Allen talks about how do you engage the community. We post all our meeting and agenda's but people aren't paying attention until something comes close to them. MAPC is an avenue worth exploring but always the challenge is getting people there. Maybe a committee can be formed to work on this. Liz Hibbard feels like we are campaigning against our neighbors, and she doesn't want that, however she feels it is important to get the truth out. Community engagement is always a challenge. Leanne thinks community forums could work and she wonders if volunteers that are focused on community engagement to explain housing needs in Norwell could help. One way to stay engaged is that residents can sign up to receive agendas from specific committees ahead of their meetings.

Brian Carroll said we aren't here to get you to stop doing what you are doing and we aren't here to attack. No one wants the CHT to stop working or dissolve. Brian is saying there are more people than just abutters opposing building on these forests and wetlands. Brian would like to agree on the facts. He believes there are a lot of facts that we don't agree on. Brian believes there are a lot of people that want to work on the Open Space goal of 30%.

Heather Hanley believes Carleton Property and Wildcat Property shouldn't be lumped together. She believes Carleton is bigger than she remembers and she thinks the website is out of date. As far as Wildcat, the was acquired by the Town 20 years ago and has always been earmarked for affordable housing. Heather received a postcard last year and she doesn't mind the project, and she feels that Wildcat is an appropriate site for affordable housing.

Liz suggests that Heather go to the CHT Committee page and watch the Carleton Presentation which included several different options and also the Town Meeting last year is a good resource for the project. Both videos can be found on the CHT Webpage. Liz doesn't want Heather to feel like she was misled.

David Cedrone WATD News asks once a community votes at a Town Meeting can it be changed? Ellen Allen helps clarify. Town meeting can authorize Selectman put it in conservation but cannot force the Selectman to do anything. We can authorize but not direct or be forced or

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anything else. The Selectman don't have to do anything based on the outcomes of Town Meeting. .

Brian Carroll wants to speak a little to the issue of distrust and wants to eliminate distrust. Brian believes Ellen's comment to Norwell Social being a place for false information and hateful things said on Norwell Social is false information and he speaks about a post on Norwell Social brought forward by Select Board member Allison Demong and Brian believes that it isn't true that there was hateful or untruthful information on that post. Ellen says many people have discussed with her about the hurtful comments. Brian insisted on Ellen commenting on a fact. "Womansplaining" was the example Ellen used of how Allison felt a comment was meant to be hurtful as did many others. Brian admitted the one comment "womansplaining" was over the line. Brian Carroll raised questions about why the 40R at Queen Anne's corner was stopped. Brian Carroll would like to have the facts as to why this isn't going to work. Ellen reiterated the facts again, including the state's decision.

Carleton Property walk 10am Saturday- all are welcome to join.

FUTURE MEETINGS

May 4, 2021 - 7pm

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn at 8:44p.m. Seconded and passed 5-0-0 by roll call vote.

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