

Boxborough Housing Board
Minutes of Thursday April 13, 2023, meeting
In-person, Town Hall Boxborough MA 01719

Housing Board Members Present: Al Murphy, Chair; Channing Wagg, Vice Chair; Diane Friedman, Jessie Robinson, Korinne Stephens
Invited Attendees present: Les Fox, Becky Neville, Wendy Trinks
Guests: Hugh Fortmiller, Francie Noldie
A quorum being present, Chair Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

I. Informational Items

Guest Fortmiller commented on his presence as being part of a new initiative in town on the part of *Action Unlimited* to cover the activities of the town's various boards and committees. There ensued a discussion of the merits of this.

Chair Murphy then commented on the Boxborough Emergency Aid Program (BEAP) and that MetroWest Collaborative Development had decided to "copy" the program for use with its constituency. There ensued commentary on the board's relationship with MetroWest as well as the Assabet Regional Housing Consortium (ARHC).

II. Minutes

The minutes of the March 2 and March 9 meetings were reviewed and accepted, the March 2 minutes with minor edits.

III. Old Business

Chair Murphy asked Vice Chair Wagg to review the status of efforts by the task force established at the March 9 meeting. Wagg's comments were as follows:

1. A request of town counsel (KP Law) was to be followed up with the Town Administrator for a determination of its status. Chair Murphy and liaison Fox agreed to do this.
2. The Town Planner had been briefed on the housing board's desire to have another civil engineering opinion on the feasibility of placing affordable housing units on the 72 Stow Road property. This will be arranged upon resolution of item one, above,
3. Representative Lori Trahan (Massachusetts 3rd Congressional District), state senator James Eldridge and state representative Danillo Sena have been contacted with requests for assistance in obtaining public funding for placing low-cost affordable housing on 72 Stow Road,
4. Preliminary data was presented to support the position that there are a significant number of low-income households in town to warrant demand for the above referenced housing.

There then ensued a discussion which brought forward several thoughts and concerns, to wit:

- a) Sustainability issues,
- b) Conservation issues
- c) Aesthetic issues
- d) Parameters pertaining to need.

Regarding d), an action item was formulated, to enlist the help of MetroWest, and possibly other entities, to better assess the metrics involved via more research on incomes, number of

households, funding, and the nature of such housing, i.e., rental vs. ownership. Chair Murphy, Vice Chair Wagg and member Robinson will collaborate on this project and report to the full committee. Member Friedman pointed out that previous deliberations had indicated the target group consisted of the low-income, elderly, and challenged.

The discussion then shifted to the use of Wendy's time, and it was agreed that projects entailing significant time would require board consensus prior to initiation.

The focus then shifted to the status of the Boxborough Rental Assistance Program (BRAP). Wendy reported that 16 households are now participating, and she attributed this to more program publicity noting that rental costs were a constant source of contact with her office. Comments were made regarding the issuance of Forms 1099-MISC and 1099-NEC. It was suggested that the landlords be contacted to inform them the situation had been corrected.

The discussion then turned to the question of Boxborough Meadows affordable housing units' maintenance. Member Stephens presented a draft of a program tentatively titled "Boxborough Housing Board H.O.P.E Program (Homeownership Opportunity for Preservation & Equity).

The purpose of the program is to address the time deterioration of affordable residential properties causing repairs the cost of which is beyond the means of the owners and thus threatens their continued ownership which in turn jeopardizes their housing status and the continued listing of the property on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI).

Member Stephens made several comments regarding current programs in effect within the Commonwealth, most notably CBDF, or Federal Government CFDA for assistance in maintaining deed-restricted, i.e., affordable housing. Other thoughts were mentioned.

Member Stephens asked that everyone review her draft and respond to her with comments as appropriate.

Chair Murphy made some preliminary comments on the maintenance issue as a general matter and opined that the housing board might serve as an *ad hoc* source of assistance, but that a general policy of support might well be beyond its capability. Further discussion was tabled due to the lateness of the hour but remains an open topic.

A motion was made and seconded for adjournment and the meeting closed at 9:19 p.m.

List of documents/exhibits referenced/used.

1. Minutes of meetings on March 2, 2023, and March 9, 2023
2. Documents describing the Housing Board's HOPE program.
3. Limited Legal Opinion for Housing Board_3.1.23