

**Sturbridge Affordable Housing Trust  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, October 17, 2023  
Town Hall**



**APPROVED**

**Present:**

Diane Trapasso  
Margaret Darling  
Wally Hersee  
Ed Goodwin  
Kathy Neal  
Maura O'Connor  
Jean Bubon, Town Planner  
Robin Grimm, Town Administrator  
Jeneé Lacy, Administrative Assistant  
Will Downie, Barrett Planning Group

**Absent:**

Jamie Goodwin

K. Neal called the meeting to order at 4:30pm and read the agenda.

**Approval of Minutes**

August 22, 2023

**Motion: To approve the minutes of August 22, 2023 as written.**

**By: D. Trapasso**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. O'Connor**

**Vote: All in Favor (6-0)**

**Review Draft Action Plan**

W. Downie went over updates made to the Mission, Vision and Values portion of the draft action plan.

- Mission: unchanged since last meeting.
- Vision: unchanged since last meeting.
  - J. Bubon pointed out grammatical errors to be edited.
  - The Trust discussed possible revisions to wording in regards to "creed", "gender", and "income".
- Values: W. Downie asked if there were any changes the Trust would like to see to the Values section.

- J. Bubon stated to make it consistent to changes made to the Vision section.

### Problem Statement

W. Downie discussed the Problem Statement section of the draft action plan.

- Outlines the Trust's history
- Discusses Sturbridge's affordable housing obligations
  - Current SHI count, and benchmarks established by the Town's current Housing Production Plan
- Discusses recent growth and aging population in Sturbridge, and how that relates to housing challenges
  - Sturbridge has been growing quickly, outpacing its neighbors
  - An aging population brings new challenges for types of housing, and the need for downsizing and accessibility options

The Trust discussed minor grammatical errors to be edited.

### Key Issues

W. Downie discussed the Key Issues section of the draft action plan.

- Lack of public awareness of the Trust.
- Lack of coordination between organizations involved in affordable housing.
- Rising prices and limited growth potential in Sturbridge.
- Strain on existing affordable housing supply.

J. Bubon stated that she disagrees with a Housing Production plan statement in the Key Issues section and asked that it be changed, discussed changes.

The Trust discussed traffic being added as a key issue. W. Downie stated that he will add a section for Community Concerns that can include traffic, density, aesthetics, etc.

### Focus Areas

W. Downie discussed the Focus Areas section.

- Financial Services – Providing direct assistance to individuals or projects
- Educational Programming – Hosting educational events
- Coordination and Partnerships – Developing connections with local and regional actors
- Development of Public Use Resources – Developing resources for the public to help increase access and awareness
- Public Advocacy – Advocating for policies out of the Trust's direct control

The Trust discussed ways to get information to the people that need it, i.e. outreach, education, resources. M. O'Connor asked who would keep the website updated. J. Bubon

stated that the Planning Office would handle the website information. J. Bubon also discussed grammatical errors in the plan for correction.

### Resources Required

W. Downie discussed the Required Resources section.

- Funds – Financial resources to spend on projects and programming
- Property – Land available for affordable housing
- Partnerships – Connections and relationships with town government and other actors
- Community Ties – Public awareness and buy in for the Trust and its goals
- Capacity – The administrative and technical abilities to conduct programming

J. Bubon and K. Neal discussed grammatical errors that need to be fixed in the plan.

W. Downie explained to the Trust how to read the matrix in the plan and discussed the content.

- Year 1 Tasks
  - Basic tasks to get the Trust started on its goals, and make some public advancements.
  - Mostly focused on building capacity, raising public awareness and setting the Trust up for success in the future.
  - Actions include public engagement, budgeting, and setting up lower complexity programming.
  - Prepare the File Certification of Trust.
  - Formulate budget.
  - Prepare Year One advocacy and education plan.
  - Prepare public resources guides.
  - Prepare job description and seek funding for Coordinator.
  - Identify potential funding stream for programming.
  - Establish website as source of resources.

J. Bubon stated that she will working on developing a scope and formulating a budget soon and stated that she will reach out to CMRPC to see if there is a district Housing Coordinator that the Town can utilize. M. O'Connor asked where J. Bubon would start for budgeting amounts and where the funds would be coming from. J. Bubon stated that she won't have an amount until she starts the budgeting process and that the funds would come from different sources. M. O'Connor asked about the possibility of applying for grants. J. Bubon stated that grants could be a source for funds but the Planning Department doesn't have the capacity to add that process. R. Grimm stated that the Trust should get off the ground first.

W. Downie discussed long-term tasks:



- Long Term Tasks
  - Transitioning from setting the Trust up to rolling out programming.
  - Actions are organized by timeline:
    - Short – within 1 to 2 years
    - Medium – 3 to 4 years
    - Long – 4+ years
    - Ongoing – Annual and ongoing programming
  - Still building capacity, connections and public awareness, but expanding programming.
  - Building upon what we have discussed, and bringing in action from the HPP and Master Plan.
  - Develop monitoring system for SHI units.
  - Prepare RFPs for current town-owned land.
  - Friendly 40B project.
  - Low-and moderate-income homeowner rehabilitation pilot.
  - Down payment/closing cost assistance for first time homebuyers.
  - Subsidy programs for affordable housing development.
  - Mechanism to purchase properties in danger of losing affordable deed restrictions.
  - Buy-down assistance program.
  - Yearly education sessions.
  - Advocacy programming.

J. Bubon suggested that updating the Housing Production Plan be added to the list of tasks.

W. Downie asked for input from the Trust in regards to the tasks. J. Bubon stated that she thinks he has set forth enough action items for the Trust to get going.

The Trust discussed collaborating with local banks for support and resources. W. Downie stated that the first sub actions would be creating a list of organizations that the Trust wants to develop relationships with.

The Trust discussed friendly 40Bs, SHI numbers, safe harbor provisions, etc.

### **Old/New Business**

Next meeting date: November 14, 2023

### **Adjourn**

**Motion: To adjourn.**

**By: W. Hersee**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: D. Trapasso**

**Vote: All in Favor (6-0)**

Meeting adjourned at 5:31 PM.

Minutes prepared by: Jeneé Lacy