

**Sturbridge Affordable Housing Trust  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, February 28, 2023**



**APPROVED**

**Present:**

Diane Trapasso  
Margaret Darling  
Wally Hersee  
Ed Goodwin  
Jamie Goodwin  
Kathy Neal  
Bob Lucier  
Judi Barrett, Housing Consultant  
Jean Bubon, Town Planner  
Robin Grimm, Town Administrator  
Jeneé Lacy, Administrative Assistant

J. Bubon called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.  
The members of the Trust introduced themselves.

**Organization of the Trust (elect Chair, Vice Chair)**

**Motion: To nominate Kathy Neal for Chair.**

**By: D. Trapasso**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Darling**

**Vote: All in Favor (7-0)**

**Motion: To nominate Wally Hersee for Vice-Chair.**

**By: M. Darling**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Goodwin**

**Vote: 2-0-2 Motion fails**

**Motion: To nominate Diane Trapasso for Vice-Chair.**

**By: K. Neal**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: B. Lucier**

**Vote: 5-0-1 Motion passes**

**Meet with Housing Consultant to discuss interests and objectives, plan of services and public participation**

J. Bubon introduced Judi Barrett to the Trust. J. Barrett gave a background on herself and her company.

J. Barrett stated that to start of the meeting she had questions about the Town that she would like everyone's input on.

- How would you describe Sturbridge to someone already in Town:
  - J. Goodwin – Quaint New England town
  - R. Grimm – Charming, historic
  - M. Darling – Everyone wants to be here
  - B. Lucier – Needs more housing, convenient for shopping, historic, Publick House, Town Common, stated that he moved back to Town after eight years.
  - K. Neal – Good schools
  - W. Hersee – Not totally residential, not totally suburban, in a transitional period
  - D. Trapasso – Good location
  - E. Goodwin – Great place to raise a family
  - J. Bubon – Community, great location, schools, amenities, events, trails
- How would you describe Sturbridge to a newcomer?
  - R. Grimm – Trails and outdoor activities
  - B. Lucier – Old Sturbridge Village
    - K. Neal – OSV events for families
    - J. Bubon – Takes mother to OSV
    - D. Trapasso – Grandkids love OSV
  - E. Goodwin – Crossroads in Sturbridge, discussed growing up in Plymouth and would hate to see Sturbridge go the same way development wise, recognizes the need for affordable housing and elderly housing
  - M. Darling – Discussed long waiting list for affordable housing.
- What Boards/Committees/Communities is everyone part of or has served on?
  - B. Lucier – Assessors, Planning Board, Veterans Agent, 40 years in real estate
  - K. Neal – School Committee, Tantasqua Committee, Finance Committee
  - J. Goodwin – Board of Selectmen, owns law firm, legal committees
  - M. Darling – Housing Partnership, COA Committee, Senior Center Building Committee
  - W. Hersee – Planning Board, CPC, Historic Committee, Housing Partnership
  - D. Trapasso – Worked in Planning Office, ARPA Committee, ZBA
  - E. Goodwin – Economic Development Committee, Conservation Commission, CPC, Sturbridge Basketball League
- What is your circle outside of Town Government?
  - E. Goodwin – Large family in Town, active liberal Democrat, business, non-profit, conservation
  - B. Lucier – Sturbridge Hills Trust Board VP
  - D. Trapasso – Family, church (St. Anne), grandkids sports & events

- W. Hersee – Retired critical care nurse, writing, photography, interest in history, family
- M. Darling – Family, church, sports enthusiast
- J. Goodwin – History, politics, family, works a lot
- K. Neal – Family, church
- R. Grimm – Penguin Plunge, Horseman's Association, farming, Center for Canines, family – husband and pack of dogs
- J. Bubon – Family caregiver, fundraising for Cancer research
- What do you hope to accomplish with this Housing Trust?
  - J. Bubon – Discussed the former Housing Partnership and the Housing Production Plan, what has worked in the past and what hasn't, and that it is important that the Trust be creative when it comes to creating housing solutions that can be accepted by the community and fit in with the character of the town.
  - K. Neal – stated that she is following in her husband's footsteps as he was on the Housing Partnership, wants to see more affordable housing in Town for young people and seniors
  - J. Goodwin – Creating a safe place for people to be ie: disabled, elderly, single parents
  - M. Darling – Safe place to live, Sturbridge is safe and should be able to offer affordable housing
  - W. Hersee – Discussed coming up with creative types of housing that will be affordable but will still feel like Sturbridge
  - D. Trapasso – Young first time home buyers need housing, hardworking people can't afford housing
  - E. Goodwin – Agreed with J. Bubon that creative solutions are needed. There wasn't enough energy in former Housing Committees, discussed finding a way to leverage builders to have a stake in affordable housing, but doesn't want to create crowded housing solutions. Wants to put energy into the effort but is not a compromiser when it comes to what he feels is important.
  - B. Lucier – Senior housing is important, discussed housing community in Spencer.
- What are some of your biggest concerns?
  - K. Neal – Needs more variety, discussed cost and size of septic's and wells, doesn't want to focus on school age families that can afford big houses, small houses for couples, elderly, and young people
  - E. Goodwin – Discussed water & sewer systems for smaller areas, stated that he is worried about small lots to add more housing
  - J. Goodwin – Discussed water & sewer, stated that they need to be open minded about housing
  - M. Darling – Discussed builders not wanting to build affordable housing because they will not make a profit.

- W. Hersee – Mobile homes used to be a great affordable option, new version of that is cluster housing or cottage housing, discussed attracting builders will be difficult unless they are open minded
- B. Lucier – Discussed State affordable housing initiatives
- J. Barrett – Discussed things other towns have done, discussed town of Easton – upgraded sewer system, saved historic buildings and created affordable housing. Housing Trusts may not have a lot of money starting out so they can focus on Community understanding and work with CPC to receive funds. Discussed Inclusive zoning – payment in lieu if builders won't put in affordable housing. Stated that working with the CPC is very important.
- Housing Production Plan Goals?
  - J. Bubon – Discussed the Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw update and also stated that the Housing Trust hasn't yet sat down as a group to go over goals.
  - J. Barrett – asked if the current Plan goals make sense and asked if there was anything anyone wanted to add or take away.
  - J. Goodwin – stated that it was too premature to discuss.
  - J. Bubon – stated that the housing forum that was held was very successful, many people came out to participate, and they received good feedback.
  - The Mill was discussed – mixed use, former attempts to develop, financing for cleanup and mitigation,
  - R. Grimm – Discussed mixed use, discussed the burden on the schools when more families move into Town, mixed use would attract people without families.
  - J. Bubon – Discussed 40B first right of refusal and how several units have been lost because they can't find people that meet the requirements. Discussed CHAPA process. Discussed affordable housing fund.
  - B. Lucier – Discussed zoning laws regarding 40Bs
- What is your personal experience with affordable housing?
  - B. Lucier – Developed housing – grants to keep housing affordable (Block grant funding)
    - J. Bubon stated that in the past they have found that the Town has not been eligible for Block Grant Funding
  - K. Neal – Worked for Southbridge, Block Grants , worked with landlords
  - J. Goodwin – As a lawyer has dealt with elderly housing issues
  - M. Darling – lives in a 40B
  - W. Hersee – has no experience personally but knows people that struggle finding affordable housing
  - D. Trapasso – has worked in the Planning Dept. with 40B permitting, also knows people who are struggling with housing
  - E. Goodwin – No experience
  - R. Grimm – Discussed housing projects she was involved in, in other Towns, blighted home flips, housing authorities, discussed public relations of housing

- J. Bubon – Has done several 40Bs, personally she has helped family members find affordable housing. Discussed call through the Planning Department of people looking for a Housing Authority and housing.
- J. Goodwin - Discussed predatory landlords in regards the disabled and elderly
- The Trust discussed people in Town struggling with housing and financially.

Bob Lucier left at 5:59 PM

- Who in Town is championing affordable housing?
  - J. Bubon – no one, the Planning Department by default
  - R. Grimm – Discussed finding qualities that appeal to the Town and get people excited about housing. Needs to appeal to everyone, we need to show that there is no agenda because we have such a varied group and it is an eclectic town.
- Who are the groups or people that we need to build relationships with to make a successful Housing Trust?
  - Stakeholder interviews
  - Community surveys
  - How to build a good education base
  - Affordable Housing Trust website

#### **Discuss Meeting Schedule**

The Trust decided to meet again on March 21<sup>st</sup> at 4:30pm and J. Bubon will review the Goals of the current Plan with the Trust to see the Trust feels the goals make sense and if there was anything the group wanted to add or take away from the list and/or change the timing of a certain goal. J. Barrett stated that she will meet with the Trust again on April 18<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm.

**Meeting adjourned at 6:24 pm**