

Medford Affordable Housing Trust
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 07, 2024, at 6:30pm

Conducted via Zoom and in person (Room 207, 2nd Floor, Medford City Hall)

Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn. Also in attendance were Trustees Kayla Lessin, Roberta Cameron, Kerri Weaver, Penelope Taylor, Lisa Sun, and Lisa Anne Davidson (present via Zoom). Also in attendance were the Office of Planning, Development & Sustainability staff Adithi Moogoor, Theresa Dupont, Danielle Evans and Derrick Seegars.

Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn welcomed the newly appointed Board of Trustees.

I. Introduction

Affordable Housing Trust Fund Overview: Ms. Moogoor gave a brief presentation on the Affordable Housing Trust, outlining its roles, responsibilities, and funding sources. Additionally, she provided an overview of Medford's housing data, including housing characteristics, affordability, subsidized housing inventory, and the Housing Production Plan.

Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn asked Trustees to introduce themselves and share their interest in affordable housing. Trustee Kayla Lessin worked for a for-profit developer, is a lawyer, and has experience working with HUD and Mass housing and development. Trustee Roberta Cameron has served on the community preservation community as the chairperson, Est. 2015. She is a planning consultant and has worked on affordable housing. Trustee Lisa Anne Davidson has been working on housing her whole career since the 90's and has worked with the Somerville homeless population. Trustee Kerri Weaver is a low-income Medford resident looking to be involved in affordable housing and giving the perspective as a renter in Medford. Trustee Penelope Taylor (Penny) is a Medford renter, involved in community organizing, founded a neighborhood organization for displaced families, and works for the city of Somerville in the Office of Housing Stability. Trustee Lisa Sun has a degree in Architecture and Urban Planning and wants to be involved in environmental justice and affordable housing. Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn was originally a renter, and now a homeowner. She wants to hear the issues of the people of her community and to do what she can to assist in making their lives better.

II. Meeting Schedule

Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn proposed that the Trust meet on the first Wednesday of each month. The Trust agreed to meet on the proposed schedule at 6:00-7:30 pm.

III. Officer Designation

Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn discussed the officer designation for the Affordable Housing Trust and outlined the roles and responsibilities of a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Clerk (optional):

- Chair: Facilitates the meeting, guides the Trusts activities and meeting agenda, makes sure agreed tasks are carried out, ensures decisions are carried out, and delegates tasks.
- Vice Chair: Vice Chair assumes the role and responsibilities of the Chair in their absence.
- Treasurer: Work with the City's Treasurer to set up a Trust fund account, maintain financial records and reports it to the Trust. The City's Treasurer will have access to the Trust's financial records and the Trust's Treasurer will act as an intermediary between the Trust and the City's Treasury Department.
- Clerk (optional): The Clerk is responsible for taking and circulating minutes, preparing agendas for meetings in consultation with the Chair, and distributing information to members. This is an optional role as the city staff will support the Trust's administrative work.

Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn requested the Trustees to think about the different officer roles and Trustees interested in taking up any of the above roles were asked to inform the city staff, Ms. Moogoor with a week or two.

Ms. Penelope Taylor wanted to know if municipal employees could serve as Treasurers. Ms. Moogoor informed that she would investigate this question and get back to the Trust.

IV. Establish Working Groups

Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn recommended the Trust to establish two working groups that can meet more than once per month to work on the following:

A. Draft the Declaration of Trust:

Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn talked about the role and importance of executing the Declaration of Trust. She suggested that the Trust can set up a working group of 1-2 trustees who can draft the Declaration. Once reviewed by the full Board, the Declaration should be reviewed by the legal counsel before recording the Declaration.

B. Develop Strategic Action Plan

Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn talked about creating an Action Plan to illustrate the Trust's goals and priorities, usually for 1–5-year period. She informed that the communities have drafted an Action Plan in-house forming a working group/ sub-committee and others have hired a consultant to draft an Action Plan. Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP- a quasi-public agency) recommended that Trust draft a 2-year Action Plan in-house with 2-3 achievable goals.

V. Finances

Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn stated that the Trust must identify funding sources to support its activities and goals. One such funding source is Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds.

CPA funding application: Ms. Dupont, the CPA Grants Manager, provided an overview of the CPA grant funding process and how CPA funds can support the trust affordable housing goals. She stated that the CPA funds can be spent on Historic resources, Open Space, Recreational Land and Community/Affordable Housing.

Below are the allowable uses for the CPA funds:

- Acquisition- The purchasing of residential property to preserve and develop affordable housing. This can involve buying existing properties, land or foreclosed homes.
- Creation- Creating and developing new affordable housing units
- Preservation- Preventing the loss of affordable housing units due to expiring restrictions or physical deterioration (i.e., to prevent a building from collapse)
- Support- Help households be able to access housing, and rental assistance
- Rehabilitation/Restoration- (May only be used for buildings originally created with CPA funds) Restore and or rehabilitate existing affordable housing units

CPA could be used to help and extend toward preserving restrictions (Deed). Any funding going to the Trust must be recorded and properly filed.

Ms. Moogor provided a status update on the CPA application and the next steps. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) put out a filing application to determine the Trust's eligibility. The preliminary form was submitted to determine the Trust eligibility for \$250,000. The full application is due on September 9, 2024.

Ms. Moogoor asked if the Trust could use CPA funds to develop an Action Plan. Ms. Roberta Cameron responded that there is a limited amount of administrative funds that can be used for activities determined by the Trust. There is no application form to request administrative funds, a direct decision made by the CPA manager or the CPC, depending on the amount we are willing to spend. Different parties help make that discretion. Hopefully, they will factor in the newness of this new Housing Trust.

Ms. Lisa Anne Davidson asked for clarification on the CPA application, and the reason for requesting \$250k from CPC. Ms. Dupont responded that a minimum of 10% of the budget is allotted for the housing category. She also mentioned that although the timing was currently difficult, the Trust needs to identify a couple of items that can be focused on in the beginning to make it work. Ms. Roberta Cameron added that, depending on availability of funds, the CPC has historically voted to reserve more than the minimum amount for affordable housing even when there wasn't an application in front of them, with the understanding that affordable housing projects typically come less frequently but requiring larger amounts of funding than other types of CPA projects.

Ms. Penelope Taylor asked when the CPA application is due, and Ms. Theresa Dupont responded that it is due on September 9th, 2024. Ms. Moogoor added that in the next meeting, which is on September 4th, the Trust could review and develop a draft for a final read. Ms. Penelope Taylor asked if the previously submitted eligibility determination form can be shared with the Trust. Ms. Dupont clarified that the eligibility form is a one-to two-page form to determine if the projects are eligible for CPA. Ms. Moogoor agreed to share the eligibility form with the Trust.

Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn asked if the Trustees had any ideas about the CPA application form. Since the CPA Application is on the agenda, the Trust could discuss ideas. We are currently reviewing city owned parcels to see what's available and exploring the idea of building affordable housing in city owned lots. Those are some of the ideas of what we could do with the \$250,000, and consultants we can hire to evaluate what our cities and towns have done and give us ideas.

Ms. Penelope Taylor inquired if a nexus study for affordable housing was conducted in Medford. Ms. Moogoor responded that Medford has an Act that allows the city to establish a linkage fee for affordable housing. Currently, Ordinance allows the city to collect a linkage fee for improving capital facilities such as parks and recreation, police, fire, water, sewer, and roads and traffic but not affordable housing. It would cost \$200k to do a nexus study to update the current linkage fee for capital improvement facilities and include affordable housing linkage. A nexus study to only include affordable housing linkage is around \$60k. The city is exploring options to cover the cost of the study. Ms. Roberta Cameron clarified that the Nexus study would not be an eligible use under CPA funding and will have to explore other funding resources. Ms. Evans added that as part of the Nexus study, the city is also interested in reviewing the current Inclusionary Housing Ordinance as the ordinance does not include fractional payments. Updating the ordinance to include fractional payments may help in funding the Trust.

Ms. Penelope Taylor asked about a study on analyzing impediments to Fair Housing outlined in the Housing Production Plan (HPP). It was mentioned in the HPP that the last study was done in 2012, and she wanted to know if there is a need for the Trust to initiate another study. Ms. Evans responded that the North Suburban Consortium (NSC-HOME) might be working on something that's regional in nature and gave a brief overview of NSC-HOME. Ms. Roberta Cameron asked about the timeline of NSC-HOME's consolidated five-year plan. Ms. Moogoor responded that the plan is to be finalized by February.

Ms. Moogoor asked if CPA funds could be used to study city owned lots for affordable housing development. Ms. Roberta Cameron clarified that the city-owned lot must be clearly defined and designated for affordable housing to qualify for CPA funds as pre-development costs for the project; otherwise, the study might be categorized under administrative funding. She also added that CPA funds cannot be used as seed money to help the Trust generate additional funds for affordable housing. Ms. Penelope Taylor asked if there was a map identifying the city owned lots. Ms. Moogoor informed that they city has identified two-three potential lots for housing development. There is an inventory of city owned lots, but the development uses of these lots have not been identified yet.

Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn reiterated that the Trustees could inform Ms. Moogoor mentioned if they are interested in a designated position, to participate in the two working groups and provide ideas for CPA funding application.

VI. Adjournment

Ms. Kayla Lessin made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Ms. Penelope Taylor. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was passed with all seven in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 7:34 pm.