

SALISBURY AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING -- SUBCOMMITTEE

JULY 25, 2024 – 10:30AM (VIA ZOOM)

Present: Mary Close Oppenheimer, Jon Higgins and Jim Dresser

Attending: Kim Fiertz

Topic: Discussion about Fundraising for Affordable Housing (AH)

M. Close Oppenheimer began by mentioning that Ms. Fiertz had asked if the Town had looked into a bond issue to raise a significant amount of money for housing. J. Higgins commented that he had spoken to Curtis Rand about having a larger item in the budget for housing, rather than the amount now and suggested that Mr. Rand was open to that idea. J. Dresser commented that the Town has significant bonding capacity, a good rating and has strong finances; funding could be requested at a Town Meeting. J. Higgins suggested there should be on-going fundraising, even if not for a specific project. M. Close Oppenheimer mentioned costs associated with the development of the Pope property; J. Dresser mentioned the pre-development costs. J. Dresser suggested that other ideas and options need to be explored, before going to a Town Meeting, such as conveyance fees. J. Higgins pointed out that there would need to be an Ordinance for such fees. M. Close Oppenheimer shared some articles about fundraising efforts in other towns in CT and had been in touch with Jocelyn Ayer about such efforts; Ms. Ayer was not aware of anything like that being done in our regional towns. A possible fee on short-term rentals was discussed briefly, as well as how even some allocated funds can be difficult to access, if not approved specifically for AH at town meetings. Kim Fiertz asked M. Close Oppenheimer about the fees for short-term rentals and how to accomplish that. J. Higgins answered that it could be a permit fee done through Planning & Zoning or a Town Ordinance. J. Dresser commented that there is a business tax on equipment used in known short-term rentals, but there are no fees. There was some discussion about how short-term rentals are handled in Great Barrington. J. Dresser pointed out that none of that is directly related to providing AH and wondered how their regulations are being enforced. J. Higgins suggested that charging fees won't generate the kind of money needed for AH and that there hasn't been enough of a problem with short-term rentals in the past for the need to regulate them. M. Close Oppenheimer suggested that they will need to go the BOS about the conveyance fee idea; J. Dresser would like to know more about how those fees are used in towns that do have them before going to the Board of Finance or the BOS here. More up-to-date research about what other CT towns are doing is needed; M. Close Oppenheimer will reach out to David Rich and David Berto for updated info. Ms. Fiertz asked if there was any information about public/private ventures, such as in Great Barrington. J. Dresser noted that this Subcommittee should focus on finding alternative sources of funding, beyond fundraising campaigns. Ms. Fiertz asked if private donations would impede or help some AH projects, such as Dresser Woods; J. Dresser expressed that donations are always welcome, to help offset costs and lessen the amount of State grant applications. There was further discussion about public/private

ventures. M. Close Oppenheimer will continue to explore what other towns are doing. J. Higgins will talk to Curtis Rand again about increasing funding for AH. Ms. Fiertz was thanked for her fundraising efforts.