

**Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust**  
Teleconference

June 10, 2020

HAHT Members Present: Chair Russ Tanzer, Rosemary Kennedy, William Massos, Marnie Crouch, and David Smith

Other Town Staff Present: Director of Planning & Inspections Patrick Reffett

Town Manager: Joe Domelowicz

*\*This meeting was teleconferenced via Zoom with all of the above participants remaining at home.*

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Chair Russ Tanzer opened the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT) online meeting at 6:05 p.m. with a quorum present and took roll call. The full board was present; Town Manager Joe Domelowicz was also present.

REVIEW/ APPROVE MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 4

Marnie Crouch made an edit to her statement on page 2 that read that “the Town may or may not have a malpractice claim against the first Habitat attorney.” It should read: “Habitat may or may not have malpractice claim against the first Habitat attorney.” Mr. Tanzer had another edit: a reference to the Asbury Street homes as “condo units.” Mr. Tanzer stated that the word “condo” needs to be removed.”

Mr. Tanzer made a motion to accept the minutes with the edits. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with “ayes” from Mr. Tanzer, Ms. Crouch, Mr. Massos, Mr. Smith, and Ms. Kennedy, (5-0) unanimous.

Mr. Tanzer said he is stepping down from his post as Chair, effective this evening, and is leaving Hamilton to move to Albuquerque, NM, at the end of the month.

UPDATE OF GCTS TASK FORCE HOUSING DISCUSSION

In addition to being a HAHT member and the Board of Health chair, David Smith heads the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (GCTS) Task Force. Speaking in this capacity, he said he thought the GCTS Task Force had made excellent progress toward its objective [obtaining a P.I.L.O.T. (payment in lieu of taxes) arrangement with GCTS] before the coronavirus put things on hold. He said he would reach out to GCTS to resume the relationship most likely with a Zoom meeting in July. Two questions remain: the first concerns the 20-acre parcel abutting Bridge Street that the Planning Board approved as an

ANR (Approval Not Required) parcel. If sold to a private party, the 20 acres would go from being non-taxable to taxable. The second question is whether some affordable housing may be created out of some of the underutilized residences on the campus. Concerning the latter, Ms. Crouch asked who would own the units. Mr. Smith said it was a good question as the Town does not have the financial wherewithal to buy them; a third party developer would need to buy the units and transform them. While the Town would not own the units, they would count toward the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). Ms. Crouch asked how many units were there. A ballpark number of 50 was given.

Mr. Massos asked if Harborlight Community Partners had expressed interest. Mr. Smith said yes; however, the Seminary would have an obligation to go with the best deal. There was a discussion about whether units on campus could also be considered for market-rate housing. Ms. Crouch pointed out the Seminary hadn't put any commitment to any affordable housing in writing. Mr. Massos noted he didn't think dormitories could be used as market-rate housing without having them re-permitted, which would give Town boards (such as the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals) some leverage. Another option for GCTS would be to sell off some of the property through the Great Estates bylaw. Mr. Smith said anything is possible, but in practical terms, the Town holds the cards as far as the options. Ms. Kennedy cautioned against saying the Town holds the cards. Mr. Smith clarified that it is a negotiation and said so far GCTS has been sympathetic to the Town's concerns. While he said nothing can be guaranteed, he remains optimistic.

Mr. Tanzer said GCTS understands its obligations to the Town, but on the other side of the coin, has a huge financial responsibility to the folks who work there. GCTS world headquarters are in Hamilton and it would like to stay. He said there are two buildings side by side and well-suited for family housing and one- and two-bedroom units. They would need to be made handicap-accessible. One advantage is there is an existing separate entrance. Ms. Kennedy asked if the apartments were now inhabited. Mr. Tanzer said yes, at 60%. He said their appearance (if renovated) would not be that much different from what they looked like three years ago when fully inhabited. He said he had a good feeling about the conversation with the Seminary. While the conversations were always pleasant, he said he did not have the feeling they are as productive as they are now.

Anna Siedzic, 227 Highland St., asked if there was a need for more Task Force volunteers as she knows someone currently living at the Seminary who might like to become involved. Mr. Domelowicz said the group was supposed to sunset last year, but he continued it for another year. He said he would check if there were a need and let her know.

Mr. Tanzer said the SRO (single room only) units on the campus are not being considered as part of the discussion with the Seminary. He said the most specific he can be is that Buildings A and B are two masonry structures that are at 90 degree angles to each other. GCTS representatives have said they would prefer the buildings not generate a lot of traffic through the campus. Any purchaser of the buildings would have to contribute toward the septic system and its maintenance. Ms. Crouch asked if the college had supplied any kind of unofficial appraisal of the acreage with the units. Mr. Smith said the Seminary had begun to think along these lines before the pandemic hit.

Mr. Tanzer said there are 213 housing units on the property and GCTS representatives have said if the Seminary is to have headquarters in Hamilton, it needs to have 80 of the units. He doesn't know what type of units that includes (SROs, one-bedrooms or twos, etc.).

Mr. Domelowicz said at this point, GCTS is openly discussing its plans and sharing the information, which it does not have to do. Mr. Tanzer said he felt that had to do with Mr. Smith's kind manner and approach as the face of the Task Force.

Bob Curry, 713 Bay Road, said he remembered the campus when it was a Carmelite seminary before the residences and huge septic system were built. He said it sounds like the Task Force was on the right track; although the process won't be quick, he thinks the Task Force should be applauded.

#### DISCUSS/ APPOINT NEW CHAIR PERSON. RUSS TANZER STEPPING DOWN AS CHAIR (RETIREMENT)

Mr. Tanzer spoke about his pending departure and move west. He said his four years on the Trust had been interesting and he felt the Trust was in a great spot with members engaged and thoughtful and doing the right thing. He cited good things happening with the current Willow Street and Habitat for Humanity projects, as well as at Gordon-Conwell. He brought up Mr. Massos and Ms. Crouch as potential replacements. He thought Mr. Smith had too much on his plate. Ms. Kennedy cannot be considered because she is a Selectmen as well as the BOS liaison to the Trust. He said the HAHT will need to add an additional member when he leaves as the Trust is a five-member board. During the past year, the composition was changed; Mr. Domelowicz's status changed from being a voting member to an advisory role. Mr. Tanzer said in his view, the new member needs to be someone thoughtful and committed; someone who might not know all about affordable housing, but has committed to learning, listening, and being involved; someone kind-hearted and not spiteful. Part of the criteria is that the member needs to be a Hamilton resident. He complimented and thanked Ms. Crouch and Mr. Massos, as well as the other board members. He asked Mr. Massos if he would take on the position of interim chair. Ms. Kennedy questioned whether a resigning member should be making the decision. Mr. Tanzer said that is what happened when he became chair; the nomination came from the departing chair.

Ms. Siedzik asked if the vacancy would trigger the BOS policy on board appointments. Mr. Domelowicz said yes; the policy is that the BOS announces the position twice at two of its meetings and people apply.

Mr. Massos asked if a new member would be added right away. Mr. Tanzer said at a minimum the HAHT needed to choose an interim chair and figure out where to go from there. Mr. Massos said he would be willing to step in as interim chair, but wondered if the board could get someone to help him work with coordinating the inner workings of the Town.

Mr. Domelowicz shared news he thought would be helpful to Mr. Massos. He said he is preparing an offer letter for a man whom he said had lots of energy as well as a master's degree in Public Administration who will replace his assistant Michellelee Carroll and assume many of the duties formerly handled by Coordinator Dorr Fox. He said the new person will function as a grant manager, as well, and will start July 1.

Mr. Tanzer commented on things he thought the Trust may want to focus on. One was better communication with the BOS. Also he brought up the Host Community Agreement regarding Harborlight Community Partners and Habitat for Humanity, saying the HAHT was never privy to that document, which was originally crafted by BOS. He said the Trust was left out of that conversation. Ms. Kennedy said it had only been in existence a couple of years. Mr. Tanzer said it was at least three years old, maybe longer, and the idea behind the agreement was to show the Department of Housing and Community Development that the Trust is working to try to create relationships with potential developers working on the same team to do the right thing for the community.

Ms. Kennedy said in light of the fact that this is an interim position, she wanted to nominate Ms. Crouch as interim chair, saying Ms. Crouch has time, energy, legal experience, and interest necessary. Mr. Tanzer asked Ms. Crouch if she were up for the task. She said yes, with the condition Mr. Tanzer would grant her what is typically known as an exit interview. Also, it was her understanding that every other member's term would be expiring June 30 and they will have to decide whether to re-up. Mr. Tanzer said he was delighted she was willing to take on the role and would be glad to chat with her before he leaves as well as afterward.

**Decision:**

Ms. Kennedy made a motion that Ms. Crouch be appointed HAHT interim chair. Mr. Tanzer seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with "ayes" from Ms. Kennedy, Mr. Tanzer, Mr. Smith, Mr. Massos, and Ms. Crouch, (5-0) unanimous.

Ms. Crouch said she had not wanted to usurp Mr. Massos' role as interim chair if he had wanted the position. He said he thought she would be better at some of the mechanics and is happy to have her be chair. He said he would be there to help her.

Mr. Smith proposed another "motion"—that the HAHT thank Mr. Tanzer for the wonderful service he has given to the community and wish him the best of luck in his new home in Albuquerque. Mr. Kennedy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with "ayes" from Mr. Smith, Ms. Crouch, Mr. Kennedy, and Mr. Massos, (4-0) unanimous.

Mr. Curry, 713 Bay Road, commented that Mr. Tanzer had brought openness and honesty to his role as chair and that he "helped the Town help us all." He thanked him for his service.

Ms. Siedzik said, speaking on behalf of the Hamilton Affordable Housing Advocates group, that Mr. Tanzer had taken heat and been diplomatic with a sense of humor. She said he had been steady and great example of leadership under fire.

NEW BUSINESS

Thursday, July 30, 2020, was set as the date of the next meeting. Mr. Domelowicz said he will set up a time for his new assistant to meet with Ms. Crouch and help her with the agenda.

Mr. Tanzer thanked everybody for the good wishes.

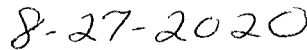
MEETING CLOSED (ADJOURNMENT)

Mr. Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 p.m. Ms. Kennedy seconded the motion. A roll vote was taken with "ayes" from Mr. Smith, Mr. Massos, Ms. Kennedy and new Chair Ms. Crouch, (4-0) unanimous.

Prepared by:



Mary Alice Cookson  
Minutes Secretary



Date

