

**MINUTES OF THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST  
FUND BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING ON  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2021, AT 4:00 PM EDT  
THROUGH A WEB AND PHONE MEETING**

Present for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board of Trustees: Ralph Blessing (Chair), Ellen Bromley, Frances Lane, and David Mannis.

Present for staff: Emily Gordon, Acting Community Development Director/Planning Analyst.

Chairman Blessing called the meeting to order at 4:06pm.

Chairman Blessing stated that this meeting is being conducted through “Zoom” video conference. He then gave instructions on how the meeting will be run and described the meeting information and access via weblink or dial-in instructions could be found on the meeting agenda posted on the City of Stamford’s website.

Chairman Blessing then provided an overview of the planned meeting agenda.

**1. Approval of Minutes (for July 20, 2021 meeting):**

Since only four Trustees were present, the Board did not have a quorum. Approval of Minutes from July 20, 2021 will be taken up at the next meeting.

**2. Housing Affordability Plan Discussion with HR&A:**

The City of Stamford is completing a Housing Affordability Plan with consultant HR&A, as required every five years through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund ordinance. As part of the study process a Community Advisory Committee was formed including all current members of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund along with other members of the Stamford community. Mr. Phillip Kash and Ms. Christiana Whitcomb from HR&A lead the discussion.

The following was discussed:

- The Trust is likely the most important tool relative to subsidy.
- The Ordinance is broad enough so funding from other sources could expand the Trust Fund if there was interest, including municipal capital funds, federal funds, grant funds, etc.
- In the past the small amount of fee-in-lieu dollars available have been leveraged by other sources and used as gap funding.
- Without more funding there is likely not enough money to support new programs.
- Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis and once the funds hit \$3 million the Board will put out a NOFA that may provide more specific criteria.
- Some Trustees feel strongly that fund should be used to develop new housing units, others believe there should be a balance between new construction and preservation to maintain total number of affordable units and improve quality of life for current residents.

- The cost of building a new unit is about three or four times more expensive than preserving an existing affordable unit.
- The Trustees have mostly been working on Policies & Procedures and are awaiting the Housing Affordability Plan to identify priorities.
- Decisions about priorities for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund may take into consideration priorities of the new administration.
- The Housing Plan will include recommendations for specific tools, implementation approaches, potential for new funding sources, priorities, tradeoffs, and governance considerations.

3. **Communication from Nydia Brown** (Executive Director of Neighborhood Housing Services of Stamford, Inc.) **regarding damage to affordable housing stock from storms Henri and Ida**

After storms Henri and Ida flooding impacted many building owners including affordable housing providers like Neighborhood Housing Services of Stamford, Inc. Ms. Nydia Brown joined the discussion to provide more information about the impact of the storms on her organization's properties.

Neighborhood Housing Services of Stamford, Inc. (NHS) has been serving in-need residents in various Stamford neighborhoods since 1982 and operates a rooming house at 13 Woodland Avenue that serves 14 homeless residents. After storms Henri and Ida three feet of water flooded the basement likely putting two boilers and two water heaters out of commission. NHS may reach out to the Engineering Department on the drainage issue, since it is not currently connected to the main line causing the parking lot to remain flooded. An estimate is still needed for replacing the equipment, but it is expected to be at least \$50,000.

NHS is interested in funding from the City through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund or other channels to cover at least part of the replacement costs. Unfortunately the Board does not currently have the Policies & Procedures set, although the Board could consider expediting this processes to consider funding the project. Its likely Community Development or recent FEMA funding could be used to fund the project as well. The Board would need more information about the scope and estimates to take the project up for consideration in the future.

4. **Review of Policies and Procedures to be adopted by the Board of Trustees**

Tabled until the next meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Board informally adjourned at 5:01pm.

**NOTE:** These proceedings were recorded on video and are available for viewing through the City of Stamford's web page – [www.stamfordct.gov](http://www.stamfordct.gov).