

# Meeting Notes

## Small Town Housing Working Group



**Date:** March 15, 2022

**Time:** 5:30-7:00PM

**Location:** Remote

**Notetaker:** Jen Audley, [jaudley@frcog.org](mailto:jaudley@frcog.org) (413)774-3167 (ext. 126)

**Attending:** Alyssa Larose (RDI/FCHRA and Greenfield), Barbara Carulli (Leverett Affordable Housing Trust), David Greenberg (Colrain and Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution (FCCPR)), Mary McClintock (Community Action and Conway), Susan Worgaftik (Greenfield CPA Committee and Housing Greenfield), Jerry Lund (Leyden, Boards of CHCFC and FRPB (of FRCOG), CABs of HCS-MA (Franklin rep.) and HCRC, parent w/ daughter struggling w/ OUD, OTF activist), MJ Adams (Greenfield Community and Economic Development Director), Mike Shaffer (Erving Planning Board), Alec Wade (Orange Economic Development Director), Hannah Davis (Whately Asst Town Administrator and Economic Development Director), Lili Dwight (Deerfield), Jen Audley (FRCOG and Montague)

**Presenters:** Christine Madore, Mass Housing Partnership, Alyssa Larose (FCHRA/RDI)

## Housing News, Announcements, and Community Updates

### \* MHP's Complete Neighborhood Initiative

This Massachusetts Housing Partnership program, which aims to improve multi-modal connectivity between neighborhoods in the Commonwealth, held a kickoff workshop about the current funding opportunity on March 10 and is accepting applications until April 15. <https://conta.cc/3CEI9H0> and <https://www.mhp.net/community/complete-neighborhoods-initiative>

At this meeting, Christine Madore, Senior Development Manager at MHP, described the program goals and MHP's interest in receiving regional applications and in working with communities that have limited public transit.

Alyssa Larose is working with a group of municipalities to develop a regional application. Meeting scheduled for March 17 at noon. MJ Adams suggests that towns along the east/west Route 2 could be a natural grouping; at this meeting the case was made for a north/south cluster along I-91, as well,

with interest in participating expressed by Hannah Davis (Whately) and Lili Dwight (Deerfield) Alyssa welcomes all who are interested to reach out to her and will extend invite to 3/17 meeting to all in attendance. [alarose@fcrhra.org](mailto:alarose@fcrhra.org)

**\* MassHousing Neighborhood Stabilization Program**

Alyssa Larose briefly described this opportunity, which is focused on making investments in deteriorated housing so those units can become livable again. The deadline for the current application window is April 28, 2022. <https://www.masshousing.com/programs-outreach/neighborhood-stabilization-program>

**\* Habitat for Humanity project in Conway**

Megan McDonough and MJ Adams provided information about the opportunity to apply for a new 3-bedroom home to be built in Conway, in Mary McClintock's neighborhood. Info sessions being held March-May; applications due May 11. [Become a Habitat Homeowner! | Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity \(pvhabitat.org\)](https://www.pvhabitat.org)

**\* Leverett**

Barbara Carulli reported progress on locating sites for potential development of affordable housing on land owned by the Cows family on Montague Road. DLTA funds will be used for feasibility and due diligence.

Jerry Lund and Mary McClintock observed that zoning allowing for backlot development might apply here. Leyden modelled its backlot bylaw on Buckland's. Link to Conway zoning bylaws: <https://townofconway.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Zoning-Bylaws-06-05-21.pdf>

**CHAPA "Making the Case" Resources**

Mary McClintock recommended CHAPA's monthly "Making the Case" meetings as an excellent way to develop housing advocacy messages and skills. She has been attending these regularly and is happy to share notes and materials. [mmclintock@communityaction.us](mailto:mmclintock@communityaction.us)

These statewide meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month, 12-1:30PM, online, and are intended for anyone who is engaged in advocacy around affordable housing. Contact Dana LeWinter for more information: [dlewinter@chapa.org](mailto:dlewinter@chapa.org)

## Deerfield

Lili Dwight expressed concern about losing ground when restrictions that create affordable housing expire. Alyssa Larose said that HRA has reached out to the owners of the existing affordable housing in Deerfield about options to keep it affordable, and offered to follow up offline.

## ARPA funding for housing – State and local uses

Alyssa Larose gave an overview, drawing on resources from CHAPA, of the opportunity municipalities have to allocate a portion of their ARPA funds for affordable housing development. This is approved uses of these funds. However, under the recently released “Final Rule,” all of the municipalities in Franklin County have the option to use these funds for “any governmental purpose.”

There was discussion about municipal and regional housing trusts and also land trusts. David Greenberg is working with a group of people on a land trust initiative. The enabling legislation for housing trusts in MA would need to be expanded to enable a regional housing trust; that would likely be a lengthy process but might be well worth it if it led to more collaboration and pooling of resources in our area.

Housing Greenfield had MHP present on municipal housing trusts at their March 14 meeting; Susan Worgaftik offered to share the materials. [Suworg1@gmail.com](mailto:Suworg1@gmail.com)

Jerry Lund observed that the Windham and Windsor Housing Trust in southern Vermont has been able to develop much-needed transitional housing quickly and provides inspiration for what we could do here. <https://www.homemattershere.org/>

On 3/16 Alyssa Larose sent a follow-up message to the attendees RE the regional municipal housing trust concept that came up at the end of the meeting.

“I want to clarify that this idea does not conflict with a Community Land Trust, our region can have both. For example, Amherst has both a Community Land Trust and a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust. They serve different purposes and roles. From my perspective, a regional version of a municipal affordable housing trust has the following characteristics:

1. It is a governmental entity (a CLT is a non-profit)
2. It would serve as a pooled source of municipal funds that could support a myriad of affordable housing efforts, including CLT projects

3. A municipal affordable housing trust requires a min. of 5 board members. In contrast, a regional housing trust could be set up to have one representative from each participating community, lessening the burden on our towns that are already stretched thin for volunteers.

I'm excited to learn more about the current CLT effort, and to dig into the regional municipal housing trust idea deeper. Again, from my perspective, we need affordable housing across our region, at a variety of scales and affordability levels. There is room for multiple entities that are supporting this in different ways. A regional approach to municipal affordable housing trusts could benefit a CLT and other non-profits like RDI and Habitat that are building affordable housing in our communities."

## **Sanderson Place – new affordable senior housing in Sunderland**

Alyssa Larose gave an overview of process and updates on construction and upcoming marketing of apartments. Slides: <https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/RDI-ARPA-and-Sanderson-Senior-Housing-for-STHWG-3-15-2022.pdf>

This project started in 2014, when the town purchased the property at 120 N. Main Street with CPA funds. In 2017 RDI was chosen as developer, with Valley CDC as project manager. Construction started in March 2021, and lease up is anticipated for Fall 2022.

The project includes 33 units, all affordable based on 30%, 50%, and 60% Area Median Income (AMI). New income limits are coming in April, which will be used to determine household income eligibility for the initial lease up. The head of household must be age 62 or older. There are no asset limits, but assets do get calculated as part of income. It is possible for a senior to sell a home and still qualify for the apartments. Discussion followed. Alyssa will provide additional information on assets and how they are calculated.

## **Upcoming Meetings**

This group generally meets 4x/year, which puts our next meeting in June. We will avoid the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the month, as there are several other housing-related groups that now meet then. We will schedule the June meeting for Wed or Thurs to accommodate the folks who cannot do Tuesdays. Jen will orchestrate the scheduling of the June meeting by email.

## Agenda

Time	Agenda Item	Presenter
5:30 pm	1. Introductions	Group
5:35 pm	2. Housing News, Announcements, and Community Updates, including: * MHP's Complete Neighborhood Initiative * MassHousing Neighborhood Stabilization Program * Habitat for Humanity project in Conway	Group
5:55 pm	3. ARPA funding for housing – State and local uses	Alyssa Larose, FCRHRA/RDI
6:10 pm	4. Sanderson Place affordable senior housing – overview of process, update on construction and upcoming marketing of apartments	Alyssa Larose, FCRHRA/RDI
6:55 pm	5. Upcoming Meetings: Schedule, Agenda	Group
7:00 pm	6. Adjourn	Group

## ADDITIONAL MEETING INFORMATION

### Information Regarding Meeting Accessibility

FRCOG meetings are conducted in accessible locations, and materials can be provided in accessible formats and in languages other than English. To request accessibility or language accommodation, please contact FRCOG at 413-774-3167 (voice) (MA Relay System: 800-439-2370), 413-774-3169 (fax), or [mrhodes@frcog.org](mailto:mrhodes@frcog.org) (e-mail). FRCOG has posted information for the public regarding its Title VI obligations and protections against discrimination afforded to the public by Title VI on the website [www.frcog.org](http://www.frcog.org)

