

# Mtn. Lakes Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

## Meeting Minutes

February 27, 2020

**Member present:** Mitchell Stern, Borough Manager; Bob Oostdyk, Borough Attorney; Marty Kane, Planning Board chair; Kelly Holliday, Planning Board member; Sandy Batty, Community Member; Blair Schleicher Bravo, Community Member and Committee Chair; Mayor David Shepherd; Dan Happer and Cynthia Korman-Council Members.

**Public:** George Jackson, Meghan Leininger, Planning Board Member

**Guest:** Randy Gottesman, President, CGP&H

1. **Meeting Minutes** The minutes of the December 11, 2019 meeting were approved with the correction in section 5, last sentence: "She will share documentation from the League meeting." The minutes of the January 8, 2020 meeting were approved as written.
2. **Borough Affordable Housing Status** Cynthia gave an update on affordable housing in Mountain Lakes. Randy confirmed that he has a copy of Mountain Lakes' settlement agreement. She mentioned that the provision for five accessory apartments fits in with the historic character of the Borough. Some existing apartments exist in town, which might be grandfathered or might be nonconforming.
3. **Discussion with CGP&H on the development and implementation of a robust accessory apartment program in Mtn. Lakes**  
Randy described the process he will follow to implement the Borough's accessory apartment program:
  - A. He will first create a manual. As the process is home rule, the Borough will be able to decide how to implement many of the program's aspects.
  - B. Next, CGP&H will market the program to potential landlords through email blasts, articles in local newspapers, a mayor's letter and other local venues. Blair mentioned that presentations to the general public and/or to civic groups have worked well in Mountain Lakes in the past.
  - C. The accessory apartments should be treated like any other construction, with the normal permit process. If the unit is pre-existing, the Borough doesn't have to pay subsidy. If new, the State regulations require the Borough to subsidize. Cynthia mentioned that the Committee and Council have discussed paying a landlord a small subsidy to cover improvements to an existing apartment, such as a fire wall between residences. Randy mentioned that a landlord will have an incentive to turn a non-conforming apartment into an affordable one as it would then conform with our zoning.
  - D. CGP&H will then market the apartments to potential tenants, according to the State affirmative marketing requirements and our ordinance. The first unit will be marketed and then a waiting list will be created for subsequent units as they come on line. CGP&H will match

income level and family size, with the size of the affordable units. Normal apartment restrictions can apply, such as no pets and no smoking.

- E. If an existing tenant is in a unit that is being converted to affordable, the tenant can stay, but the 10-year deed restriction doesn't start until a new income-qualified tenant moves in. The deed restriction runs with the land. If a property with an affordable apartment is sold, the restriction continues. Randy distributed a sheet of typical rents for our region. The Borough might be able to negotiate for longer deed restriction if it gives a higher subsidy.
- F. The Borough will check in 2025 to see where we stand regarding very low-income apartments. Perhaps the Medicaid beds in Sunrise assisted living can qualify.
- G. CGP&H will review the lease or provide a standard lease. The Borough will need to decide how to handle vacancies when they occur.
- H. Potential tenants must file a pre-application to get on the wait list. Position on the wait list is randomized, rather than first come, first serve. As apartments become available, CGP&H will review applicants for income eligibility – requesting detailed documentation like tax records, etc. After an applicant is selected, annual income reviews are not required.
- I. CGP&H will create a page of information regarding the apartments on the Borough website, giving interested individuals a contact for further information.

**4. Next Stenos**

- CPG&H will draft manual. The AHAC will review.
- Council Discussion Accessory Apartments policy and procedures Item – March 2020
- First reading- April 2020
- Resolution to adopt - May 2020

Cynthia suggested that CGP&H do FAQs for the Borough website. The committee expressed concern that it's too early and that they should be done when program detail is more defined. Most of the questions can be answered by going to the "Affordable Homes" website.

**Next meeting- March 11, 2020 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Sandy Batty