

**Mtn. Lakes Affordable Housing Advisory Committee Meeting
March 8, 2024 Minutes**

Committee members present: Bob Oostdyk, Borough Attorney; Sandy Batty, Community Member; Sueanne Sylvester, Community Member and HPC Liaison; Tom Chiang, Community Member and Chair; Steve Castellucci, Alternate Member #1; Cynthia Korman, Khizar Sheikh – Council Members.

Erin Stankiewicz, CGP&H

The Minutes of the February Meeting were approved as written.

Discussion on proposed legislation

Tom introduced Erin Stankiewicz, representing CGP&H, our Administrative Agent. She has recently been given responsibility for Mountain Lakes. She gave her perspective on the pending affordable housing legislation that will establish how the fourth round of affordable housing will be handled. It abolishes COAH and sets up an affordable housing dispute resolution program in the Department of Community Affairs. It gives dates for when new municipal obligation numbers will be set, and the deadline for municipalities to adopt them. Numbers will be decided on regional need. At this point, we are not sure how vacant land adjustments will be affected. If a town adopts its fourth round plan, then it will get immunity from builder's remedies. Some bonus credits have changed, for example, age-related numbers have increased. Erin is hoping some allowances will increase, like the cost of utilities that helps to establish the maximum rental pricing.

Erin said Mountain Lakes is doing well as it has made a good faith effort to achieve its obligation. ML did this by adopting resolutions and zoning to allow for affordable housing. CGP&H has completed and submitted our annual report for 2022 and 2023.

Bob said the affordable housing bill is in the State Senate now and some proposed amendments will accommodate the Highlands resources. Our planner will follow this and develop the plan accordingly. Other amendments have been proposed, including one to reinstate regional contribution agreements. Khizar asked Bob to let the Borough Council know if he learns there are any amendments that would be affect ML, such as changes in calculating our vacant land adjustment.

Mountain Lakes has found it difficult to get landlords for our accessory apartment program. Erin said that allowable rents change because the calculation changes depending on what utilities are included. Erin can give us proposed rent amounts for this year as an indication. The deed restriction must be 10 years. Right now, owners don't have any input into who rents and lives in their home per (UHAC) Affirmative marketing requirements. Selection off the waiting list is made on a random basis. CGP&H establishes the waiting list and if an apartment becomes available, CGP&H would draw the name of an applicant and make sure that they meet the pre-qualification. The landlord can run a credit check and other checks as long as they meet the fair

housing laws. There can be no discrimination on gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc. The lease can have some restrictions that would be in a regular tenant-landlord agreement. The proposed legislation doesn't change it. Anybody can own an apartment – nonprofits, private owner, or other. This could be a burden on homeowner if they have to pay for the administrative agent fee (Could be as high \$1800/year) but perhaps town could pay this fee. CGP&H will be sending quarterly updates on their activities.

4. Discussion - State Funding

Cynthia said there was possible State Funding for Accessory Dwelling Units through the Governor's proposed part of the State budget, giving ADU funding - \$100,000 per unit. The apartment owners would still have to rent a person who they probably don't know.

5. Old Business

Steve contacted the agent for owners of old animal hospital, but hasn't gotten a reply.

6. Meeting adjourned. Next Meeting- April 12 2024, 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 am