

## Affordable Housing Board Meeting

April 19, 2012

The following are the minutes of the Affordable Housing Board meeting, which was held on Thursday, April 19, 2012 in the Community Development Conference Room, located in the Lawrence Township Municipal Building.

### Statement of Proper Notice

Adequate notice of the regular meeting of the Lawrence Township Affordable Housing Board has been provided by filing an annual meeting schedule with the Municipal Clerk, and by filing the agenda with the Municipal Clerk, posting prominently in the Municipal Building, and mailing to the Trenton Times, the Trentonian and the Lawrence Ledger.

Present: Peter Ferrone, John Masso, Susan McCloskey, Kevin VanHise

Absent: Walker Ristau, James Kownacki, Council Liaison

Excused Absence: William Capell, Jean Washington, J. Andrew Link, Principal Planner

Also Present: Susan Snook, Secretary

### Approval of Minutes:

The February 16, 2012 minutes were approved as amended by unanimous vote.

### Public Comment:

None

### Allocation of Trust Funds:

Back in 2008 they passed a statute called Roberts Bill and there was a small revision that stated "monies that you collected and deposited in your Affordable Housing Trust Fund must be expended within 4 years or you lose them", if the money is not spent, the State will take these monies and use them for Affordable Housing purposes within the housing region.

It is now 2012 and the Supreme Court has not given any guidance on what the obligations are and towns are sitting on the trust funds waiting for something to do; the State has provided no guidance and the agency in charge of setting up the standards, which was part of the Community Affairs, which were working on the guidance to give to the towns on what the language of what the statute meant, then COAH was never supposed to be abolished and therefore was not to be under the Department of Community Affairs; so COAH was put back.

So there is no guidance and it is up in the air whether COAH has been re-instated or whether there is still Community Affairs because the Governor is going to appeal the Appellate decision. Lawrence has over \$900,000 in the trust fund; so the town is trying to figure out a way to preserve these funds. Lawrence is trying to look at ways to extend the expiring controls; looking at trying to fund programs that make them available on sale units.

One of the problems is there is language in the statute that says a municipality must spend or commit to expend in a four year period. However, it is not defined on commit to expend. The Township has ideas, so Lawrence had COAH approval since 2009 and one of the things to use the trust fund on is to extent expire and control so if there is a for sale unit and wants to sell their unit and controls coming off in 4 or 5 years, the Township considering the controls or another 20 – 30 years; the Township can't get a paper trail until that units comes up, so there is a program in mind.

One example is in Princeton, when a unit goes in foreclosure, Princeton purchases the unit, paints it and sells the unit; so the old money went out and then the new money came in. If the unit goes into foreclosure, we could lose the unit anyway, so if you can get control, buy the unit, the money goes out the door and new money comes in.

Lawrence is a good position, we have COAH approval for the spending plan and COAH's rules are money goes into your trust fund, you have to submit a plan on how much revenue you think you are going to get in a 10 year period; how you think you are going to spend it. At present, it is not sure if it is COAH or Department of Community Affairs; so spending plans are not getting approved.

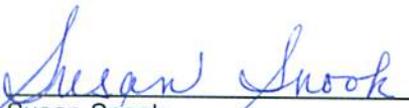
**Status of Changes at State Level:**

There are no changes at the State Level, which includes no court date yet for what the Department will be called.

**Other Business:**

None

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m. The next meeting will be held on May 17, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.

  
Susan Snook  
Secretary

SJS

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