Malden Affordable Housing Trust Fund
Meeting Minutes
April 15, 2020 – 4:00 PM

Trustees
Mayor Gary Christenson
Steve Finn
Angie Liou
Catherine Price
Roxanne Reddington-Wilde
Brian Slater
Councillor-at-large Stephen Winslow

New Business:

1. Call to Order
Mayor Christenson called the meeting to order at 4:13 PM.

Mayor Christenson read the following remote meeting notice into the record:

In accordance with Governor Baker’s 3/12/20 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor’s 3/23/20 Revised Guidance on Order by the Governor Prohibiting Assemblage of More than Ten People, this meeting will be conducted via remote participation. In person attendance by members of the public is prohibited, and all effort will be made to permit public attendance of this meeting, in the manner specified below, via remote access by internet, telephone, and if available via public broadcast of the meeting by Malden Access Cable Television on public access television channels. Public access will also be provided by posting draft minutes, and/or a transcript, recording, or record of the meeting on the City of Malden website at cityofmalden.org as soon as practicable after the meeting. Additional information/guidelines for the public can be found here:

Members of the public who wish to attend remotely can do so using the following information:
Please click the link below to join the webinar:
https://zoom.us/j/9583113104?pwd=UDBjOGdFdB4OTVXWVVM1M2a3VYUT09
Password: MAHTF20

Or iPhone one-tap:
Evan Spetrini called the roll
- Trustees Present: Mayor Gary Christenson, Steve Finn, Angie Liou, Catherine Price, Roxanne Reddington-Wilde, Brian Slater, Councillor-at-large Stephen Winslow
- Others Present: Evan Spetrini, Shelly Goehring

2. Introductions
Each of the trustees introduced themselves. Steve Finn is the Executive Director of the Malden Housing Authority. Angie Liou is the Executive Director of the Asian Community Development Corporation (ACDC), an affordable housing developer with properties in Chinatown and Quincy and runs youth leadership and first-time homebuyer’s programs in Malden. Catherine Price is a life-long Maldonian and affordable housing resident. Roxanne Reddington-Wilde runs the fuel assistance program for Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) and has a strong background in public benefits and foreclosure prevention. Brian Slater is a Senior Vice President at East Boston Savings Bank where he directs a team solely focused on affordable housing projects. Steve Winslow is a Councillor-at-Large in the Malden City Council.

3. Role of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund – Presentation by the Massachusetts Housing Partnership
Shelly Goehring of the Massachusetts Housing Partnership gave a presentation on the role of Affordable Housing Trust Funds in communities across the State. Ms. Goehring explained that the primary role of the Trust is to implement the community’s affordable housing goals. To do this, the Trust must first develop a strategic plan using existing or new data on housing needs. The Trust needs to determine which goals it is equipped to address in order to narrow its focus.

Ms. Goehring gave a brief overview of potential revenue sources for typical Trusts. Many Community Preservation Act (CPA) communities transfer the Community Housing allocation of CPA funds directly to the Trust. Restrictions on CPA funds follow through to the Trust, and the Trust is required to submit annual reports to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) on how those funds have been spent.

Ms. Goehring presented two broad models that Trusts typically follow: funding entity or active initiator. Trusts that follow the funding entity model solicit applications for affordable housing projects and make grants to support those projects. Active initiatives take a more hands-on approach, for example, managing the dispossession of publicly owned property to develop affordable housing.

Since many Trusts are funded in part by CPA funds, they typically use the same three categories to define their activities: acquire, preserve, and support. Acquisition activities include the creation of affordable housing through either new construction or placing covenants on existing units. Extending expiring deed restrictions is considered preservation. Preservation activities may also
include capital improvements to Housing Authority properties only if the need is severe enough that the units would be lost if the repairs are not made. Many Trusts fund rental assistance programs, hire a housing coordinator, or support other affordable housing planning and development activities under the support category.

Ms. Goehring explained that the role of the Trust in the community is to manage coordination among the many entities working in the housing field to promote collaboration in achieving the City’s housing goals.

Councillor Winslow asked if Trusts typically own or manage properties to ensure the affordability of those units is sustained. Ms. Goehring explained that some have done that but she would not recommend it. Managing properties is too much work for a volunteer board and the money would be better spent assisting affordable housing developers with that expertise. Instead, affordability should be maintained through covenants.

Councillor Winslow asked if CPC’s typically transfer funds to the Trust automatically. Ms. Goehring explained that some communities transfer more than the required 10% (10% of CPA funds are required to be spent on Community Housing, 10% on Open Space, and 10% on Historic Preservation, with the remaining 70% to be spent on any of those three categories). For example, Cambridge allocates 80% of CPA funds to the Trust and Somerville allocates 50%. Ms. Goehring recommends that the Trust follows this model to ensure that it has reliable funding each year.

Mayor Christenson asked if other communities have used Trust funds to acquire vacant or foreclosed homes in order to get them back in the market with affordability restrictions. Ms. Goehring confirmed that other communities have done similar work, typically with a nonprofit partner.

4. Meeting Schedule
Mayor Christenson suggested that the Trust meet on the third Wednesday of each month, to which the Trustees agreed.

5. Designate Officers
Mr. Spetrini explained that the Mayor serves as Chair by state statute and that Trusts typically have a Treasurer and a Clerk as well. Mayor Christenson asked the Trustees to think about whether they would be interested in serving in either of those roles, to be discussed further at the next meeting.

6. Establish Rules and Regulations
Mayor Christenson asked Councillor Winslow to work with Mr. Spetrini to develop a draft of the Trust’s rules and regulations.

7. Strategic Planning Process
Mr. Spetrini explained the importance of developing a strategic plan to guide the activities of the trust, echoing the presentation given by Ms. Goehring earlier in the meeting. Mr. Spetrini indicated that he would create an outline of the plan itself and a process by which the Trust may develop those guidelines. Ms. Reddington-Wilde, Ms. Liou, and Councillor Winslow were assigned to a subcommittee on developing the Strategic Plan.

Ms. Reddington-Wilde asked if this will be a plan for the Trust or for affordable housing in Malden as a whole. Mr. Spetrini explained that it will be a bit of both. The Trust needs to
determine through data review and community engagement what the affordable housing goals are and how the Trust may address those goals.

8. Finances
Mr. Spetrini explained that there is currently $414,000 in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The revenue came from an amendment to the City’s Expendable Trust Fund account, which is funded by mitigation fees on developments in specific zoning districts. Those projects, which include the new City Hall development and Overlook Ridge, are required to pay $2,000 per housing unit in mitigation fees. The amendment allocated half of those funds for the Trust. Between the two developments, a total of approximately $600,000 is expected to be reserved for the Trust.

9. Mayor’s Affordable Housing Program Updates
   a. Emergency Rental Assistance Fund
      Mr. Spetrini explained that the City is receiving an additional $800,000 in Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds as a part of the CARES Act, which was passed by Congress in response to COVID-19. To address the housing emergency resulting from the pandemic, the Malden Redevelopment Authority (MRA) on behalf of the City of Malden has proposed to use $500,000 in CDBG funds to establish an Emergency Rental Assistance program. The City Council approved this expenditure at the Council meeting on April 14, 2020 and the MRA is currently seeking an additional $250,000 in CPA funds for the program. The MRA will work with a nonprofit housing services provider to administer the program and will focus on households making less than 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

      Ms. Liou asked if this program is only for renters. Mr. Spetrini confirmed that the program will only cover rent, which will be paid to the landlord directly.

      Ms. Reddington-Wilde commented that those who receive this assistance would also be eligible for fuel assistance through the program she runs at ABCD.

   b. Inclusionary Zoning
      Mr. Spetrini presented an update on the City’s effort to develop an Inclusionary Zoning ordinance. Inclusionary Zoning is a requirement on new housing developments to dedicate a certain portion of the units as affordable housing. Mr. Spetrini explained that to determine the specifics of that ordinance, the MRA and the City have hired a consultant, Levine Planning Strategies, to undertake a Financial Feasibility Analysis. The MRA and the City are working on finalizing the contract with the consultant and intend to complete the study by the end of the summer and present a draft ordinance for Council review this coming fall.

      Ms. Reddington-Wilde commented that some communities allow developers to make payments in lieu of housing units to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Mr. Spetrini confirmed that this study would analyze the effectiveness of that option in creating affordable housing units.

      Ms. Liou suggested that the consultant may have a problem pulling relevant data due to the COVID shutdown and the uncertainty in the housing market that has resulted. Mr. Spetrini agreed that this situation has presented new challenges and will work with the consultant to ensure that those issues are addressed.
10. Adjournment
Ms. Reddington-Wilde made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Mr. Slater. All Trustees voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 5:25 PM.