



# TOWN OF IPSWICH

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## IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS 01938

Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board &  
Ipswich Housing Partnership Joint Meeting

Meeting Minutes

April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022 7:30am

Meeting Room A and Virtual Zoom Meeting

**Ipswich Housing Partnership Attendees:** James Warner, Don Greenough, Binni Hackett, Ken Redford, Stacey Pedrick, Patricia Valcour, Carl Gardner, and Charlie Allen

**Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board Attendees:** James Warner, Sarah Player, Binni Hackett, and Anthony Marino

**Guests:** Alison Lex, Marina Bueno, and Andrew Defranza

**Staff:** Caja Johnson and Ethan Parsons

**Call to Order:** Quorum established for the AHTFB and IHP

**Meeting called to order:** 07:36am

**Citizens Queries:** none.

**Adopted Minutes:** 03/10/2022 (IHP&AHTFB)

**Action Inc.:** Allison Lex and Marina Bueno presented a twenty thousand dollar grant renewal request and reviewed the most recent reports. Lex discussed how Action Inc. provides Ipswich residents with rental assistance, immigration support, supportive services, referrals to community based partners (i.e. fuel assistance), and case management. Lex reports there being less than fifteen thousand dollars remaining from the previous ninety thousand dollar grant. She explained that Action Inc. has been applying for private/other sources of funding and mentions surrounding cities and towns who have broadened their fund eligibility criteria for non-COVID related reasons (i.e. injury, domestic violence). Lex expresses Action Inc.'s appreciation of the rental assistance grant, partnership with the Town of Ipswich, and the increased visibility it's created for Action Inc. here in Ipswich. Allen inquires about federal money and how those dollars may or may not be applied to households. Lex responds reporting how our funds are being leveraged with other funding sources but that all funds are running low. She states there are certain allocation of rental assignment funding that has gone to specific organizations (LHAND, Lynn and CTI, Lowell). but Action Inc. is not one of those organizations. Warner inquires about the longevity of the \$20,000 grant renewal request. Lex is unable to predict the need of the community for the future at this

time. Affordable Trust Fund Board Vote: Hackett motioned to grant Action Inc. the \$20,000 renewal rental assistance. Warner seconds the motion. Discussion: Greenough encourages the trustees to look favorably upon the requested \$20,000. Vote (Affordable Trust Fund Board): Player, yes. Hackett, yes. Warner, yes. Marino, no vote. Motion passes. Marino states he is aware of the benefit of granting these funds but is a no vote due to the federal funds that are available, the need to create more affordable housing here in Ipswich, other upcoming projects, and the \$190,000 the Town has granted Action Inc. in the past is enough at this time. Gardner supports Action Inc.'s efforts and suggests working together with surrounding communities. Trust Fund Board and Housing Partnership members thank Action Inc. for their presentation and services.

**Oak Hill/Memorial Hall:** Allen gives some general background information from the day Oak Hill and Memorial first came to the Board and Partnership requesting assistance until present. Allen recalls his comments surrounding financial support, the age of property, and the program types they are both involved in from a previous meeting. Oak Hill and Memorial Hall provided financial information and list capital needs. Allen states he is committed to the long-term success of these two properties. Allen reports after having several discussions with OH/MH, his recommendation is to include consulting (Harborlight) work into the lump sum that the Board has committed with the expectation of recapitalization and permanent affordable housing. OH/MH may be open to consulting work to be completed. Greenough and Warner agree and discussion opens up surrounding potential next steps. Warner emphasizes the specialized interest there is in OH/MH. Johnson adds that OH/MH are on the SHI and OH affordability expires 2026. She suggests an OH/MH subcommittee. Affordable Trust Fund Board Vote: Warner motions for trust fund to set aside \$10,000 for a Harborlight Community Partners consulting contract for Oak Hill. Player seconds. Discussion: none. Player, yes. Hackett, yes. Warner, yes. Motion passes.

**161 Topsfield:** Warner provides background information surrounding dividing the parcel into three instead of two, opening up different uses for this area. Parsons reports back on the recent Finance Committee meeting: there was some discussion surrounding the maximum dollar amount of the property and potential for the Trust Fund Board to buy the land from the Town. Greenough expresses his support for this project. Valcour suggests focusing on creating more affordable family housing until the Town reaches its percentage on the SHI. Parsons: Planning has not fully gathered all the information of the property. He recalls a year ago, the Select Board did not want to maximize the full value of the property at that time. He states this property is on a hilltop, with wetlands, and limited accessibility. Parsons suggest amending the motion to only include the front portion of the property. Housing Partnership Vote: Allen motions for the Warrant Article 15 Amendment, to eliminate the designation of the rest of the site as open space and designate the buildable portion adjacent to Topsfield Rd as affordable housing. Jim seconds. Pedrick, yes. Valcour, yes. Gardner, yes. Warner, yes. Hackett, yes. Allen, yes. Marino, yes.

**Harborlight:** Defranza reviews HCP's progress report "Prospective Affordable Housing Development in Ipswich". Potential sites include (Elm Street Lot, Hammat Street Lot, MBTA Lot) prepared. He discusses the potential benefits and drawbacks of each site. Defranza discusses the financial models, funding sources, and the MBTA community legislation. Board and Partnership members make comments/recommendations and ask questions. Gardner suggests preserving the existing structure of the police station and educating the community affordable housing. Marino inquires about a mixed use with Council on Aging below and Senior Housing above. Johnson suggests a collaborative approach including COA. Defranza explains supportive senior housing versus assisted living. There is some

discussion about potential affordable housing sites, EBSCO, the reuse committee. Members thank Defranza.

**HOME Funds:** Warner provides back round information on the HOME funding that is available and reminds member that we must commit these funds by June 2022 or they will return back to the local pool of HOME funding. Allen reports the NS HOME Consortium did not adopt the language he had previously suggested, allowing housing authority sponsored nonpublic housing to be funded. Greenough inquires about anyone who has requested a rehab loan in the past that was turned down who may be able to utilize these funds now. Johnson reports the North Shore HOME Consortium has changed their focus to creating and preserving affordable housing and taken a step back from allocating funds for rehabilitation loans.

**New Business:** none.

**Meeting Adjourned** 08:44am