

**MINUTES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
HARWICH AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
GRIFFIN ROOM, TOWN HALL
732 MAIN STREET, HARWICH, MA
JULY 07, 2025 - 1:00PM**

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: Brendan Lowney, Acting Chair, Bob Spencer, Clerk, Jeff Handler and Claudia Williams

MEMBER NOT PARTICIPATING: Larry Ballantine

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Lowney called the meeting of the Harwich Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT) to order on Monday, July 7, 2025 at 1:00PM and welcomed Mr. Handler to the HAHT.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comments.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discuss Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) affordability using Harwich Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT) funds

Mr. Spencer noted that this item was on the Agenda to discuss how the HAHT would carefully approach this question.

Mr. Lowney asked Noreen Donahue for follow-up comments on an idea she presented to the Trust a few months ago.

Ms. Donahue commented that she was unsure how her idea would work with the ADU By Right. She described her idea for the public noting the benefits to the town.

Mr. Spencer questioned what the next steps would be to take an idea and bring it to fruition.

Ms. Donahue suggested seeking guidance regarding the legality of the proposed idea.

Mr. Lowney noted that the State has established ADU Laws. He described the HAHT's limitations and ways that the HAHT could participate. He expressed an interest in what the incentive would be for homeowners to deed restrict their property and noted that the HAHT has the resources to develop a program.

Mr. Spencer suggested developing a pilot program.

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Mr. Handler suggested researching whether another Town in the Commonwealth has done something similar and if so, if there is a template for their program. He also noted other questions to be answered such as tax rate, the SHI List and possibly policy changes.

Members agreed that both Brianna Powell, Housing Advocate and KP Law, Town Counsel should be involved and asked to gather information regarding other towns.

Ms. Donahue described what an incentive would be to certain homeowners.

Kathy Green, representing the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) and the Real Estate and Open Space Committee commented that a part of the HAHT funding uses CPC funds. She asked that the HAHT find out how those funds can be used for ADUs. She asked that the HAHT be mindful of those funds and what they will be used for.

Art Bodin suggested that most Cape towns are doing something with ADUs and suggested they would be a source of information. He commented on the need for incentives and suggested starting with a pilot program. Mr. Boden suggested other ways of gaining information prior to hiring a lawyer.

Ms. Willams brought up the topic of splitting a house, the ADU as deed restriction but not the main house. She agreed with Mr. Spencer that it would be a question for KP Law.

Mr. Handler noted other legal questions noting different scenarios and rental restrictions.

Mr. Spencer asked that they request advice from Ms. Powell on whether or not to bring in CDP or HAC.

Mr. Handler suggested that Trust members email their questions to Mr. Lowney and Mr. Ballantine to be forwarded to Ms. Powell.

B. Begin Conversation on Homeownership and HAHT partnerships

Mr. Spencer suggested that the HAHT look into homeownership and how it fits into Affordable Housing.

Mr. Lowney suggested reaching out to other partnerships for information.

Trust members discussed the process involving the Buy Down and the process to purchase homes.

Mr. Bodin commented that reasonably priced homes are purchased as soon as they are on the market and that the Trust would have to be ready to move quickly if there is an opportunity to make a purchase. He also noted examples of what other towns have done using the Buy Down Program, both successfully and unsuccessfully.

Mr. Spencer noted the need for a policy that empowers the HAHT to act quickly on a purchase.

Ms. Williams commented on projects that the Town of Chatham has done including Chop Houses which could be an option for Harwich and home ownership. She also suggested getting information about what people are looking for, rental or ownership.

Ms. Green suggested that the Trust could support Habitat for Humanity for homeownership.

Mr. Lowney commented that the Trust could find the right partner or developer through an RFP.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review/vote Minutes of June 11, 2025

Mr. Spencer moved to approve the Minutes of June 11, 2025. Seconded by Ms. Williams.

Vote: 3:0:1 with Mr. Handler abstained. Motion carried.

B. Review Properties at:the Community Preservation Committee and

1. 0 Oak Street

Mr. Spencer commented on being ready to go to the Acting Town Administrator to develop an RFP for 0 Oak Street.

Mr. Lowney noted the options for determining the value of the property.

Mr. Spencer moved to go forward and ask Administration for advice on an RFP for the property at 0 Oak Street. Seconded by Mr. Handler.

Vote: 4:0 in favor. Motion carried.

2. 0 Depot Street

Mr. Spencer moved to go forward and ask Administration for advice on an RFP for the property at 0 Depot Street. Seconded by Mr. Handler.

Mr. Handler questioned if the property had build-ability. He suggested the Trust vet the properties to see what they would command for a purchase price versus the Trust using the property for a pilot program.

Mr. Spencer summarized previous conversations about the property suggesting that if the property was sold, the Trust could then use the money towards the Buy Down or ADU Programs. That would have more impact than building just one unit.

Mr. Lowney noted the restrictions and challenges of that property. The assessed value is just over \$201,000.

Mr. Bodin commented that the property could be used as an experiment for someone to build a tiny house or two on it.

Mr. Lowney explained the options of going through an RFP or using the appraisal or assessed value of the property.

Ms. Williams asked for clarification on the Trust's decision to move forward with an RFP and not sell the property and apply the profit to something else.

Trust members discussed the options and noted the difficulties of getting a builder for one or two units. Also noted that the intent of the motion was to get information to enable the Trust to have further discussions about options.

Ms. Green commented on 0 Depot, its restrictions and its value.

Vote: 4:0 in favor. Motion carried.

3. 0 Depot Road (J1, J2, J3)

Mr. Spencer moved to table this Agenda item. Seconded by Mr. Handler.

Vote: 4:0 in favor. Motion carried.

4. 265 Sisson Road

Mr. Spencer referred to Michael MacAskill's comments at the last meeting about the confusion with this property and what the Trust's responsibilities are regarding 265 Sisson Road. He noted that he has requested that Mr. Ballantine schedule a special meeting with KP Law for clarification on ownership, insurance and liability, as soon as possible. He also noted that the Trust does not have a Chair at this time.

Mr. Lowney suggested that the Trust wait until after the Select Board meeting for more information before moving forward.

Trust members agreed that they cannot continue as they have and clarification of the lease is important to determining their next steps.

C. Updates on 456 Queen Anne Road

Mr. Lowney requested that this Agenda item be tabled until the next meeting for Mr. Ballantine's input.

Ms. Donahue commented on 456 Queen Anne Road and the challenges of traffic and timing.

D. Review data on Rental Assistance program

Ms. Williams did not have an update at this time.

V. NEXT MEETING: August 11, 2025

Mr. Lowney noted that the August 11th meeting will be held at 1:00PM.

VI. ADJOURN

Mr. Handler moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Spencer.

Vote: 4:0 in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Judi Moldstad
Board Secretary

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