

West Tisbury Affordable Housing Committee Minutes of July 28, 2026

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present: Kim Angell, Michael Colaneri, Jeffrey DuBard, Sebastian Hiatt, Kanta Lipsky, Ivory Littlefield, Matt Merry, Kate Guiney (admin)

Also present: Laura Silber (Martha's Vineyard Commission)

Meeting called to order 6:02.

Michael moved to approve the minutes as amended, Kanta seconded. Roll call: Kim—aye, Michael—aye, Jeffrey—aye, Sebastian—aye, Kanta—aye, Ivory—aye, Matt—abstaining.

Maeve Rice/Bangs Lot: Matt said Maeve reported little activity to date. The Bangs have engaged an electrical contractor but Eversource has not provided engineering. The first-phase cut-in of the road is complete but formal top dressing is on hold for utilities.

It was asked whether next time a homesite lot is created, should the Planning Board (PB) dictate a timeframe so the recipient can make financial arrangements? Whose responsibility is it to move the process along? The process itself falls under the purview of the PB; with privately owned land, control lies with the owner. Does AHC verify income for recipients too early, setting up expectations before lots are ready? It was suggested permitting have two parts: a preliminary permit for utilities and then a later permit for building.

Matt said typically, the PB doesn't release lots until the road and all infrastructure have passed inspection. Eversource operates on its own schedule. Michael felt a 2-part process was too complex; a lot should satisfy all PB requirements, have utilities, survey done—only then should the recipient be sought. In the Rice case, the Town accommodated the Bangs, which threw off sequencing. Homesite regulations already have a mechanism through which once the lot is ready, the developer or Town finds an occupant. Changing procedure could mean amending the Homesite bylaw in order to dictate at exactly what point an owner should designate a lot recipient.

Matt said the Bangs' intentions were good: Once they'd decided to create a homesite lot, they approached potential recipients quickly. Going forward, any recipient should understand the process isn't immediate. It was agreed to write something into the Homesite regulations to temper expectations and ensure every party knew what was expected of them and at what point. A suggestion was made that the AHC, PB, and ZBA convene to hammer out protocols.

Q: Of the four rentals at 401 State Road that serve over 80% AMI, how many would the Town like to designate as permanent municipal employee housing? Laura explained: The AHC

decides how many units to designate for public-sector employee preference and the Island Housing Trust (IHT) then writes this into the tenant selection plan. Under Seasonal Communities, employee preference can be set in perpetuity. WT also can choose whether to set the preference for island municipal employees or solely WT municipal employees. In the lottery, if no one applying for a particular unit meets the employee criterion, the unit goes to the general pool. A two-tiered (Town/non-Town) employee preference would be worked out with IHT. Preferences are determined for individual projects, not as general policy. There is no typical length a tenant stays in a unit. A young tenant may only stay a few years, but middle-aged tenants could stay through retirement and beyond. When choosing which units to set aside, the AHC should specifically designate whether the preference applies to 1- or 2-bedroom units or a mix.

To date, the State doesn't allow employee preference on 80% or lower AMI units. All four 401 State units *not* designated for up to 80% are restricted to 100% AMI; resident and/or employee preference can apply only to units in that category. (The 100% AMI determination stems from CPC funding.) If a tenant qualifies at 100% AMI but their income later increases, their rent increases proportionately but they're not displaced.

"Municipal employee" is anyone receiving a W-2 or a 1099 from the Town; it also includes volunteer essential workers. Currently, early childhood educators not employed by the Town or the UIRSD are ineligible. Since the Town shares emergency services and a School with other up-island towns, it's worth discussing what constitutes "municipal."

In terms of Town-employee vs. Town-resident preference, for the first-round lottery the AHC can designate one, the other, neither, or both. The Town is allowed a maximum of 70% for *resident* preference, but this preference only applies in the first round of lease-ups.

Laura recommended a conversation with the Town Administrator over a possible internal hierarchy for selection: Should the preference prioritize emergency workers, or teachers, or public works? Anecdotally, Nantucket needed an apartment for their police chief and now have a policy where they can designate certain apartments for certain job types.

Michael made a motion to start the discussion regarding potential preferences for the four up-to-100% AMI units at 401 State Road. Sebastian seconded.

Michael noted that historically, projects primarily funded by West Tisbury have always had a local preference before opening to general selection. He felt first-round preference should go to WT residents given the project is predominantly WT-funded. Matt said he'd like a preference for current WT residents or former WT residents who are now displaced. Jeffrey cautioned against territoriality since 401 State Road is small compared to larger projects like Meshacket. If WT is restrictive, other towns will follow suit; WT residents/employees could get shut out of

affordable housing elsewhere. Also, CPC funding for projects derives from many towns. The practice has been that when IHT receives funds from a given town, it offers a preference on one or more units; IHT may have offered 401 State units to other towns.

Michael felt two units was adequate for municipal employees; we may need units for other commitments. Kim suggested four: if four local municipal employees need housing, a critical need is filled, but this is unlikely and the remainder could pass to the general pool. Matt agreed with four. Jeffrey felt four was high: When four of eight apartments are municipal-employee preference, it could feel like a Town employee development rather than a more diversely representative community. Laura agreed about territoriality—she felt that if 401 State Road had initially been proposed to voters as employee housing, it would make sense for four, but it hadn't. She noted the AHC can set a preference for the next unit at Scott's Grove that opens by amending that tenant selection plan, same for other developments. Upcoming projects can also designate employee preference.

Michael noted that local preferences are a one-time thing. Without local preference it's possible no WT resident would benefit from the development. Kim said local municipal employee preference (versus resident) still benefited the Town and by extension, Town residents. Sebastian felt preference should be for local municipal employees. Jeffrey was in favor of island-wide municipal employee preference. He noted each preference requires a \$150k CPC payment and funds are limited; opening to other towns made sense. Matt asked whether DCRHA kept a rolling list of applicants to see how many were actually from WT.

It was decided Kate would draw up a list of questions for Phillipe Jordi, Kim and Laura would review these, the questions would be sent to Phillipe, and his answers would be distributed prior to the meeting so that the AHC could make an informed decision.

Michael withdrew his motion for discussion.

Questions for Phillipe Jordi:

1. How is the number of preferential units determined if the number doesn't divide cleanly, i.e., 70% of 4 units = 2.8 units.
2. Does local municipal employee housing count toward the allowed first-round 70% municipal preference? (And how are things playing out at Tashenack Knoll?)
3. How many applicants for IHT housing tend to be from West Tisbury?
4. Do employees who are part of the Up-Island District, either School or Tri-Town, fall under "municipal" since they work in Town-shared services?
5. When must the IHT finalize its tenant selection plan for 401 State?
6. Over time, can the Town vary the mix of 1-br vs. 2-br units designated for preference?

7. What happens if someone receives an apartment as a municipal employee and later no longer works for the Town either by retiring or resigning?

AHC Town webpage: Kim proposed that the webpage contain items listed in the agenda-- Homesite Lot guidance, Conveyance Policy, Lease to Locals program, 401 State Road - info/progress/applications, Old Courthouse Road - info/progress/applications, House-moving policy—and asked if anyone had anything to add; they did not.

AHC name: It was proposed the name “Affordable Housing Committee” change to the “West Tisbury Housing Committee” given that “Affordable Housing” could imply the AHC serves only people at 80% AMI or less and is possibly stigmatizing. According to current census data, West Tisbury has approx. 250-300 households under 80% AMI or less, and about 220 houses between 80-150% AMI. A change in name could broaden mission focus.

It was pointed out that the specific State designation “Affordable” in this area was up to 140%. It’s true AHC has created fewer opportunities for people in the 140% range, largely because these projects are harder to finance. But given that Affordable is a State designation, name change may be a matter for Counsel. Also, “Affordable” comes from the Zoning Bylaw, so a change would require an amendment at Town Meeting. And once “Affordable” is taken from the name, it might imply the Committee was a general resource for all kinds of real estate. No decision was reached.

Heritability: Kate will distribute Jeffrey’s amended Heritability options prior to next meeting. The AHC will vote after its discussion with Phillipe Jordi (topics unrelated).

Action items:

- Kate will ask the DCRHA where WT residents on their applicant waitlists fall on the AMI spectrum.
- Committee must discuss with other boards the time frame for completion of subdivision and infrastructure for a homesite lot once it has been approved
- Committee will clarify with Jen about municipal employee preference possible hierarchy.

Michael moved to adjourn. Kanta seconded. Roll call vote unanimous.

Meeting adjourned 7:26 pm.