

# West Tisbury Community Preservation Committee

## Minutes of December 6, 2023 Meeting

Via Zoom Technology

Approved December 13, 2023

Call to Order: 5:30 PM

Committee Members Present at Call to Order: Cheryl Lowe, John Christensen, Bea Phear, John Rau, Mary Sage Napolitan, Jeffrey Dubard and Ernie Thomas

Staff Present at Call to Order: Maura Valley, Administrative Assistant

Members of the Public Present: Kate Devane from Island Autism Center, John Stanwood and Philippe Jordi of Island Housing Trust

Approval of Minutes of November 15, 2023 meeting: Bea Phear moved, John Christensen seconded and all voted unanimously to approve the minutes as presented (Cheryl Lowe – yes; John Christensen – yes; Bea Phear – yes; John Rau – yes; Mary Sage Napolitan – yes; Jeffrey Dubard – yes; Ernie Thomas – yes)

Cheryl Lowe took a moment to officially welcome Ernie Thomas as the Conservation Commission representative to the Community Preservation Committee.

### PUBLIC HEARING FOR FUNDING INTERVIEWS:

5:30 PM      Kate Devane  
                  Island Autism Center

Ms. Devane began by explaining that the Island Autism Center received funding from the CPC in 2020 which helped with the purchase of the center property. She stated that the plan has always been that the center would raise 50% of the funds needed and apply to the Island Community Preservation Committees for the other 50% of the funding. The Center does not accept State or Federal funding so housing can be limited to only those who grew up on Martha's Vineyard. This allows the kids who grow up on Martha's Vineyard and have autism to receive the help they need without having to go off Island.

The Center has just about completed the day programming side, which was done entirely with private donations. If this year's requests to the Island CPCs are approved they are going to start work on the residential building. The overall cost for the center is \$4,600,000 and this year's request of \$1,000,000 from 5 towns will get them to the two-million-dollar mark. The remaining funds will be privately raised through fundraising.

When questioned whether the barn was completed Ms. Devane replied that it was and that they used it to run a very successful job training program selling eggs, flowers and vegetables at the farmers market all summer. They're also using the barn for the solar panels which will power the entire campus.

Ms. Devane added that this is the only disability housing on the Island for people with intellectual disabilities. According to fair housing laws, 25% of all affordable housing must be for people with disabilities but state qualifying disabilities are hearing impaired, seeing impaired or physically disabled. This often leaves people with intellectual disabilities out in the cold as far as affordable housing availability.

John Christensen questioned whether the Island Autism Center was based on some national model and noted that, if not, the nation should model their programs on this. Ms. Devane replied that it wasn't based on a national model but there was a model in California that has a similar program for adults. The Island Autism Center serves the full lifespan of people with autism by beginning with preschool and continuing through housing adults so they can age in place and remain on the Island for their entire life.

5:45 PM Greg Orcutt  
Habitat for Humanity

Cheryl Lowe reported that Mr. Orcutt had a family emergency and could not make the meeting. He will be added to the December 13, 2023 meeting agenda.

6:00 PM Philippe Jordi and John Stanwood  
Island Housing Trust

Philippe Jordi and John Stanwood were present representing Island Housing Trust for the IHT 55+ community housing project at 401 State Road, the veteran's supportive housing project in Oak Bluffs and the school employee housing project at 48 Old County Road.

Prior to the meeting IHT submitted letters revising the age restriction for the 401 State Road project from 55+ to 60+ in order to meet CPA eligibility. They also submitted a letter stating that in order to comply with fair housing and CPA regulations they were modifying the 48 Old County Road project application from an ongoing preference for school employees to a one-time preference for school employees for up to 70% of the rental units (5 out of 8 total.)

John Stanwood began by addressing the IHT veteran's supportive housing project which is a partnership with the Cape and Islands Veterans' Outreach Center (CVOC) and Mark Leonard who was instrumental in moving the project forward by acquiring land from Oak Bluffs. IHT has requested a total of \$1,000,000 funding from all the towns' Community Preservation Committees with \$70,600 being requested from West Tisbury. This development will have 12 rental units for veterans at a variety of income levels. When asked if there were any questions, Bea Phear stated that she had questions for all three of the IHT projects. She questioned what the other Towns' financial commitments are and the viability of outside funding sources. She also questioned how shovel ready each project was as, since the CPC doesn't have enough money to fund all of the requests, funding those projects that are ready to go might take priority.

Philippe Jordi responded that IHT was about ready to submit permit applications to the Town of West Tisbury for the 60+ housing at 401 State Road. They have also just received the green light to move forward with permitting for the veteran's housing in Oak Bluffs.

Philippe then brought up the change they've made to eligibility for the school employee housing adding that they had just hired an architect for that project so they're not as far along on that one but are hoping to break ground next year. At the moment they are looking for commitment from the Town on the school employee housing so that they're in a better position when applying for state funding. If the town commits to funding the project now it doesn't necessarily mean that IHT will draw down on these funds. He raised the issue of West Tisbury supporting a bond as has been done in the past for Scotts Grove. Jeffrey Dubard questioned whether, based on the timeline for the project, it was feasible to look at funding the current request over a two-year period. Philippe Jordi responded that they are really looking for a full commitment at this time to make the project more appealing for State funding. John Christensen then questioned the State funding process, how frequent and how competitive the process is. Philippe responded that they will be applying for different types of funding and that the state has different rounds that they can apply for.

Bea Phear questioned whether there was a dollar figure that Philippe Jordi thought would be a sufficient commitment for the state. Mr. Jordi responded that the state will be looking at the budget just as the CPC is and will try to make sense of it. According to Mr. Jordi, the state typically can support upwards of 100 to maybe 200 per unit in costs. Ms. Phear then posed the hypothetical question of how IHT would allocate funding between the 3 projects if the CPC were to award a million dollars total. Philippe Jordi replied that the allocation of funds is really a CPC decision. When pressed by Jeffrey Dubard Philippe stated that, because of the momentum and the progress made on the projects, the 60+ housing and the veteran's housing would be a priority for IHT if they needed to prioritize them.

Bea Phear then questioned if the septic system issues could present problems for the Old County Road project as they are proposing 12 bedrooms with an additional 2-bedroom ground lease house. The 3-acre parcel of land supports a total of 13 bedrooms. Philippe Jordi responded that they are using the Kleantu Nitroe system which allows for a greater number of bedrooms due to the advanced nitrogen removal provided by the system.

Jeffrey Dubard questioned whether IHT has a policy on hiring minority/women owned businesses or local owned businesses as contractors on the projects. Philippe responded that, although they don't have a measured and quantified policy in place, they look to be as diverse and inclusive as possible and currently have a 100% Brazilian crew working on one of their projects. He went on to state that they would certainly give preference to women/minority owned businesses as they have done in the past.

When questioned by Ernie Thomas Philippe Jordi explained that the veteran's housing will be located on a lot abutting the capped landfill on Bellevue Avenue which is off of County Road in Oak Bluffs. Mr. Thomas then questioned whether there was some type of lease or contract in place for all of the IHT projects stating that nobody would be evicted in 90 days because they no longer meet the income requirements. Mr. Jordi assured him there are no evictions unless they're warranted for non-payment of rent or other violations of tenancy. People are not forced out because they are over the income levels.

Bea Phear raised the issue of bonding and requested that Kathy Logue, West Tisbury Town Treasurer, be invited to a future meeting to discuss the issue and comment on the advisability and process for

bonding of the IHT project(s). John Christensen questioned whether the current financial climate was favorable for bonding, an issue that can be discussed with Ms. Logue.

Cheryl Lowe questioned whether IHT had additional projects coming in the future as the number of IHT applications currently before the committee was higher than normal. Mr. Jordi stated that the current high number of projects is unusual and that IHT currently has nothing of magnitude on the drawing board.

Cheryle Lowe then recognized David Vigneault of Dukes County Regional Housing Authority. Mr. Vigneault brought up the growing awareness of rental assistance programs and the ability to bring on new landlords as a result.

Ongoing Business for Discussion:

Affordable Housing funding discussion with Affordable Housing Trust Representative(s) – Cheryl Lowe reported that she received a call from Skipper Manter, Chair of the Affordable Housing Trust, to let her know that he was unable to attend the meeting. He reported that the Affordable Housing Trust account balance is currently \$845,000 and that some of that money could be earmarked for the affordable housing projects currently under consideration for funding. Jeffrey Dubard feels that the committees need to talk about these issues in greater depth. Both committees are determining how to allocate limited funds and the cumulative amount the municipality is being asked to contribute must be considered. John Christensen agreed mentioning the total project costs of the Island Housing Trust projects. Jeffrey Dubard will look into the amount of money being requested from the Trust for each of the affordable housing projects.

Bonding issues and CPC funding of affordable housing projects over multiple years was raised and will be discussed further when Kathy Logue attends the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to discuss Bea Phear made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 PM, seconded by John Christensen. All voted in favor of adjourning the meeting (Cheryl Lowe – yes; John Christensen – yes; Bea Phear – yes; John Rau – yes; Mary Sage Napolitan – yes; Jeffrey Dubard – yes; Ernie Thomas – yes)

Respectfully submitted,

Maura Valley  
Administrative Assistant