

# West Tisbury Housing Bank Committee

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Thursday, March 12, 2020

A regularly posted meeting of the West Tisbury Housing Bank Committee was scheduled for Thursday, March 12, 2020, at 5:00 PM at the West Tisbury Town Hall, State Road, West Tisbury.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.

*Present: Michael Bellissimo, Cynthia Mitchell, Douglas Finn, Jane Dreeben, Sam Hall, Matt Merry*

*Absent: Jeff Dubard*

A quorum was declared.

Prior to addressing agenda items, Ms. Mitchell read a letter from State Rep Dylan Fernandes, regarding potential legislation being considered in response to Coronavirus / Covid-19 concerns. There was discussion related to public meeting requirements, and continuance of essential town business, in light of restrictions on public meetings, and the availability of board and committee members to meet.

## **LETTER TO ISLAND TOWNS**

Mr. Finn noted that the letter as drafted by the Committee was sent to all Town Planning, Select and Housing Boards or committees, and provided a follow-up:

- Oak Bluffs will be reviewing the letter tonight, and Kim Laird would report back to Mr. Finn.
- Tisbury is interested in meeting with the Housing Bank on April 8 (ttba).
- Chilmark is hoping to meet with the Housing Bank on March 23, 4:30 PM.
- Edgartown Planning Board and Board of Selectmen will be referring the issue to the Housing bank Committee, which may meet in the near future.

Potential talking points for the meetings were considered:

- Draft legislation being considered at the state level
- The composition / purpose of a housing bank
- Whether there is still an appetite for a regional entity.
- Whether a regional housing bank is still a possibility.

Mr. Bellissimo: Based on a conversation with Oak Bluffs Selectmen Brian Packish, Oak Bluffs might be interested in the real-estate transfer tax as a funding source, but only if it is proposed as a slice of the existing land-bank tax process (so that the combined resulting fee does not exceed 2%).

Mr. Bellissimo also spoke about community housing as a general category of housing to promote; each island town could then determine their own specific needs on their own terms.

Mr. Merry proposed establishing communication with local realtors to try to find ways to channel 'entry-level' properties to island residents. Discussion ensued. There was interest in reaching out to local realtors, or local realtor business groups, to talk about options that might exist, or that could be negotiated.

There was further discussion related to pending legislation being considered at the state level, and

the potential local impact of the same.

There was discussion related to potential ‘local’ options that might support resident homesite housing, such as development of undersized lots, etc.

**Joint Meetings With Other Towns**

Potential talking points for meetings with other towns were considered:

- We are working on
  - o Community / Affordable / Senior housing
  - o Funding for local housing efforts
  - o Keeping an eye on state legislative proposals
- What are you working on?
- The Housing Bank proposal one year later:
  - o Is there still an appetite for a regional “Housing Bank” entity?
  - o Do the towns wish to explore options for regional cooperation?
- What is the best way forward for all concerned?

The committee generally agreed to pursue meetings with other towns as possible, and when dates were determined, members would communicate their availability.

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

It was MOVED by Bellissimo, SECONDED by Finn

*To approve the minutes of February 27, 2020*

VOTED: 4, 0, 2 (Merry, Hall)

**SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING MEETINGS**

The following meetings were tentatively scheduled:

- March 26, 2020, 5 PM

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, it was MOVED by Finn, SECONDED by Dreeben

*To Adjourn.*

VOTED: 5, 0, 0.

The meeting was declared adjourned at 6:13 PM.

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APPROVED by a Vote of the Housing Bank Committee, taken at a regular meeting on

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So Certified:  
Douglas Finn, Clerk