

Merrimac Affordable Housing Board of Trustees
Minutes
January 27, 2021

- I. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:14 p.m. by Chair Sandra Venner.
- II. **Present:** Sandra Venner, Colleen Ranshaw-Fiorello, Dawne Young, Holly Moran, Ben Beaulieu and guests Ray Cormier, Attorney Mark Bobrowski and Christopher Alphen.
- III. **Approval of Minutes for April 29, 2020.** With a motion by Board member Dawne Young and a second by Holly Moran, board members approved the minutes for the board's April 29, 2020 meeting with one amendment noting that \$10,458 in HOME Funds for the Town of Merrimac FY 19 be allowed to revert to the competitive pool.
- IV. **Presentation on The Flats at Merrimac Square – Ray Cormier.** On behalf of developer Ray Cormier, Attorney Mark Bobrowski discussed a proposal by AA@Merrimac Square, LLC to build two five-story residential buildings off West Main Street that would each include 90 rental apartment units. The project would include 20 three-bedroom units, 80 two-bedroom units and 80 one-bedroom units. The buildings would include elevators and sprinklers. A clubhouse with a pool is planned and 320 parking spaces for the apartment units. Twenty-five percent of the apartments would be affordable and 75 percent of the units would rent at market rate. All of the units would count towards the town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). Currently, the town's SHI is 5.6 percent of the Town's housing, Mr. Bobrowski said and is below the state's requirement for 10 percent of the Town's housing. The project might include a second access to Currier Avenue. The project could target Merrimac residents and town employees and would consistent with the Town's Master Plan, Housing Production Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan. Board member Dawne Young noted concern for the impact to schools and town services. Next steps for the project include filing a project eligibility letter, community meetings and then filing with the Zoning Board of Appeals. The project cannot be reviewed by the potential impact to schools, Mr. Bobrowski said but should include less than 100 children. Board member Holly Moran cited concern for the impact to the Town's sewer system and board member Dawne Young asked about the impact to the Town's water capacity. Chair Venner said 38 affordable housing units will come on line as the Town moves forward with the NSCCDC Affordable Housing Development planned for the former Coastal Metal property and the former fire station on School Street. The addition of those rental units would mean that the Town would only need 130 more affordable housing units in order to meet the State's 10 percent requirement. In seeking a letter of support from the Affordable Housing Board of Trustees, Mr. Bobrowski said that he could discuss making some of the units accessible to individuals living with disabilities and that he would provide the board with rental cost information for the different bedroom units. Chair Venner said she would send a draft letter of support to board members as a starting point for future board discussion.

- V. **Discussion of Impact on Affordable Housing of Possible Zoning Bylaw Change for Sections 4.13 and 17.4.** Board members discussed options for current zoning bylaws regarding multi-family housing units that could encourage affordable housing such as a third-unit in larger older homes surrounding Merrimac Square or in the Village Residential zone that surrounds Merrimac Square.. Chair Venner said that she would email links to the current zoning bylaws to board members for future discussion.
- VI. **Recommendation to fill Vacancy on the Board:** Chair Venner announced that former board member Laura Dillingham-Mailman has resigned from the board following her recent move from town. Chair Venner announced the vacancy on the board. Board member Colleen Ranshaw-Fiorello said she would contact Merrimac resident and Merrimac Council on Aging Director Brienne Walsh regarding her potential interest in filling the vacancy.
- VII. **Scheduling Next Meeting and Adjournment.** The board will meet Thursday February 25, 7 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Ranshaw-Fiorello, Secretary, February 21, 2021