

**Merrimac Affordable Housing Board of Trustees Minutes**  
**April 21, 2022**

- I. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Chair Sandra Venner.
- II. **Present:** Sandra Venner, Colleen Ranshaw-Fiorello, Phil Parry, Dawne Young, and Brienne Walsh.
- III. **Approval of Minutes for February 10, 2022.** With a motion by Board member Dawne Young and a second by Phil Parry, board members approved the minutes for the board's February 10, 2022 meeting.
- IV. **Status of The Flats at Merrimac Square:** Chair Venner reported that the Zoning Board of Appeals' next public hearing are scheduled for May 17 and June 14, 2022. Peer reviews are underway and are expected to be complete by June 14. Director of Public Works Bob Sinibaldi has raised concerns for town water and sewer capacity but applications for comprehensive housing permits cannot be rejected due to utility issues. Wetland concerns have been raised as a new road will be built across wet areas. Stormwater management will require retention ponds. Replication of wetland area might be smaller than originally thought. If the developer were to reduce the number of stories planned, the overall impact to parking and wetland areas would be reduced. The proposed 20-foot roadway is narrower than the 22-foot roadway usually allowed for subdivisions. Once the peer reviews are finished, the developer will work with a smaller group to develop an agreement that could be presented to the town.
- V. **Status of NSDC affordable housing project:** Voters at Town Meeting will consider a \$75,000 proposal for soil testing at the former Coastal Metal site. The site is cleaned but will need to be tested for several years until the Department of Environmental Protection says the case is closed.
- VI. **Zoning for Multi-Family Housing in MBTA Communities – Chapt 40A Sec. 3A.** Considered to be an MBTA Community due to the proximity of commuter rail stations in Haverhill, the new law requires the town to create a zoning district of sufficient size to allow multi-family housing by right (with three or more units and no special permit required). Town representatives and department heads met with representatives of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission and incoming state representatives to discuss the new law and impact to local communities. Comments to the state were gathered regarding the number of housing units and formula for local acreage required for the housing units. Town representative also raised concerns for water and sewer. The town will complete a form noting the plan to establish a zoning district by May 2, which will keep the town eligible for grants until deadline in 2024 required for the zoning bylaw change. The town has received \$230,000 in 20 grants including the Healthy Choice grant program. The town would no longer be eligible for grants under that program if the town did not move forward with the zoning bylaw change.
- VII. **Budget:** \$87. 40 for the board's annual email account will be paid through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
- VIII. **Scheduling Next Meeting and Adjournment.** The board will meet again at a date to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Ranshaw-Fiorello, Secretary, October 23, 2022