



MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST • TOWN HALL
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Minutes of the Affordable Housing Trust

January 20, 2026

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Sarah Mellish, Chris Olney, Gretchen Wood, Muffin Driscoll, and Rosemary Costello, Joan McDonald

STAFF PRESENT: Gail Hunter, Administrative Assistant, Marc Resnick, Director of Land Management

Call to Order

Ms. Mellish called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM. Ms. Mellish informed the Trustees that Peggy Hegarty-Steck had resigned.

Powder House Lane Status & Regulatory Agreement

Ms. Mellish explained that when she went before the Select Board regarding the Powder House Lane Regulatory Agreement, they were not prepared to sign the Agreement until Town obligations under the Agreement were identified and assigned to appropriate staff. Ms. Mellish has reviewed both the Regulatory Agreement and the Marketing Plan to identify these obligations.

Ms. Mellish reported that the Town has no obligation under the Marketing and Tenant Selection Plan. The only obligation under the Regulatory Agreement is to approve any proposed rent changes submitted by the owner, Powerhouse Lane LLC (North Shore CDC). The owner must submit rent schedules to both the Town and EOHLC when they want to change rents, and the Town has 30 days to approve the new schedule. If they fail to approve within 30 days, rents will automatically increase.

Ms. Mellish planned to suggest to Town Administrator, Mr. Barletta that Debbie Powers, Executive Assistant to the Select Board and Town Administrator, follow up with North Shore CDC, to obtain the rent schedule, and place it on a Select Board agenda. Ms. Mellish also recommended obtaining the specific apartment numbers that are affordable, in the event a tenant's income increases to 140% of area median income (AMI), they can stay if the property owner makes the next available unit affordable.

The Regulatory Agreement covers 8 units at 80% of AMI (5 one-bedroom and 3 two-bedroom units). The Marketing Plan includes these 8 units at 80% AMI with the remaining units at 60% AMI. Mellish explained this was necessary for financing purposes. The Town would also

become involved if the property owner wanted to sell or change the number or type of affordable units.

The Trustees agreed with this approach.

Future Projects – Goals and Possibilities

School Street Property

Mr. Olney reported that the School Street property had not yet closed but was expected to close the following day. The prospective buyer had contacted Mr. Olney and expressed openness to discussions with the Trust. The buyer plans to take a piece of the property to join with his own property, leaving what Mr. Olney described as a "dumbbell" shaped lot. The buyer's idea is to create two parcels - one with the existing house on School Street and another at the back, connected by an access road.

After discussion about potential zoning requirements, the Trust decided to invite the buyer to their February meeting. Mr. Olney also said he would contact Andrew to see if he'd still be interested in the property.

Standpipe Hill

Mr. Olney presented another potential project at Standpipe Hill, showing a topographical map of Town-owned land near Pine Street and the cemetery. He explained there was a flat area of approximately 10 acres that could potentially be developed.

Mr. Olney and several Trustees recounted the history of this site, explaining that in the 1990s, a group called the Manchester Housing Partnership had requested the Town to declare this area as surplus land; the request was granted. A nonprofit developer, Community Builders, had proposed 40 townhomes or duplexes for the site. Despite going through the planning process, the project failed due to issues with driveway length and significant pushbacks from nearby property owners concerned about the environmental impact.

The Trustees expressed interest in revisiting this site as a potentially Affordable Housing location.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Mr. Olney suggested the Trust consider supporting the creation of ADUs, possibly with financial or technical assistance, as long as either the owner or the ADU meets income criteria of 80% AMI. While these would not count on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), they could create Affordable Housing opportunities.

Trustees expressed concerns about monitoring and administration challenges. Ms. Mellish worried it would be difficult to ensure compliance with deed restrictions without an appropriate monitoring system in place. After discussion, the Trust did not reach a decision on this proposal.

Gordon College Development

The Trustees discussed a potential development at Gordon College property. Ms. Mellish mentioned that the Town Administrator was trying to set up a meeting with herself and the Developer. The Trust discussed potential approaches, including buying down the total number of units or increasing the number of affordable units from 80% AMI to 60% AMI.

Owner/Rental Subsidy Program Promotion

Trustees briefly discussed promotion of the Owner/Rental Subsidy Program. Members noted there had been very few inquiries about the Program. The Trustees agreed to request Ms. Marletta, Director of Communications, create flyers and use social media to promote the Program, directing residents to the website for additional information.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. McDonald reported that the Trust received one donation at the end of the year from a private citizen who annually supports the Trust. The total amount in the Trust's account is \$1,740,983.19. The checking account (money market) balance was \$475,907.02. The next CD maturity date is April 1, 2026, with the remaining deposits maturing in July 2026.

Ms. McDonald also noted that the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) would be voting at their next meeting on the Trust's request for \$200K, though there were still questions about an outstanding request for the Rotunda Project.

Public Comment

There was no public comment this evening

Approve Meeting Minutes

Ms. McDonald moved to approve the meeting minutes of November 2025; Mr. Olney seconded the motion. The motion passed with Ms. Costello abstaining.

Next Meeting February 17, 2026

Adjourn

At 7:30 p.m. Ms. Costello moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. McDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.