



Office of the
Townsend Housing Authority
272 Main St., Townsend, MA. 01469

Chairman: Laura E. Shifrin (2021)

General Member: Natalie Call (2019)

Clerk: Carol Tule (2023)

State Representative: Chaz Sexton-Diranian (2022)

Appointed Tenant Seat: BetteAnn Coleman (2020)

TOWNSEND HOUSING AUTHORITY 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

The Townsend Housing Authority (THA) was organized in 1984 and currently operates under 760 CMR 4.00: General Administration of Local Housing Authorities. 760 CMR 28.00, 32.00, and 33.00 as previously promulgated, which were rescinded on that date. Amendments to 760 CMR 4.12 through 4.16, and certain related definitions were effective on September 9, 2005. The THA is a five-person board which is made up of three elected positions, one appointed tenant position, and one State appointed position. Our mission is “To promote, maintain, and provide housing opportunities for income groups who could not otherwise afford to live here.”

One of the purposes of the THA is to facilitate the Town of Townsend’s goal to reach an equitable number of affordable housing units pursuant to state affordable housing mandates. The THA continues to research the best use of the town’s developable resources and seeks any and all state and federal funding where possible to reach these goals. The Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) is used to measure a community’s stock of low-or moderate-income housing for the purposes of M.G.L. Chapter 40B, the Comprehensive Permit Law. While housing developed under Chapter 40B is eligible for inclusion in the inventory, many other types of housing also qualify to count toward a community’s affordable housing stock. With several projected projects thus far, as of September 14, 2017, Townsend’s affordable housing inventory was 160 units or 4.8%. This figure was adjusted in 2018 to reflect the loss of 2 units being changed from low/moderate income housing to full market value because of no eligible buyers. The state requires each town in Massachusetts to have at least 10% of their total housing units to be affordable to moderate and low-income households. Therefore, the THA is looking to increase our affordable housing units to remain congruent with Townsend’s Housing Production Plan approved by the Department of Housing and Community Development in 2015.

In the first and second quarter of 2018, there was little activity for the THA because of an on-going Open Meeting Law (OML) complaints filed by Cindy King against the THA for alleged inappropriate committee formation and tampering with posted documents. The authority remained inactive until the Attorney General made the determination that there was never an occurrence of an OML violation and the matter was resolved with the AG in the second quarter of the year. Also, at this time General Member Kevin Smith’s term had expired, and he did not seek for reelection, therefore there was a vacancy on the board going into election. The open ballot was held, and write-in candidate Carol Tule was elected and accepted. Unfortunately, at that same time Susan Congdon submitted her resignation as Clerk and Carol was quickly placed in that open position leaving a General Member vacancy. A formal vacancy was posted with the Town Clerk and advertising for this open position sparked interest from several Veterans of the town knowing we are working on a Veteran’s project. With four interested volunteers, the THA held an open interview to fill the vacancy which resulted in accepting Natalie Call for the open position. It was at this juncture with a full attending board, the THA could finally move forward with the Veteran’s project.

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In the second and third quarter, the main focus on the THA was to reach out to as many Veteran's agencies as we could to gain information on what non-profit agencies were interested in working with the THA for our next project. Veteran's Inc., Veteran's Count, Soldier On, and Leeds Inc. were asked to come talk to the THA along with several other agencies. All were asked to an open meeting to present what they could do for the town's affordable housing interests. At this present time, the THA is continuing to earmark a parcel of land that would constitute the 3rd phase our 11 + acres parcel of Town owned land located on Dudley Road. Our present vision is to develop a multi-unit main building designed for aging in place, low-income housing for veterans that would also provide space for connected services. We are also looking at combining this facility with cluster townhouse type units earmarked for families of Veterans who need low-income housing and services on a short-term basis. Throughout this past year we have welcomed several non-profits and Veteran's agencies to Townsend to interview for consideration of this major project. Current focus is extracting the available land in Land Court to allow the Board of Selectman to make decisions with the THA for a possible partnership with an approved non-profit for affordable housing and to formally conduct a feasibility study.

In the fourth quarter, the THA voted to place a Warrant Article (Article 23) in the Special Town Meeting (STM) that was initially to be held on December 13, 2018. This Article 23 in definition was to extract the remaining parcel of land in court to allow the Board of Selectman to make decisions with the THA for a possible partnership with an approved non-profit company for moderate to low income housing and to formally conduct a feasibility study. Because of several major administrative errors, the STM had changed actual meeting dates several times before finally being held on December 20, 2018 where Article 23 could be addressed by the town. Several townspeople voiced their concern about the focus of the THA in targeting Veteran's as a probable population for the THA's next project. After several requests for the THA to withdraw their motion to approve Article 23, a motion from the floor to table Article 23 was made, seconded and approved by the town to table. Several questions were raised by individuals in this meeting and the THA will plan to address this feedback in upcoming public meetings. Therefore, Article 23 remains on the table until the THA, working with Town Counsel, moves to bring this article forward again.

There has also been a focus throughout the year regarding our current low-income housing facilities. The THA has been looking at ways to reduce the current wait list for our two other low-income housing buildings located on that same parcel while reviewing other options like Habitat for Humanity future projects and establishing an Affordable Accessory Apartment Program. The THA is also working with the Planning and Zoning Boards to earmark specific bylaw changes that could enhance the towns current bylaws. With everything the THA is involved with, it is imperative for all town boards to freely communicate and work with one another in order to meet our affordable housing goals outlined in our Housing Production Plan and the goals of Townsend's Master Plan. The THA will continue to be dedicated to advance our affordable housing plans into 2019 where we will be commencing to write our new housing and master plans for the future. This will allow for Townsend



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to continue to strive for affordable housing options that will meet the wants and needs of our community.