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## Town of Dennis Meeting Minutes

**Dennis Affordable Housing Trust meeting of Monday, January 12, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. in the Prue Room at the Dennis Town Hall 685 Route 134, South Dennis, MA 02660.**

Members Present: Kayla Hilts (Co-Chair), Robert Samoluk (Co-Chair), Joshua Mason (Vice Chair), David Winther (Treasurer), Noreen Browne, Kate Byron, PJ Rainwater

Absent: Maggie Spade-Aguilar (Housing Coordinator)

Others Present: Paul Foley (Town Planner), James Plath (Select Board)

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

1. **Public Comment:**

There was no public comment tonight.

2. **Planner Paul Foley Update:**

Paul Foley provided a comprehensive update on the proposed draft revisions to Section 4.9 of the Zoning Bylaws related to Affordable Housing. He explained that he had reorganized the structure of 4.9 to improve clarity, particularly by moving the "Affordable Housing Complex" section further down since it applies to larger projects, and placing "Project Approval Requirements" and "Affordable Housing Restrictions" earlier in the document so people understand the essential requirements upfront. Other changes/clarifications to the Bylaw include:

- Adding clearer definitions, including adding Sections and updating references from DHCD to EOHL (Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities).
- Reviewing other towns to include Design Standards and Performance Standards for Project Approval Requirements which are currently cited but do not exist.
- Adding language requiring water conservation measures due to concerns about the town approaching its water pumping limits, energy efficiency, environmental considerations, and accessibility.
- Adding details to the Development Site Plan that the Planning Board needs to make a finding.
- Including a requirement that a Certificate of Occupancy should not be issued until Affordable Housing Restrictions are approved and recorded and Regulatory Agreements have been approved. Foley mentioned that he is also working on a GIS mapping project to identify all 4.9 projects that have been approved over the years, noting that of 444 units approved, only 315 were built, and only 106 of those made it onto the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI).
- Reviewing the application process.
- Adding the Planning Department (as well as the Dennis Housing Authority) to notify if the unit under this Bylaw becomes vacant.
- Adding definitions for Affordable Housing Apartments, Local Preference List, Renter Ready List, Regulatory Agreement, Short-Term Rental, Special Permit Contract, conversion of hotels/motels to year-round affordable housing.

- Adding language for "Affordable Housing Rental Apartments" specifically in commercial districts or properties within a quarter mile of commercial districts.
- Adding provisions for "Locally Affordable Dwelling Units" as an alternative option (10% SHI-eligible units plus 50% locally affordable units at 60% AMI pricing). Members expressed concerns about whether restricting affordable housing rental apartments to commercial districts might limit development compared to what has been approved in the past. There was also significant discussion about whether the proposed locally affordable option would be financially viable for developers. Joshua Mason indicated he wouldn't pursue projects with that requirement.
- Adding language to the 40B size requirement regarding affordable housing apartments. The Planning Board has the discretion regarding parking spaces.
- Adding "natural" to basement conversions requiring walkout capabilities.
- Adding lot coverage requirements to Conversions of Hotels/Motels.
- Adding language that no complex can be located in Zone 1 or Zone 2.
- Adding language that municipally sponsored housing projects must be approved by the Board of Selectmen to go to the Planning Board.
- Adding language to reduce minimum lot size for affordable lots from 10,000 to 7,500 square feet for single lots only.

All agreed this was a good starting point and that more discussion is needed. Foley was thanked for attending tonight.

2. **Review and Consider Engagement Agreement with Galvin & Galvin, Attorneys:**

The Trust reviewed an Engagement Agreement with the Law Firm Galvin & Galvin. Bob Samoluk explained that the firm was recommended by Laura Shufelt from the Barnstable Housing Trust and Mass Housing Partners, as well as Noreen Browne. They would provide not just document review but also advisory services on what other trusts are doing and how to handle various housing matters.

The rate schedule was presented as \$185/hour for Principal Counsel, \$150/hour for Associate Counsel, and \$125/hour for Paralegal work, which was noted as being discounted compared to what they charge Barnstable. A question was raised about the funding source for these legal services. It was clarified that the Trust has approximately \$175,000 in "Free Cash" from in-lieu of affordable housing payments that can be used at the Trust's discretion, plus approximately \$60,000 from the management of two rental properties. In addition to that, in the approval relative to the program the Trust is doing helping pay for the lottery, have \$5,000 for administrative fees. Select Board Member Plath didn't think funds from the approval of the lottery could be used.

**Kayla Hilts made a motion that the Dennis Affordable Housing Trust hereby authorize the Engagement of the firm Galvin & Galvin for ongoing consulting and legal advisory services as needed. Further, that the Co-Chair is authorized to execute the standard Engagement Letter and subsequent tasks in order to approve paying for services. David Winthers seconded. Roll call vote: Samoluk-aye; Browne-aye; Byron-aye; Rainwater-aye; Winthers-aye; Mason-aye; Hilts-aye; the motion was approved unanimously.**

4. **Housing Coordinator Update:**

This item was deferred as Maggie Spade-Aguilar was not present tonight.

5. **Treasurer's Report:**

David Winther reported that no updated financial information was available yet for the end of the year. The Housing Authority had not yet provided information about the Trust's rental houses. More information would be coming by mid-February.

6. **Co-Chairs Update:**

Bob Samoluk reported that Spade-Aguilar and Fran Venuto met with Mary Waygan from Yarmouth who coordinates with the Plymouth Redevelopment Authority on lottery processes and were told the price for lottery services has increased from \$10,000 to \$25,000. We are waiting for an itemized bill.

Regarding the Depot Street project, Samoluk thought Venuto's cost would be approximately \$15,000-\$17,000 and he would be eligible for \$10,000 in the lottery process. He felt the Trust should cover it since we originally offered \$150,000 for the more affordability and it was reduced by \$15,000. Given that it's town-owned land and we're in a partnership with him, he should not have to pay more than \$7,000. There was some discussion that money could be saved by having Spade-Aguilar take on the "Mary Waygan role" and asking the Housing Assistance for help if needed. A state certified lottery agent must be used for the Lottery. More exploration is needed. Samoluk is waiting to hear from Venuto with the commitment letter from the bank which is needed before Town Counsel will approve the Ground Lease.

Regarding Bob Crowell Road, there is a meeting this week with Ryan Christenberry from Tighe & Bond who has replaced our Project Manager, Sharon Rooney. The Trust has a letter for \$7,500 to develop a detailed project plan that would include information about state funding opportunities, processes, deadlines, and potential alternative locations for the DPW materials currently stored on the site.

For the next meeting, Samoluk would like to review the list of potential projects the Trust has been discussing, e.g., a buydown program, and focus on one project to make it happen. He noted that the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has rescinded funding for 7 slots in the Housing Authority's Rental Subsidy Program because they have not yet been filled. The Rental Subsidy Program has been a successful program helping Dennis residents with rental assistance over a 3-year period. More discussion at the next meeting.

Spade-Aguilar Maggie is arranging a meeting with Greg Roundsville regarding the RFP process for the Housing Production Plan.

7. **Discussion of Lottery Situation for Depot Road Project:**

This item was covered during the Co-Chairs Update.

8. **Minutes Approval (September, October & November 2025):**

**Bob Samoluk made a motion to approve the September 2025 minutes. Kayla Hilts seconded. Roll call vote: Samoluk-aye; Browne-aye; Byron-abstained; Rainwater-aye; Winthers-aye; Mason-aye; Hilts-aye; the motion passed 6-0-1.** The October and November 2025 minutes were deferred to the next meeting.

9. **Additional Items Not Anticipated by the Chair:**

No additional items were brought forward.

10. **Next Meeting – February 9, 2026:**

The next meeting was scheduled for February 9, 2026.

11. **Adjourn:**

Bob Samoluk made a motion to adjourn. PJ Rainwater seconded. All voted in favor; the motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Rich

Minutes Clerk