CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
MEETING MINUTES
August 27, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.
Conducted via Zoom and in person (City Hall, Ackermann Room)

Trustees Present in Person:	Teresa Cardosi, Elaine DeRosa, Raffi Freeman, Krissandra Robinson, Jim Stockard
Trustees Present via Zoom:	Susan Schlesinger, Alyson Stein
Trustees Absent:	Yi-An Huang, Chair; Elaine Thorne
Staff Present:	Chris Cotter, Chief of Housing; Cassie Arnaud, Director of Housing Development; Alexis Turgeon, Senior Housing Development Planner; Christine Yu, Associate Housing Development Specialist
Others Present:	Councillor Catherine Zusy, Luke Smith, Jackie Mignone, Nahid Chowdhury, Justin Saif

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m. Mr. Cotter explained that this meeting of the Affordable Housing Trust is being held in a hybrid fashion pursuant to applicable requirements, and that all votes would be taken by roll call. He noted that there will be no public comment. He then confirmed via roll call that each remote participant could hear the meeting and was audible to others.

MEETING MINUTES

Upon a motion moved, seconded, and approved by roll call of five in favor and three absent (Chair Huang, Mr. Freeman, and Ms. Thorne), it was voted to approve the minutes for the meeting of July 23, 2026.

HOUSING DEPARTMENT UPDATE

HomeBridge: 13 buyers have been approved for HomeBridge funding and are actively looking for a home on the market. 7 units are under agreement.

139 Bishop Allen Drive (Vail Court): Staff are working to prepare a Request for Qualifications to identify and select a developer for the development of Vail Court.

52 New Street: Tenants are continuing to move into the newly constructed building.

4 Mellen Street: Over 2,000 applications were received for the 29 units at 4 Mellen Street. Construction is expected to be completed by late November to early December.

Jefferson Park Federal: The first few buildings are wrapping up construction soon, and the second phase of buildings will be completed in 2027.

350 Rindge Avenue: This is a new proposed 92-unit Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) development to be developed by Boston Communities. AHO community meetings are underway. Staff expect to receive a funding request which will be brought to the Trust at an upcoming meeting.

State Funding: Staff are expecting news soon on whether 28-30 Wendell Street, Corcoran Park, and 37 Brookline Street/240 Broadway received state funding awards in the current application round.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Community Preservation Act (CPA) Funds: The CPA process is underway. The Community Preservation Committee is scheduled to meet on August 31 to vote on the CPA allocation.

Incentive Zoning: An incentive zoning contribution of $16 million was received from the development at 320 Third Street and 585 West Kendall Street.

Social Housing Task Force: The Task Force held two meetings in August and is scheduled to meet again on September 23 to continue talking about social housing models.

Prior to moving to new business, Mr. Cotter informed the Trust that the unofficial Trust fund balance was roughly $12 million as of the end of FY26, subject to year-end closeout confirmations after the Trust committed a record $114 million in funding in FY26. Staff are expecting a total balance of $70 million in Trust funds to be available in FY27.

NEW BUSINESS

Inman/CAST I & II Funding Request

Mr. Cotter presented a funding request for up to $4,244,897 in funding to support renovation work at two existing affordable projects, CAST I and Inman Square Apartments/CAST II. HRI will be consolidating these two projects into a single scattered-site project, currently being referred to as Inman/CAST I & II. Both projects were former expiring-use properties which HRI purchased and preserved and together consist of five scattered-site buildings containing a total of 167 affordable rental units.

Staff noted that although the Trust does not frequently fund renovation work at existing affordable housing, it was noted there are cases where the scope of needed capital work exceeds what can reasonably be covered by project reserves. In the case of Inman/CAST I & II, limited work was done at the time of acquisition when the primary goal had been to purchase and preserve affordability. While HRI has used the projects' reserves for limited renovation work since purchase, neither property has had a major rehabilitation since their acquisition and are now in need of significant upgrades.

The scope of work for Inman/CAST I & II will address critical long-term capital repairs, including replacing the roofs and outdated systems, renovating bathrooms and kitchens as needed (some have been done upon unit turnover), swapping gas stoves with electric stoves, and updating handicapped units to meet MAAB codes. Energy efficient systems will be installed at the same time. In addition to deferring a portion of their development fee, HRI is providing $2.8 million of their own funds to support predevelopment activities and is prepared to bridge any gaps in the budget if they are unable to secure certain financing. The Trust funding being requested is the last major piece of financing needed for this consolidation and rehabilitation project.

Trust members expressed support for this request and agreed that this is a case where it makes sense for the Trust to support rehabilitation and upgrades in existing Trust-funded housing. Trust members agreed with staff's comments that as other existing developments age there will likely be similar requests in the future which will need to be balanced with proposals to acquire more properties for affordable housing development.

In response to a question regarding how rents will be set for tenants with vouchers, staff explained that households with vouchers pay 30% of their income as administered by the voucher-issuing agency, usually the Cambridge Housing Authority. Their rent maxes out at market rate if their income increases significantly.

In response to a question about when the affordability restriction will end, Ms. Arnaud responded that a new long-term affordability restriction will be placed on the property, as part of this transaction. In response to a question regarding what the relocation plan is, staff explained that tenants will be relocated in phases for two months at a time.

Trustees and staff discussed the hard costs of this project. Staff informed the Trust that part of the reason why the hard costs are so high is because Inman Square Apartments is a high-rise and the CAST apartments are historically significant buildings. Ms. Stein noted that it is typical to conduct only essential rehabilitation on a recently acquired property and to defer systemic rehabilitation to the future, which is what happened at the Inman/CAST properties.

Upon a motion moved, seconded, and approved by roll call of seven in favor and two absent (Chair Huang and Ms. Thorne), it was:

VOTED: to approve the request for up to $4,244,897 in construction and permanent funding to assist with the rehabilitation of Inman/CAST I & II, as detailed in the memo provided.

2072 Massachusetts Avenue Funding Request

Mr. Cotter presented a funding request for up to an additional $17,055,000 in Trust funding to support the construction of 2072 Massachusetts Avenue, which would bring the total Trust funding for this project to $22,126,000, or $299,000 per unit. The development team, Capstone Communities and Hope Real Estate Enterprises, is also requesting that $2,410,288 of the new funding be available prior to construction closing to cover the cost of pre-construction work, including $891,520 for the building permit fee.

The development team acquired 2072 Massachusetts Avenue, an 8,515 square foot site with a restaurant and a parking lot, in 2018 with the assistance of the Trust. The project initially was expected to be advanced under 40B as a 9-story building, but the development team paused their plans due to uncertainty regarding their ability to gain approval under 40B. The team is now advancing the development under the provisions of the AHO.

Staff presented an overview of the current design, which has undergone a series of refinements as the development team worked to bring down costs. The current plan is to create a 12-story building with 74 rental units. The development has faced added costs related to high-rise construction, sunk costs related to advancing the original 40B proposal, and overall increases in construction costs. Staff explained that while the development team had planned to use cross-laminated timber (CLT), which was expected to be more cost-efficient than steel-frame construction, the team pivoted to a light gauge steel construction method when CLT estimates came in significantly higher than expected.

Staff reviewed other expected funding sources including permanent debt, federal and state low-income housing tax credits, state soft funding, Passive House energy rebates, deferred developer fee, and rental income from the restaurant located on the property during predevelopment stage.

In response to a question regarding how much funding the Trust has left after they approved the Inman/CAST I & II funding request, Mr. Cotter explained that if the 2072 Massachusetts Avenue funding request is also approved, and after the Trust receives its FY27 CPA allocation, there may be approximately $50 million. However, staff will work on updating that amount for the Trust for an upcoming meeting once all appropriations are completed and balances confirmed. Staff noted that the Trust will need to evaluate how to prioritize funding requests in the future given the number of developments in the pipeline as well as continuing receipt of new funding requests and new opportunities.

In response to a question regarding whether the design will change now that it will be constructed with light gauge steel instead of CLT, Ms. Arnaud responded that the exterior facade is expected to remain unchanged.

Upon a motion moved, seconded, and approved by roll call of seven in favor and two absent (Chair Huang and Ms. Thorne), it was:

VOTED: to approve the request for up to $17,055,000 in construction and permanent funding to assist with the construction of 2072 Massachusetts Avenue, as detailed in the memo provided.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion moved, seconded, and approved by roll call of seven in favor and two absent (Chair Huang and Ms. Thorne), it was:

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 24, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting Materials:

- Agenda
- Minutes from the Trust's July 23, 2026 meeting
- Project Update
- Inman/CAST I & II Funding Request – 8.27.2026 memo
- 2072 Massachusetts Avenue Funding Request – 8.27.2026 memo