

**ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION**  
**Minutes Monday, March 8, 2021 – online via Zoom**

Pursuant to notice given, a Regular Meeting of the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) was held on Monday, March 8, 2021 at 4PM via zoom. Present and constituting a Quorum for the purpose of conducting business were regular members Janet Adachi, Andy Richardt, Bernice Baran, Judy Hodge, Bob Van Meter, and associate members Corrina Roman-Kreuze and Dan Buckley. Janet made Corrina and Dan voting members for today's meeting.

Lara Plaskon from RHSO serves as ACHC's off-board Clerk and was present for the meeting; Nancy Tavernier serves as ACHC's off-board treasurer and was also present for the meeting.

Guests:

- Jon Benson and David Martin, BOS; Alissa Nicol, Bonnie Lobel, Terra Friedrichs, Ruth Thatcher, Steve Ballard, Lauren Rosenzweig Morton, Sahana Purohibt, several other individuals, general public.

Janet Adachi, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:02PM. Janet read the meeting notice, including the Covid-related guidelines for the meeting.

**I. Meeting Administration**

- **Recording of virtual meetings via Zoom: continue or discontinue** – Janet introduced discussion with some remarks. She clarified that there is no Town policy regarding whether meetings of Town Boards should be recorded. There has been some public input regarding this issue – ACHC received an email advocating for continued recording and some comments were made on social media.
  - Bernice spoke in favor of recording; Andy expressed dismay about some of the negativity voiced on social media, but is happy to continue recording meetings; Judy spoke in favor of recording; Bob and Corrina also expressed some dismay about negativity, but are happy to keep being recorded. Dan also spoke in favor of recording. The board agreed that they have nothing to hide, so there is no objection to continuing to record meetings.
  - Bob asked if the committee could stop recording for discussions to protect the privacy of individuals homeowners applying for financial assistance. Committee members agreed on the need to protect homeowners' privacy. Janet explained that that was why she provided committee members with the materials about this capital assistance request but did not post them in the meeting packet; in order to post the materials, she would have to redact nearly all information except the dollar amount. Lara said that for other RHSO towns she prepares a summary of each request for assistance that provides the information that the committee would need to make a decision but omits individually identifying information. Janet will work with Lara on a process going forward.

- Judy moved that we continue to record; Bernice seconded; Lara took a roll call and the motion was approved unanimously.

## II. **Regular Business**

- **Minutes** – The minutes from the meeting of 2/8/21 were read. Bernice moved to approve the minutes and Bob seconded. Lara took a roll call vote – the motion passed unanimously.

- **Financial Report**

Nancy reported the following:

- Total ACHC assets as of 2/28/21 – \$73,282.70 (includes savings, checking, CD).
- \$504,488.32 available for future expenditures
- Spending items - \$1,500 in assistance to affordable homeowner for emergency water heater replacement; \$640.90 was added to New View account to bring the amount we gave to town Social Worker to use for emergency assistance to \$15K.
- Bernice moved to approve the financial report and Judy seconded; Lara took a roll call vote and the motion passed unanimously.
- Audit was completed as part of the Town Audit by a new auditor this year – all went well, and the auditors did not find any issues. Bob moved to approve the audit and Corrina seconded; Lara took a roll call vote and the motion passed unanimously.

- **Regional Housing Services Offices Update**

Lara reported the following:

- RHSO received the emergency request for capital improvement assistance described below – Lara coordinated.
- Lara is wrapping up another refinance request.
- Liz Valenta is continuing to work with Acton renter and homeowners in need of rental assistance or mortgage assistance.
- RHSO Advisory Board comprised of representatives of all member towns is meeting this week.

- **Chair Update**

Janet reported the following:

- Proposed ACHC transfer of funds to Town for housing-related assistance; On 2/22 – BOS approved transfer of the New View gift funds to the Town social worker
- Liz Rust from RHSO reported during monthly meeting that the State of MA will be receiving an influx of funds from HUD which should help with back rent – assistance will be for both tenants and landlords

- 2/26 – Janet attended Diversity-Equity-Inclusion training session for Town staff and committees. Focus of training was not simply on race, but more broadly on building awareness and sensitivity about a variety of potential identity dividers, such as socio-economic differences, disability, etc.
- 3/1 – BOS had an executive session where they discussed the parcel on 19-35 Wetherbee. Janet has been involved in earlier private discussions with land-preservation and housing advocates about that parcel.
- 3/2 – 446 Mass Ave was approved for financing by DHCD; more discussion later in agenda.

- **Member Reports**

- None

### III. **New Business**

- **Capital Assistance Request** – reimbursement for emergency replacement of failed water heater; Janet did an emergency authorization since the water heater failed and the owner had to replace it right away
  - Dan raised a concern about paying the full cost of the repair – he will abstain from vote
  - A discussion followed about who should be eligible for the capital improvement requests – just deed restricted homeowners or all homeowners below a certain income threshold?
  - Bernice moved to approve expense; Andy seconded – all members voted in favor, except for Dan who abstained
- **2020 Housing Production Plan – continued discussion of ACHC priorities for the next 6-12 months** – 2020 HPP Goals and Action Items are included in the packet – Janet asked where ACHC members would like to go with this and a discussion followed with the key points below:
  - Janet reviewed ideas that were raised last month and asked if the board was inclined to focus on something in particular from the list
  - Bernice asked about Wetherbee parcel, and Janet provided some more details. Bernice said perhaps some family housing would be an option.
  - There was some discussion about the Housing Choice law including the provision applicable to MBTA communities like Acton.
  - Bob suggested the issue of how ACHC's work affects racial justice in Acton: gather demographic information on residents in Acton's restricted housing as well as doing other analysis; Bob suggested meeting with the Town's diversity, equity and inclusion committee (DEIC) – Bernice agreed with this idea
  - Janet suggested doing something related to fair housing in support of Bob's concern about how to attract more diversity to Town
  - Janet noted, relative to Judy's earlier suggestion about environmentally

friendly construction, that the local Climate Coalition is working on a special legislation proposal for Acton that would prohibit the use of fossil fuel systems in new construction or substantial renovation. Judy added that the proponents don't necessarily believe that the MA legislature will approve Acton's proposal or similar local government proposals, but hope that if enough communities file such proposals, the legislature will feel compelled to adopt state-level legislation.

- Nancy suggested using some ACHC funds to support green technology in the proposed senior projects on Mass Ave and Main Street
- Audience member David Martin commented that heat pumps are less expensive upfront, and slightly more expensive to operate; Hot water is a challenge in large scale projects – difficult to provide the highest efficiency systems in certain multi-family housing
- Mr. Martin also offered to put ACHC on the agenda of a DEIC meeting. DEIC meets in the evening because most members work during the day, so wouldn't be able to attend an ACHC afternoon meeting.
- Andy reminded everyone of the agreed-upon feasibility study for housing for people with special needs; Bob suggested a meeting with the Planning Department. He will reach out to arrange a meeting with Andy and him.
- Janet will update the priorities list for the next meeting so ACHC can start to get to work on some of these items

#### **IV. Old Business**

- **446 Massachusetts Avenue**
  - Approved for funding from DHCD, so 31-unit senior housing will be moving forward; developer Common Ground is hoping to break ground before the end of the year
- **Other updates, if any** - none

#### **V. Future Agenda Items**

- **RE-visit ACHC's grant programs**
- **Spreadsheet of ACHC program grants** – Janet is hoping to create to help provide clarity

Corrina moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:32pm and Bernice seconded. Lara took a roll call vote – motion passed unanimously.

The next ACHC meeting will be on April 12, 2021.

#### **STATEMENT OF DOCUMENTS PRESENTED AT THIS MEETING:**

Agenda, March 8, 2021

Minutes from February 8, 2021

Financial Report through 2/28/21

Housing Funds as of 2/28/21

Annual Audit

Email from Alissa Nicol dated 2/11/21

Email from Alissa Nicol dated 3/4/21

HPP Goals & Action Plan

ACHC 2021 Priority Setting List

Confidential file regarding capital assistance application