

ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION
Minutes Monday, September 13, 2021, 7:30 PM – online via Zoom

Pursuant to notice given, a Regular Meeting of the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) was held on Monday, September 13, 2021 at 7:32 PM 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 Dan Buckley and Corrina Kreuze. Janet elevated Dan and Corrina to voting members for this meeting.

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

Guests/audience members:

- Alissa Nicol, Charlie Kadlec, Royce Fuller, Susanne Fuller, Michaela Moran, Terra Friedrichs

Janet Adachi, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm. Janet read the updated meeting notice, including guidelines for public participation in the meeting. The meeting was recorded starting at 8:09 pm (Janet accidentally didn't hit the record button earlier).

I. Regular Business

- **Minutes** – The minutes from 7/26/21 were read. Bernice moved to approve the minutes and Judy seconded. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

• **Financial Report**

Andy reported the following in his first report as treasurer:

- Total ACHC assets as of 8/31/21 – \$71,832.96. This includes savings (\$64,985.89), checking (\$945.15), and CD (\$5,901.92)
- No change in other accounts – Balance for undesignated gifts funds is \$298,926.22, and balance of CPA funds is \$135,000.
- Funds were moved from Cambridge Savings savings account to checking account in September to pay for closing cost assistance.
- Janet, chair, and Andy have both reviewed the monthly financial statements.
- Judy moved to approve the financial report and Corrina seconded; Lara took a roll call vote and motion passed unanimously.

• **Regional Housing Services Offices Update**

Lara reported the following:

- Lara is going to begin annual homeownership monitoring either this month or early next month – letters will be mailed to all affordable homeowners in Acton requesting that they self-certify that they are compliant with certain aspects of their deed riders.
- Liz and Liz are working on fair housing; Lara worked with Janet and Andy on a

closing cost assistance request – both will be covered in more detail later in the agenda.

- **Chair Update**

Janet reported the following:

- Andy is officially the second signatory on ACHC's Cambridge Savings bank accounts – required two bank visits and confirmation of Nancy's resignation and Andy's appointment as Treasurer.
- SHI is now unofficially at 7.2% based on preliminary 2020 Census data. New ratio eliminates the 230 units at Powder Mill Apartments since they fell off the SHI because the developers did not pull building permits. Projected denominator increase due to residential units added in Acton since 2010. Final 2020 Census data is not out yet.
- 184 Main Street – lottery was held for the two affordable units there, and one of the new buyers has requested closing cost assistance (see agenda item under New Business).
- 26 Carlisle Rd – application to MA Department of Housing and Community Development for local initiative project, filed 8/16. See New Business agenda item.
- 348-364 Main St – Zoning Board of Appeals hearing opens tomorrow, 9/14, 7:30 pm via Zoom. Bob, Bernice and Janet plan to attend and speak, so Janet posted extra ACHC agenda for 9/14 to cover quorum participation.
- MA e-bike program: Bob and Janet met via Zoom with Acton Sustainability Director Andrea Becerra and intern on 8/16 about proposal to make e-bikes available at multi-family affordable residences. MA has grant program for distribution of e-bikes to priority populations (low-income, non-white, seniors, etc.); Ms. Becerra also did outreach to Kelley Cronin about Acton Housing Authority possibilities; Bob planned to reach out via Housing for All to multi-family housing residents.
- September-October rental assistance program: Acton launched short-term program, starting 9/1, end mid-September, providing two months of assistance in one payment.
- Bedford Housing Partnership inquiry/meeting: Janet invited Nancy Tavernier to join her for meeting via Zoom with member of Bedford Housing Partnership, which is exploring whether to form non-profit organization that oversees affordable housing, and wanted to learn more about how ACHC was formed, its work, etc. Bedford affordable housing function seems fragmented, with Housing Partnership, an affordable housing trust and an Assistant Planner covering various affordable housing tasks but apparently

not communicating or collaborating with each other. Nancy and Janet recommended that all meet to discuss where Town is going with respect to affordable housing, and also seek guidance from Regional Housing Services Office, of which Bedford is a member.

- 516 Mass Ave. appointment – Postponed to allow proponents time to address Acton Water District concerns about potential impact of proposed project on abutting District-owned property.

- **Member Reports**

- Andy let ACHC know that he was contacted by the Town auditors, and he provided the documents and information they need for ACHC's participation in the Town audit.

II. New Business

- **Presentation about rehabilitation trust proposal** – Alissa Nicol (community member) joined to present about an idea to create a rehabilitation trust to create affordable housing units:

- Alissa prepared a slideshow – included in the Statement of documents for this meeting. The slideshow is a draft, and their group is looking for feedback.
- Bob, Dan, and Bernice made some clarifications about ACHC's focus/role – clarified that ACHC is focused on affordable housing for all income levels – affordable homeownership as well as rental housing for lower income levels; ACHC supports developments that come forward and provides resources to assist them.
- Vision of this proposal is for a 3rd Town entity (in addition to AHA and ACHC) that would use borrowing power of Town, serve households in the 30%-60% AMI range; proponents need to work out the details with Town staff re: how the trust would work; Bob clarified that they are describing creating a development entity that would purchase property, rehab it, and then sell or rent the units
- ACHC had many questions re: how the Trust would work, where the funds would come from, how it would be managed, etc.
- Some questions on how the financials would work – Royce Fuller from audience explained that trust would buy properties at discounted price, put \$50K of work into them and then rent or sell to income eligible renters/buyers
- Janet raised some questions about the cost of staffing; if trust owns property that is rented out, there will be costs associated with hiring a property management company; An attorney would also be needed for a variety of legal issues
- Dan raised questions about the borrowing – Alissa explained that they

are hoping for a \$3-4 million allocation from Town Meeting

- Bernice asked about the role that the Town and Select Board would have in the Trust – Alissa clarified that the Town would have to agree to assume responsibility for the Trust; Janet suggested that Alissa further explain the expectations for the Town’s role in the Trust in future iterations of the presentation
- Bob commented that most Housing Trusts in MA operate similarly to the ACHC – as a vehicle to help fund affordable housing projects rather than acting as a development agency
- Judy commented that rehab costs may be higher than predicted
- Andy commented that it may be difficult to get support when the model is not clear – will units be sold, rented, etc.?
- Terra Friedrichs from the community made several comments in support of the Trust
- Royce Fuller emphasized that they are talking about using existing units so it wouldn’t increase Acton’s population or increase the burden on Town services
- Dan raised some questions about the financial calculations and the viability of the Trust
- Alissa took everyone’s feedback and is hoping to meet with other Town officials, committees, etc. to further crystallize the proposal

- **26 Carlisle Rd – Vote to ratify Chairman’s between-meeting signing of Local Initiative Program-Local Action Units application to MA-DHCD** – Bob moved to ratify, and Corrina seconded – Lara took a roll call vote and motion passed unanimously
- **184 Main Street – Vote to ratify Chairman’s between-meeting commitment of \$2,500 in closing cost assistance for buyer of affordable unit** – Janet consulted with bank to clarify details and complete paperwork regarding the nature of the grant; Andy sent out the check; Janet will work with Lara to notify the buyer; Judy moved to ratify, and Bob seconded – Lara took a roll call vote and motion passed unanimously
- **WestMetro Consortium fair housing testing project: Discuss and vote on proposed Town of Acton participation, with ACHC having lead role; discuss and vote on potential funding commitment to help cover cost of consultant** – Janet wants to see if ACHC supports participation in this endeavor with ACHC as the lead entity in Acton (Bob has already volunteered to be the point person); Janet moved to support pursuing participation and Corrina seconded – Lara took a roll call vote and motion passed unanimously

- Housing for All & Acton Climate Coalition collaboration – Discuss and vote on requested endorsement of education and advocacy for benefit of low/middle-income Acton residents about how to improve energy efficiency, reduce utility costs and protect the environment – Bob reported that the NARA event in July was attended by 50 people, including 30 renters of affordable housing – resulted in a group of 10 new people who are focused on energy efficiency improvements at multi-family housing; Bob commented that this has made clear that there should be more involvement from tenants in affordable housing efforts in Acton – it is a way to broaden the constituency for affordable housing in Acton.
 - Bernice commented that DHCD has now mandated that all housing authority board in the a housing authority tenant.
 - Judy moved to formally endorse this effort and Corrina seconded – Lara took a roll call vote and motion passed unanimously
- CPA Funding 2021-2022 – Discuss possible ACHC application – agenda item postponed until future meeting
- 2021 Meeting Schedule – Discuss possible changes in meeting dates/times, whether meetings are in-person or virtual – 2nd Tuesday of the month at 4pm works for everyone, so that will be the new meeting time; ACHC will stick with virtual meetings for now

III. Old Business

- Tavernier Place, 446 Mass Ave. – Steven Joncas reported to Janet that the tax credit financing is closing this month, and the rest of the financial closing will be in mid/late October – so this is when ACHC's contribution will be needed; After a lot of back and forth about whether ACHC's contribution should be grant, as the committee originally contemplated, or a loan, as Common Ground initially thought would be necessary, ACHC's financing will be a grant to Common Ground, which in turn will lend funds to the developing entity; Bob moved to authorize Janet to sign whatever closing paperwork is needed and Judy seconded – Lara took a roll call vote and motion passed unanimously
- Other project updates (if any) – none

IV. Future Agenda Items

- Member suggestions - none

Judy moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:45pm and Bernice seconded. Lara took a roll call vote –

motion passed unanimously.

The next ACHC meeting will be on October 18, 2021 – will likely change based on today's discussion re: moving meetings to the second Tuesday of the month at 4pm

STATEMENT OF DOCUMENTS PRESENTED AT THIS MEETING:

Agenda, July 26, 2021

Minutes from July 26, 2021

Financial Reports through 8/31/21

Housing Funds report through 8/31/21

Climate & Housing Commission Mission Statement, 6/8/21

Event Registration Information, 7/17/21

Event Flyer, 7/17/21

26 Carlisle Road – LIP LAU Application, 8/18/21

Meeting Schedule 2021 – July through December revised

Fair Housing Testing – RHO Memo to HOME Consortium, 9/3/21

CPA Grant 2021 – ACHC Acceptance, 7/23/21

Rehab Trust Slides, 9/13/21