

ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION
Minutes Tuesday, January 11, 2022 – online via Zoom

Pursuant to notice given, a Regular Meeting of the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) was held on Tuesday, January 11, 2022 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 VanMeter, and associate members Dan Buckley and Corrina Roman-Kreuze. Janet designated Dan and Corrina as voting members for today's meeting.

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

Guests:

- David Martin, Select Board; Alissa Nicol, Nancy Corcoran – community members

Janet Adachi, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm. Janet read the updated meeting notice, including guidelines for public participation in the meeting.

I. Regular Business

- **Minutes** – The minutes from 12/14/21 were read. Lara will amend the notes to include that Janet and Andy reviewed the monthly financial statements (forgot to affirm this at December meeting). Judy moved to approve the notes as amended, and Bernice seconded – 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 12/31/21 –\$69,320.73
- Balance for undesignated gifts funds is \$298,926.22. (excludes \$7,500 earmarked for monitoring or RHSO)
- Total all funds (checking account + gift funds + CPA) = \$537,345.03
- Only change from last month is minimal due to interest earned; no checks outstanding
- Auditors sent ACHC a bill for \$1,400 for audit, but ACHC did not pay because Town has always paid for the audit in the past and is continuing to do so.
- Janet and Andy affirmed that they have both reviewed the monthly financial statements.
- Judy moved to accept financial report and Corrina seconded – roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

- **Regional Housing Services Offices Update**

Lara reported the following:

- New staff person, Suzy Solomon, will be starting soon
- Office continues to be busy with variety of projects, monitoring, lotteries, etc.

- **Chair Update**

Janet reported the following:

- Audit for FY '21 is done – Andy and Janet submitted the signed representations letter in December and received the final FY21 audit report; Report is in meeting packet; Copy of audit report also is in ACHC's DocuShare file, in "Financial" folder, along with a few prior annual audit reports and newly created folder with duplicates of Treasurer's monthly financial reports on bank accounts and housing gift funds accounts.
- Town may be shifting focus of Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) to assisting residents in applying for state assistance via SMOC (South Middlesex Opportunity Council). Town's program overlaps with state assistance program, which has lots of money. Problem is that administration of state program is deficient and approval process via SMOC can take weeks. Hope is to have Town's program provide bridge funding while SMOC application pending.
- Select Board approved ACHC's proposed grant to Habitat for funding for 26 Carlisle Rd at last night's meeting; There's a further detail that Janet didn't realize until yesterday that she had overlooked--the funding source for the grant--or she would have put Carlisle Rd on today's agenda; so under the exception that allows for addressing last-minute issues that surface too late for the 48-hr-notice required for agenda items, she will cover the funding source under "Old Business" shortly.
- Community Preservation Committee meeting tonight with all applicants for community housing funds: AHA, ACHC, Habitat and Town, which is applying for funding of RHSO services. This year's available CPA funds, with surcharge receipts of 1.2M and state matching funds of just under 500K, are well short of what this year's applications would require. At last night's Select Board meeting, Dean Charter who represents the SB on CPC, made the deficiency clear. CPC provided three questions in advance that Janet on behalf of ACHC must respond to tonight. The questions hint at CPC's concern about the funding deficiency:
 - If ACHC only received 50-80% of funding request, how would that affect ACHC?
 - What other sources of funding does ACHC have?
 - How do you decide to support other housing projects, like Main Street or Habitat, that also receive funding from CPC?

ACHC does have funds and could manage in the coming year if its CPA grant were lower than the ask. But going forward, CPA funding is likely to be

essential if the mitigation payments and other sources of the so-called gift funds dry up. At some point, will ACHC need to pursue other funding sources? CPC's final question suggests a CPC concern about affordable housing organizations like AHA or Habitat that receive CPA funds indirectly from ACHC as well as directly from CPC. The Community Preservation Act requires each year that a community allocate at least 10% of available CPA funds to community housing, whether projects or a set-aside fund for a future community housing allocation. Perhaps this year, ACHC will hold community housing grants to the 10% minimum, and not approve spending beyond that.

- **Member Reports**

- Bob – proposal to create a tenant advocate position – Bob made a short presentation to the Select Board in December; Bob asked for ACHC's endorsement of the tenant advocate position; proposal is to use ARPA funds to support the position
 - Janet suggested making this an agenda item at ACHC's February meeting instead of a member report; she thinks ACHC needs more information
 - Bob shared that the State does fund agencies/programs that provide support to tenants, but those agencies/programs don't really reach Acton residents; Bob suggested that this position does not have to be a Town employee, but could be arranged through a contract with a nonprofit such as the United Way
 - Bernice supports Janet's suggestion to make this a topic for next month's meeting; she is not ready to vote until she has more information
 - Janet will add this to the agenda for next month and make suggestions to Bob regarding what information would be helpful to provide so that ACHC can make an informed decision
- Bernice – AHA is going to submit funding application for Main Street project; Peter and Kelley met with Acton TV do an interview about affordable housing and AHA's new project; Kelley will be presenting AHA's request for CPA funds tonight; Select Board was very supportive of AHA at last night's meeting; Kelley provided clarification to the Select Board about AHA's tenant selection process in response to concerns raised earlier

II. **New Business**

- **362-364 Main Street** – AHA would like support letter from ACHC for their One-Stop financing application; Draft letter from Janet is in the packet;
 - Bob moved to approve Janet's letter, and Corrina seconded – a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (Bernice abstained since she

is a member of the AHA board)

- **2022 Meeting Schedule** – Janet reserved Room #9 for 4pm on second Tuesday of the month; ACHC will continue to meet remotely for now and see how things go with Covid; Select Board voted last night to encourage boards to meet remotely in January and February and to require masks for indoor meetings
 - Dan raised that there is also a public meeting space at the police station that would provide plenty of room for social distancing; Janet will look into this

III. Old Business

- **26 Carlisle Rd** – Source of funds for grant to Habitat – ACHC currently has \$175K in CPA funds; also still gift funds from 670 Mass Ave (~\$80K) that ACHC should use – total undesignated gift funds available are about \$299K; ACHC can choose to use gift funds instead of CPA funds for the \$60K contribution to Habitat for 26 Carlisle Rd; Judy moved to use gift funds from 670 Mass Ave for the \$60K contribution to Habitat and Bob seconded – roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously
- **Other project updates (if any)** –
 - Powder Mill Apartments – purchase of that property is in the due diligence stage
 - Fair Housing Proposal – RHSO needs to confer with Suffolk to see if Acton can have a separate contract for the fair housing services; WestMetro HOME Consortium is definitely moving forward with the project

IV. Future Agenda Items

- **Accessory dwelling unit bylaw: potential zoning bylaw changes** – Acton's Planning Director will probably come to February meeting to discuss
- **ACHC program forms, guidelines** – update – We need a document that explains how grants to private citizens serve the public interest
- **MBTA community multi-family zoning requirement** – there is an upcoming webinar that Janet will attend; Towns don't have to comply, but will lose access to funding if they don't

Corrina moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:03pm and Judy seconded. Lara took a roll call vote – motion passed unanimously.

The next ACHC meeting will be on February 8, 2022

STATEMENT OF DOCUMENTS PRESENTED AT THIS MEETING:

Agenda, January 11, 2022

Draft Minutes from December 14, 2021

Financial Reports through 12/31/21, including bank account and housing gift funds

FY '21 Annual Audit Report and cover letter

Memo from ACHC to Select Board re: ACHC proposed funding for 26 Carlisle Rd. Habitat project

Letter from Habitat requesting ACHC grant to assist with 26 Carlisle Rd project

2022 Room Reservation Request

ACHC Support Letter for AHA's 362-364 Main Street project