

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

Pursuant to notice given, a Regular Meeting of the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) was held on Monday, February 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 member Corrina Kreuze. Janet made Corrina a voting member for today's meeting. Bob left the meeting at 5:30pm.

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:

- Alissa Nicol, Bonnie Lobel, Terra Friedrichs, Peter Berry general public; Jon Benson, David Martin, BOS

Janet Adachi, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:07PM. Janet read the meeting notice, including the Covid-related guidelines for the meeting.

I. Regular Business

- **Minutes** – The minutes from the meeting of 1/11/21 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 1/31/21 – \$73,923.60 (includes savings, checking, CD).
- Nancy is going to merge two of the funds to simplify the balance sheet.
- Nancy again discussed terminating the CD related to the old High School property, and return the funds to Common Ground; This issue is being reviewed by Town Counsel – they will advise ACHC how to deal with this
- There were no expenditures this month.
- Bernice moved to approve this report, Bob seconded; Lara took a roll call vote – motion passed unanimously.

- **Regional Housing Services Offices Update**

Lara reported the following:

- The homeownership monitoring letters are continuing to come in – 82% have been returned – will continue to follow up with the owners who have not yet returned them.
- RHSO continues to receive a lot of requests to refinance from affordable

homeowners due to the current low interest rates. Lara is currently working with at least two Acton homeowners on their refinances.

- **Chair Update**

Janet reported the following:

- 1/12 – Janet had her appointment with CPC the day after our last ACHC meeting; there are more requests than funds available (\$2.7 million in requests, but \$1.7 million available), so not all requests will be met.
- 1/19 – discussion with Town’s Community Services Coordinator (Laura Ducharme) and RHSO re: emergency housing assistance programs and ACHC’s involvement
- 1/21 – Very preliminary discussion about potential for an open space affordable housing project
- 1/27 – Janet met with Planning Department, HDC chair, and HC chair to discuss possible change in zoning bylaw to allow dwelling conversions from single to multi-family by-right instead of by permit (current Section 3.3.3 allows multiple units up to 4 in all residential districts and KC). Probably difficult to allow by right without adding more conditions, but maybe existing provision could be tweaked to allow more flexibility while retaining permitting requirement, for example, expanding to include houses newer than 4/1/1971.
- 1/29 — Janet submitted ACHC’s annual report to be included with the Town’s 2020 report; Due to the deadline for submission, Janet was not able to consult with ACHC for input on the report
- Housing Choice Legislation became law – amends State zoning law
 - certain zoning changes can now be approved by simple majority instead of 2/3 majority at Town Meeting
 - Legislation also changes zoning in MBTA communities (including Acton) – communities being asked to create districts for multi-family housing that are close to public transportation – DHCD will issue clarifying guidance on this provision, and Towns will be deemed in compliance until then
- Janet attended a bunch of webinars –
 - MA Housing Partnership’s CPA conference, 4 sessions, which Judy also attended - learned that DHCD created Community Scale Housing Initiative in last few years to provide developer funding for smaller projects, 5-20 units, too small for LIHTC funding and that may include Section 8 vouchers to provide revenue stream; but also can be more expensive per unit and require as much work by developer as large project

- CHAPA's Chap. 40B conference, 3 sessions, which Bob also attended - covered some topics of potential interest to ACHC, including inclusionary zoning and fair housing.
- **Member Reports**
 - Bob attended 3-session CHAPA 40B series of webinars; He highlighted a few items that he learned from the series.
 - Bob attended a NLIHC webinar with 1,200 attendees – discussed federal housing agenda under Biden – federal eviction ban extended; additional money for rental subsidies; Biden issued a statement regarding the Trump administration's abandonment of Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing
 - Bernice asked about Housing for All and housing for disabled folks – Bob replied that Housing for All met in January and that there is still interest in this issue; ACHC needs to discuss whether they will use some their resources to move the effort forward
 - Bernice gave update on Main Street Project from AHA – CPC is enthusiastic about project, but unsure if the full \$500,000 will be granted; Another community meeting took place where neighbors gave feedback to the architect; AHA is going to request an additional \$75K for the project from ACHC.
 - Judy went to a meeting about housing developments in Brewster and Salem – strong emphasis on the need to persevere over time, developing alliances, and building relationships with different groups.

II. **New Business**

- **Town emergency rental & mortgage assistance programs** – Proposal to take funds from ACHC's gift fund and move them to the Town fund for emergency assistance that is administered by Town social worker, Laura Ducharme; Nancy and Janet worked together on a letter to the BOS to request approval to move these funds;
 - Discussion among ACHC members with mostly favorable comments about the idea
 - Also discussion about ACHC's unobligated funds and what they could be used for
 - Andy moved to transfer funds; Judy seconded; all voted in favor except for Bernice who abstained because she prefers that ACHC funds only be used for deed restricted properties

- **2020 Housing Production Plan – 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:
 - Bernice is concerned that the Town will be complacent about affordable housing now that we are at 10% - she would like ACHC to focus on stimulating new 40B housing for families
 - Nancy raised idea of looking into Tiffany Manuel's group (<https://www.thecasemade.com/>), particularly building inclusive communities; Bob was at a meeting today where this idea was being discussed; MHP has ongoing relationship with Dr. Manuel, so ACHC may be able to tap into that
 - Bernice suggested a joint meeting with the newly formed diversity group in Acton; there was a discussion about diversity and housing – consensus that ACHC should look for ways to ensure that affordable housing is inclusive; Bob suggested investigating proposing inclusionary zoning at Town Meeting
 - Judy suggested focus on how housing could be more environmentally friendly
 - Bernice suggested fostering relationships with developers to encourage them to focus on inclusivity
 - Comments from the community included a request for the ACHC to focus on rehab; suggestion for a revised master plan for South Acton village; support for ACHC's focus on racial inclusivity and minimizing climate impacts
 - Discussion will be continued at future meetings.

III. Old Business

- **Updates if any**
 - No update from Steve Joncas regarding 446 Mass Ave
 - Craftsman Village – request from Maureen O'Hagan to update sales prices of 2 affordable units since prices were calculated so long ago – RHSO took care of this
 - Anthem Village – Janet met with the Planning Department regarding the drainage issues at Anthem Village; the HOA is meeting with Town Land Use and the developer to clarify how the plan for drainage was designed and to clarify what is and is not permitted in terms of gutter installation

IV. Future Agenda Items

- **Continued discussion, 2021 priorities**
- **Member Suggestions** - None

Judy moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:41pm and Corrina seconded. Lara took a roll call vote –

motion passed unanimously.

The next ACHC meeting will be on March 8, 2021.

STATEMENT OF DOCUMENTS PRESENTED AT THIS MEETING:

Agenda, February 8, 2021

Minutes from January 11, 2021

Financial Report through 1/31/21

Spreadsheet listing Housing Funds held by ACHC and the Town

Draft memo to BOS re: Housing Needs Fund

Spreadsheet with current status of Town ERAP & MAP Programs

Summary of Housing Choice Initiative – Preliminary Guidance for MBTA Communities

DHCD Preliminary Guidance for MBTA Communities Regarding Compliance with Section 3A of Chapter 40A

2020 HPP Goals and Action Plan