

ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION
Minutes Monday, April 12, 2021 – online via Zoom

Pursuant to notice given, a Regular Meeting of the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) was held on Monday, April 12, 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.

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:

- David Martin – BOS; Alissa Nicol– general public

Janet Adachi, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:09PM – there was a slight delay due to a technical issue. Janet read the meeting notice, including the Covid-related guidelines for the meeting.

I. Regular Business

- **Minutes** – The minutes from the meeting of 3/8/21 were read. Bob moved to approve the minutes and Judy seconded. Lara took a roll call vote – the motion passed unanimously.

- **Financial Report**

Nancy reported the following:

- Total ACHC assets as of 3/31/21 – \$71,785.89 (includes savings, checking, CD) – Community Hsg Program Fund (\$65,922.86) + Old High School escrow fund (5,863.03)
- No expenditures this month – 2 checks that were previously outstanding were cashed.
- Lara will check mail – Nancy is expecting quarterly savings statement

- **Regional Housing Services Offices Update**

Lara reported the following:

- Lara has been busy with a lot of re-sales of affordable homeownership units.
- RHSO is planning a post-purchase training for affordable homeowners in May that will cover such topics as refinancing, capital improvements, condo associations, etc. Lara will provide updates about the training at next month's meeting.

- **Chair Update**

Janet reported the following:

- 3/9/21 – A developer (National Development) interested in the Kmart site made a presentation to the COA about their conceptual plan for 120-unit full-service, continuing-care rental residence with no affordable units. Units will include efficiencies, 1BR, some 2BR, smaller than standard due to availability of shared amenities, activities. Main building would be where KMart is, main exit on 27. Possibility of smaller building(s) in front on Main for activities. Still very early so no architectural elevations.
 - 3/14/21 – Janet and Kelley Cronin (AHA director) spoke to Acton Congregational Church Pursuing Justice Task Force about affordable housing issues. Task Force previously had met with Community Services Coordinator Laura Ducharme to learn about the community needs and many social-support services that she provides. Task Force interested in knowing what they can do to support affordable housing efforts. Janet and Kelley both mentioned Housing for All (HFA). Bob reached out to Pam Lowe, who organized the Task Force talk, and she attended HFA's most recent meeting.
 - Late March – the last affordable homeownership unit at Post Office Square closed. The new owners are moving from Boxborough and have kids in the AB school system.
 - Housing Choice & MBTA Communities law – Janet attended multiple webinars about housing issues, including the new law. Chris Kluchman of DHCD was usually the presenter. Ms. Kluchman (now Acton resident) says DHCD is working on detailed guidance regarding MBTA communities provision, along with process and timeline for working with communities.
 - Housing Choice award to Acton – Town Manager John Mangiaratti recently announced that the Town received its second Housing Choice Award from the Commonwealth – \$233,819 for infrastructure/sewering-related work that will support the AHA project at 348-364 Main Street and Residences at Kelley's Corner at 446 Massachusetts Avenue.
 - Wetherbee Land Update – Select Board held another Executive Session about Wetherbee parcel. Meanwhile, application was recently submitted for Community Preservation Act funding of 1.23M for purchase of 51.5 acres at Stonefield Farm and placement of agricultural preservation and conservation restrictions. This has been a very high-priority open-space parcel for years in Town's open space and recreational plan – will preserve 28 acres for farmland, 23 acres for conservation. Appraised value before restrictions: 2.7M; proposed restrictions would reduce appraised value by 1.9M; purchase price represents discount of value-reduction. Open-space set-aside fund currently has 1.94M, so proposed purchase price of 1.23M would leave 700K for other open-space purposes, before addition of 400K in CPA funds that Open Space Committee requested this year. Fund would then increase to 1.1M.
- **Member Reports**
 - Bernice attended the presentation to the COA about the possible development on the Kmart parcel – full spectrum of services – including

assisted living/dementia care, nursing care; Nancy commented that there is precedent for affordable units at assisted living (3 units at Robbins Brook); Dan commented that his company built a few Alzheimer's focused projects that also included affordable units.

II. New Business

- **348-364 Main Street: Ratify Chairman's 3/15/21 letter in support of Acton Housing Authority Project Eligibility application** – shortly after the March ACHC meeting, Janet needed to write a letter of support; Bernice pointed out that the number of units has increased to 40; Andy moved to approve the letter, Judy seconded – a quorum approved, Bernice abstained since she is on the board of the AHA.
- **Special needs housing, proposed feasibility study: Status update by Bob and Andy** – Andy and Bob talked to Kristen Guichard for advice on how to proceed – Kristen suggested talking to the RHSO; Andy attended the recent RHSO meeting with the Town and he passed along the scope of work that he and Bob created; Kristen suggested consultant for the first phase of the feasibility study may cost more than \$25K; Idea to form a group to work on this project; Bob suggested that they report back next month with an update on progress.
 - Judy asked what type of housing and what population would be served – Andy described that's what they're trying to figure out – the families he has talked to have expressed a need for semi-independent housing.
 - Bernice suggested asking DMH about what they see as the need.
 - Lara offered to check in with Liz about the role that the RHSO can play to move the project forward.
- **Residences at Kelley's Corner, 446 Massachusetts Avenue: Discuss proposed recommendation to Select Board that Town join MassDocs and authorize MassDocs counsel for financial closing** – Janet has been working to figure out whether Town joining makes sense
 - Janet asked RHSO for advice – Liz suggested that Town and Common Ground meet to discuss the plans for financing;
 - Janet would like to send a memo to Select Board, Town Manager and Town Counsel asking that they do whatever is necessary to facilitate financing; Dan suggested that we set milestones that need to happen before ACHC releases funds that have been committed.
 - Bob moved that ACHC authorize Janet to prepare a memo to Select Board, Town Manager and Town Counsel to ask the best way to deal with the closing for funds ACHC has committed to Common Ground, including whether or not to use MassDocs; Bernice seconded for purposes of discussion
 - Bernice asked how everything worked with Common Ground – this was different than the AHA project because Town owns the land where the

- building sits
 - Nancy commented that the funds for Common Ground are available in ACHC accounts and that the funding was intended as a grant, not a loan
 - Discussion concluded and vote took place – Lara took roll call vote and motion passed unanimously.
- **Possible zoning provision on multi-family housing: provide feedback for belated memorandum to Planning Department** – This relates to the meeting that Planning convened with ACHC, HDC and HC chairmen back in January;
 - Chairmen agreed that the zoning provision should not be “by right,” but there should be some controls in place; there was also a feeling that the hearing process should not be onerous
 - Chairmen were supposed to get feedback on this issue from their committees, so Janet is belatedly seeking ACHC’s input now. Thinks original focus on historic district was too limiting and option perhaps should be available more broadly in town
 - Bob commented that it should be easier to convert single family into multi-family homes, generally speaking
 - Judy thinks it is a good idea to allow people with large homes to create multiple units if they have space they aren’t using
 - Andy thinks it make sense that ACHC should be supportive whether the conversions be in historic districts or elsewhere
 - Corrina also offered her support of this idea
 - Bernice agreed that this is a good idea, particularly the ability to create additional units for older or young adult family members
 - Janet is in favor as well – pointed out that HPP addresses this
 - Public comment from Alissa Nicol from School Street – commented that she agrees that it doesn’t make sense to restrict this change to homes in the historic district – she cited several examples of large homes in Acton that have already been converted to multi-family housing; believes that these types of conversions should be permitted Town-wide; Also suggested builders might be more able to handle the cost of such conversions than homeowners – idea that a project that uses a combination of historic and community housing CPA funds would receive much support from residents
 - Nancy pointed out that the language about this issue in the 2020 HPP was lifted from the 2015 HPP and was written by the chair of HDC
 - Janet will draft a summary of this feedback for Planning Department
- **2020 Housing Production Plan: continued discussion of ACHC priorities for coming year** - Janet would like to see ACHC do something related to fair housing
 - Janet reported that Liz from RHSO said that a group of towns is forming a subcommittee to look at fair housing issues – Acton could choose to participate;

- Judy commented that it's a good idea for ACHC to take part in fair housing;
- Bob commented that April is fair housing month – Amherst is having a virtual forum on fair housing issues on 4/20
- Bernice would like fair housing to be a main agenda item for our next meeting, and she suggested we hear from the DEIC
- Janet will follow up with David Martin about getting the ACHC on the DEIC's meeting agenda

III. Old Business

- **Project updates, if any** – none

IV. Future Agenda Items

- **Member Suggestions** – none

Judy moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:47pm and Bob seconded. Lara took a roll call vote – motion passed unanimously.

The next ACHC meeting will be on May 10, 2021.

STATEMENT OF DOCUMENTS PRESENTED AT THIS MEETING:

Agenda, April 12, 2021

Minutes from March 8, 2021

Financial Report through 3/31/21

MassDocs Joinder Agreement

MassDocs Loan Information Form

MassDocs Participation Agreement

Memo to Janet from Planning Department re: Dwelling Conversion, 1/13/21

Zoning Bylaw 3.3.3

348-364 Main Street support letter

ACHC 2021 Priority Setting List, updated 4/9/21