

ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION
Minutes Tuesday, December 14, 2021 – online via Zoom

Pursuant to notice given, a Regular Meeting of the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) was held on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 at 4PM via zoom. Present and constituting a Quorum for the purpose of conducting business were regular members Janet Adachi, Andy Richarddt, Bernice Baran, Judy Hodge, Bob VanMeter, and associate member Dan Buckley.

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

Guests:

- Carolyn Read, Habitat for Humanity; Nancy Corcoran, community member; David Martin, Select Board

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. **Appointment** – Carolyn Read, Habitat for Humanity, regarding 26 Carlisle Road project
 - Carolyn presented Powerpoint with details that is included in the Statement of Documents below
 - Flooding/water issue in basement that they are working on
 - Habitat has partnership with Minuteman Tech to work with their carpentry students
 - February/March timeframe for family selection
 - Budget in presentation is just cost of materials; labor is primarily volunteer
 - Questions from ACHC members
 - Bob and Judy asked some questions about energy efficiency and encouraged air source heat pumps
 - Bernice asked about process – ZBA hearing necessary? Carolyn clarified that they can build as of right on this parcel, but they still need to apply to the Conservation Commission re: wetlands
 - Bob asked about sources and uses – What is Habitat seeking from ACHC? Carolyn replied that they are seeking \$60K from ACHC and \$40K from other Town sources
 - Andy – asked about cost of materials for this project compared to previous builds – they've been higher since Covid, but Habitat hoping that they will be coming down soon; biggest concern regarding cost is the site work
 - Dan – asked more questions about budget; Family moving in will be asked to save \$1,500 for down payment; mortgage will be set to make sure it is not more than 30% of owner's income – anticipated that mortgage will be \$180K; Habitat will hold the mortgage and Leominster Credit Union will likely be the

- servicer
- Bernice – asked about selection criteria – there are three criteria – 1) household must earn 60% or less AMI; 2) willingness to partner with Habitat (200-350 hours spent helping to build home); 3) household need (needs assessment is the most important criteria); there will be a lottery per DHCD guidelines, but need will also be considered
- Bob – asked about timeline – they are hoping to be done by Fall 2022
- Janet broached whether ACHC is ready to commit the \$60K – Judy moved that ACHC support the Habitat project with \$60K and Bernice seconded
 - Dan suggested we consider how many funds are available in ACHC's accounts to confirm members are comfortable with this expense; Janet feels we can handle this financial commitment; Bob suggested hearing Andy's financial report and then voting
 - Bernice and Bob commented that they think ACHC should commit the \$60K – worthwhile expense
 - Dan pointed out that the Habitat project is expensive/a large commitment of funds considering it is only one unit; Cost per unit is high (especially as compared to Tavernier Place)
 - Janet pointed out that there are many benefits – not only is a unit of affordable housing being created, a piece of land with a home that was vacant for decades is being put to use
 - Andy and Bob both pointed out that there is not another multi-family project in front of us where ACHC can spend its money, and there is a downside to sitting on money while waiting for a better project
 - Decision was made to vote on Judy's earlier motion – a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously

II. Regular Business

- **Minutes** – The minutes from 11/9/21 were read. Judy pointed out that Bob arrived late, but was present – Lara will add; Bob moved to approved 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 11/30/21 –\$69,319.14.
- Balance for undesignated gifts funds is \$298,926.22. (excludes \$7,500 earmarked for monitoring or RHSO)
- \$440K grant check for Tavernier Place cleared.
- \$537,343.44 available to spend
- \$150K grant from CPA in 2019 - \$75K has already gone to AHA Main Street project
- Janet and Andy affirmed that they both reviewed the monthly financial statements.

- **Regional Housing Services Offices Update**

Lara reported the following:

- Lara is working on two refinances – both owners are close to closing on their new loans.
- Liz Valenta relayed to Lara that the RFP for the fair housing project will be live on 12/16 and will be available for anyone to view
- Liz Rust is working on a new safe harbor request for Acton – since a comp permit was issued for the AHA Main Street project, and building permits were issued for Tavernier Place, the units at those developments make Acton eligible for one year of safe harbor.
- RHSO interviewed a new staff person will be starting sometime in the new year

- **Chair Update**

Janet reported the following:

- She recently attended a webinar on racial justice, housing, and transportation
- She will begin working on ACHC's annual report before next meeting
- She will begin prep for CPC meeting in January

- **Member Reports**

- Bob – update on Alissa Nicol's presentation about the Rehab Trust to ACHC a few months ago; Alissa then presented a revised version to Housing for All in October; Bob wrote a memo to summarize additional questions/concerns that he has about the Rehab Trust model – Bob shared it with Alissa in November, but he has not heard back yet; Bob offered that there could be some units added to the SHI using this model, but it is not a model that will actually meet Acton's housing needs – Janet will include Bob's remarks in the packet after today's meeting
- Bernice – update on AHA's Main Street project – ZBA approved the project and received comp permit; will submit application for funding to the State in January; AHA planning a more proactive approach to public visibility to clarify and explain their work to the public (partially in response to complaint by a public housing resident); Bob commented that most of the AHA's portfolio is state-financed public housing with has been under funded for decades
- Bob – Committee for Action on Climate and Housing has called on the Town to create the position of tenant advocate – asked that the Select Board consider this and they are planning to continue to press on this; Bob will plan to bring a written resolution to a future ACHC meeting and seek endorsement from the ACHC; Bernice suggested using the term tenant liaison instead of advocate

- Judy – asked a question if ACHC can be involved in the discussion re: transit oriented housing legislation; Janet replied that this will be an issue for further discussion by the ACHC in the future

III. New Business

- **2022 Meeting Schedule**
 - ACHC will initially continue to meet virtually, but Janet is wondering if we should consider in person meeting if Covid situation begins to improve in the spring or beyond
 - Tuesday at 4pm time – no one had objections to continuing this time
 - Janet will finalize the schedule and reserve room 126 starting in March or April in case ACHC decides to begin meeting in person (with option for community members to join virtually); Janet will also check what other larger rooms might be available for meetings

IV. Old Business

- **Tavernier Place, 446 Mass Avenue: Update about financial closing** – Closed on 11/9 and Mass DOT renewed the permit for the driveway; they received building permits; groundbreaking should be early in the new year and the hope is that Nancy Tavernier will be able to attend
- **Other project updates (if any)** –
 - None

V. Future Agenda Items

- **Accessory dwelling unit bylaw: potential zoning bylaw changes** – Acton's Planning Director may come to talk about some proposed changes
- **ACHC program forms, guidelines** – update – Janet is still planning to return to this to better standardize and formalize ACHC processes
- **Housing Production Plan** – goal setting and assessment of how we're doing

Public Comment from David Martin re: AHA tenant complaint to Select Board – David Martin raised concerns about comments made by AHA in response to a tenant complaint that he feels have not been helpful; Important to acknowledge that at least some of the tenant's complaints are valid; David voiced concerns about the AHA's reputation following the response to this complaint

- Bernice voiced concerns about David making his comments to the ACHC who has no direct knowledge of this incident
- Bob voiced dismay that David read a statement intended for the AHA Board to the ACHC
- Janet chose to end the discussion on this topic for now and encouraged further discussion offline
- Bob suggested another minute or two for David – David remarked that he also

- gave his comments to the AHA Board
- Bernice suggested that this issue not be added to an ACHC agenda since it is not an ACHC issue, especially since the AHA Board has not had the chance to figure out their response

Judy moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:42pm and Bob seconded. Lara took a roll call vote – motion passed unanimously.

The next ACHC meeting will be on January 11, 2022

STATEMENT OF DOCUMENTS PRESENTED AT THIS MEETING:

Agenda, December 14, 2021

Draft Minutes from November 9, 2021

Financial Reports through 11/30/21

Housing Funds report through 11/30/21

Grant Request from Habitat for Humanity for 26 Carlisle Rd.

Habitat for Humanity Powerpoint slides for their proposed project at 26 Carlisle Rd.

ACHC Final CPA Application

List of CPA matching funds by Town

ACHC Meeting Schedule 2022

Memo from Bob VanMeter to Alissa Nicol re: Proposal for Acton Affordable Housing Rehab Trust