

ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION
Minutes Tuesday, November 9, 2021 – online via Zoom

Pursuant to notice given, a Regular Meeting of the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) was held on Tuesday, November 9, 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, and Judy Hodge, and associate member Dan Buckley. Bob VanMeter was also present, but arrived a little late. Janet elevated Dan to voting member for this meeting.

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

Guests:

- Nancy Corcoran, Paulette Farmer, community members; David Martin, Select Board

Janet Adachi, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm. Janet read the updated meeting notice, including guidelines for public participation in the meeting.

I. Regular Business

- **Minutes** – The minutes from 10/12/21 were read. Bernice moved to approve both sets of minutes and Bob seconded. A roll call vote was taken to approve the minutes and the motion passed unanimously.

• **Financial Report**

Andy reported the following in his first report as treasurer:

- Total ACHC assets as of 10/31/21 – \$69,336.10. Closing cost check was deposited in October – this accounts for the decrease from last month.
- 2021 CPA funds were added to account – increase of \$40K, so now total of \$175K in CPA funds.
- No change in other accounts – Balance for undesignated gifts funds is \$298,926.22.
- Janet mentioned that the \$440K grant check for Tavernier Place was sent.
- Janet and Andy have both reviewed the monthly financial statements.
- Judy moved to approve the financial report and Dan seconded; Lara took a roll call vote and motion passed unanimously.

• **Regional Housing Services Offices Update**

Lara reported the following:

- The Town of Concord released an RFP to solicit applications for a new staff person for the RHSO office – hoping to hire someone soon.
- MassHousing is offering a training on Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plans and affordable housing lotteries, and they asked RHSO staff to be the trainers. We are working on putting together the presentation – the training

will be next week.

- RHSO staff continues to be very busy with monitoring, refinance requests, capital improvement requests, administering projects such as rental assistance, other special projects, etc.

- **Chair Update**

Janet reported the following:

- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) activity – ADU's will be a topic in a future meeting; In the past month, Janet
 - 1) met with a resident about the challenges of the current ADU bylaw;
 - 2) attended an AARP-MA webinar about ADUs in MA
 - 3) conferred with Bob about ADUs
- Rehabilitation to create affordable units – Janet met with Sustainability Director Andrea Becerra about concept of rehab to create affordable units. Janet said rehab was one option, but as a practical matter, rehab cannot be the primary way to create affordable units due to the cost to create just one unit or a small number of units, and the need for financing to cover that cost, ideally not via local taxpayers. Habitat addresses the cost issue by using volunteer labor with a smaller number of paid skilled tradespeople, and doing fund-raising, but that model would not work for others.
- WestMetro HOME Consortium testing project – Consortium has made progress on RFP – should go out in the next couple of months; Acton's financial contribution has yet to be determined; Acton will probably need to contract with Consortium or consultant, or both, to be included in the testing project. 2-year timeframe.
- Updated SHI – now at 7.85% with incorporation of 2020 census data and removal of Powder Mill Apartments due to passing of August 2021 deadline for pulling building permits; Janet doesn't have updated information about efforts to sell Powder Mill property.
- Acton Housing Authority, 348-364 Main St. project: Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) hearing continues tonight at 8:00 pm via Zoom. Janet missed October meeting. ZBA presumably will discuss revised draft decision that is in meeting packet. Relatively small changes from original draft. Proposed decision would approve project, grant all requested waivers to allow increased density, proposed setbacks, reduced parking; one condition regarding ongoing work to develop sidewalk connections between project site and sidewalk running along Main Street into Kelley's Corner.

- **Member Reports**

- Bob – Committee on Action for Housing and Climates (group made up of tenants from private and public multi-family developments) – working to put the need for multi-family housing in climate action plan; Also advocating for access to solar energy for multi-family buildings, EV charging stations; Idea for an energy concierge; Group is concerned that there is not enough access to information for tenants who are having problems with their landlord – need for someone to fill the role of explaining tenants' rights, how to deal with unresponsive landlords, etc.; Group is looking to present to the Town in a couple of different forums.
 - Bernice contributed that an AHA tenant voiced a series of complaints against the housing authority; Bernice suggested that it would be good for the Town to have a social worker to specialize in dealing with these types of disputes
 - Dan asked a question re: rental assistance – is it tenants with smaller landlords who are having the most problems with rental assistance? Dan's experience is that larger landlords are adept at helping to facilitate rental assistance; Bob has heard reports of quite a few issues with the landlords at various multi-family developments in Acton

II. New Business

- **CPA funding 2021-2022: Discuss approve draft ACHC application**
 - Janet asked if anyone has comments about the draft that was included in the packet
 - Bernice – looks great
 - Janet asked Andy to confirm that her reporting of when ACHC spent funds on assistance checks is correct
 - Dan offered that he thought the information Janet provided was exactly what the committee would be looking for since it provides details on what ACHC has done – Dan suggested that ACHC ask for even more funds given how much we've been spending
 - Janet provided a spreadsheet in the application with all of ACHC's expenses
 - Bernice contributed that AHA will be asking for a large amount because there are so many repairs that need to be done at AHA properties
 - Bob asked if David Martin could provide information on the total amount of funding that will be available and suggested ACHC should request about 30%-35% of the total; David said we would know the funds available in about a month
 - Bob pointed out that there will be quite a lot of money flowing into MA from federal sources
 - Janet asked how many people think ACHC should ask for more –

everyone agreed that it would be a good idea to ask for more, so Janet will increase the request to \$100K. Bob moved to authorize Janet to submit a CPA request of \$100K for ACHC, and Bernice seconded – the motion passed unanimously

III. Old Business

- **Tavernier Place, 446 Mass Avenue: Update about financial closing** – the grant agreement and cover letter are in the meeting packet; Janet will add additional exhibits that Bob requested to the packet; Grant agreement executed and check was sent via FedEx to Common Ground and Janet assumes it's been put into escrow; delay in the closing is due to an issue with the Mass DOT permit for the driveway; they are hoping to break ground before the new year
- **ARPA funding Priorities: Update about Select Board decisions** – Select Board split numbers between FY '22 and '23 – ERAP will have \$50K this year, then \$100K next year, then \$150K in reserve; sewer main extension to AHA project – funds for this are in reserve; dog park will be funded this year; \$200K for rehab housing is in reserve
- **Other project updates (if any)** –
 - None

IV. Future Agenda Items

- **Accessory dwelling unit bylaw; ACHC program forms, guidelines** – Janet would like to add a bit more formality to ACHC's assistance programs
- **Member suggestions** – none

Bob moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:07pm and Dan seconded. Lara took a roll call vote – motion passed unanimously.

The next ACHC meeting will be on December 14, 2021

STATEMENT OF DOCUMENTS PRESENTED AT THIS MEETING:

Agenda, November 9, 2021

Minutes from October 12, 2021

Financial Reports through 10/31/21

Housing Funds report through 10/31/21

ACHC memo to Select Board re: ARPA funds

ARPA Investment Plan

Tavernier Place Grant Agreement, Executed

Tavernier Place Grant Agreement, Exhibit A

Tavernier Place Grant Agreement, Exhibit B

Tavernier Place, Transmittal Letter to Common Ground

ACHC CPA Application Draft