

ACTON HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEETING MINUTES
April 21, 2020 at 4:00pm
VIRTUAL MEETING

Present Remotely: Bernice Baran, Ryan Bettez, Nancy Kolb, and Robert Whittlesey

Also Present: Kelley Cronin

Attending: Robert Hummel, Tom Gillespie, Joseph Will, Claire Siska and Karen Martin

Mr. Bettez was asked to Chair the first virtual meeting of the Board. Mr. Bettez called the meeting to order with no Board members in physical attendance and broadcasted via Zoom.us virtual meeting platform called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

1. Mr. Bettez read the script for remote meetings provided by the Town of Acton and conducted a roll call for attendance with all Board members being present remotely. Mr. Bettez explained the rules of the meeting. The Board did not have hard copies of the minutes to review so postponed March minute approval until the May meeting.
2. Ms. Cronin reviewed the memo she had sent the Board about staffing during COVID. The Acton Housing Authority (AHA) closed the office to the public March 16th and the Town and Governor have closed everything until May 4th. Ms. Cronin suggested keeping the office closed to the public through the school year and said she would continue to follow the directives of the Governor and Town unless the Board felt differently. She reminded the Board that the office staff were set up since March to have access to their computers, email and voice mail from home and staff are alternating days coming in to do paperwork and get mail. The maintenance staff are here every morning. The staff are communicating with each other multiple times daily and Ms. Cronin is continuing the weekly staff meetings by zoom. Our maintenance staff are only entering tenant units for emergencies. They are cleaning the community rooms, mail rooms, laundry rooms and door handles daily. Ms. Cronin let the Board know she was participating in three weekly conference calls and zoom meetings regarding COVID 19 held by the Town, State Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Boston office of the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Ms. Cronin asked Mr. Bettez what his company was doing and he said the office staff were working remotely and he thought that would continue for months.

Ms. Cronin reviewed the HUD waivers available to Local Housing Authorities (LHA's) during the pandemic. Ms. Cronin reviewed the waivers that HUD had provided to LHA's to help them administer the voucher program during the COVID crisis and let the Board know which ones would be beneficial to voucher participants and staff. Mr. Whittlesey made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Kolb and unanimously voted in the affirmative to:

Approve implementation of the HUD waivers to extend FSS participants contract dates, allow voucher participants to self-report income information until such time as they can provide third party documentation for their redeterminations and defer inspections until safe to conduct.

and upon roll call the "Ayes" and "Nays" were as follows:

Bernice Baran: Aye

Ryan Bettez: Aye

Nancy Kolb: Aye

Robert Whittlesey: Aye

The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Ms. Cronin let the Board know that fourteen architectural firms had responded to the request for proposals and were on the agenda for DHCD's Design Review Committee. The committee should narrow down the number of applicants to a shorter list of competitive firms which the Local Screening Committee (LSC) would then interview. The LSC will then make a recommendation to the Board based on the result of their interviews. Mr. Bettez said he was hoping at least three firms would be recommended to the Board.

The Board reviewed the response to the Request for proposals for a development consultant for the Main Street project. The Board asked Ms. Cronin to invite Ms. Comasse Tsongas to the next meeting. Ms. Kolb made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Baran and unanimously voted in the affirmative to:

Authorize Ms. Cronin to enter into a contract, based on her proposal, with Maura Comasse Tsongas for development consulting services.

and upon roll call the "Ayes" and "Nays" were as follows:

Bernice Baran: Aye

Ryan Bettez: Aye

Nancy Kolb: Aye

Robert Whittlesey: Aye

The motion was unanimously approved.

The Board discussed the Option Agreement with the Town for the Main Street property. Ms. Kolb said that the Board should ask the Town to extend the deadlines on the agreement. Mr. Bettez agreed that the AHA should request an extension of dates. At this time Mr. Bettez recognized a member of the audience who had raised their hand, Mr. Gillespie from the Dog Park Committee. Mr. Gillespie said they had scheduled a meeting with the neighbors of Main Street in March which was cancelled due to COVID and they were inviting the neighbors to another meeting. The Board reiterated the importance of the Dog Park Committee working with the neighbors.

The Board discussed the Creative Place Making proposal for DHCD. The Board agreed the AHA should apply for money to do a patio and grilling area at Windsor Green. Ms. Baran made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Kolb and unanimously voted in the affirmative to:

Authorize Ms. Cronin to submit a Creative Place Making proposal to the DHCD for a patio and grilling area at Windsor Green.

and upon roll call the "Ayes" and "Nays" were as follows:

Bernice Baran: Aye

Ryan Bettez: Aye

Nancy Kolb: Aye

Robert Whittlesey: Aye

The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Ms. Kolb reminded the Board that the Acton Housing Authority proposal for Main Street was on the Town Meeting agenda for Community Preservation (CPC) funds. She let the Board know that all CPC items were being presented together. Ms. Kolb also thanked the AHA staff for their efforts during COVID.

Ms. Baran updated the Board on the Housing Production Plan and let them know there would be another Board of Selectmen hearing on the plan the first week of May and said she would participate and Ms. Cronin said she would as well. She let the Board know that Nancy Tavernier was stepping down from the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) and that Bob Van Meter would be the Chair.

5. Mr. Bettez opened the meeting to the community and recognized Claire Siska. Ms. Siska said she was on the Dog Park Committee and wanted to echo what Mr. Gillespie had said. She said the design would be next to route 2 on the far side of the parcel. Mr. Bettez asked if there were any comments or further discussion. Hearing no further comments Ms. Baran made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Whittlesey and unanimously voted in the affirmative to:

Adjourn the meeting at 5:20 pm.

and upon roll call the “Ayes” and “Nays” were as follows:

Bernice Baran: Aye

Ryan Bettez: Aye

Nancy Kolb: Aye

Robert Whittlesey: Aye

The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelley A. Cronin

Executive Director

Documents and Exhibits Used During the **April 21st** meeting:

Draft Town Agreement for Main Street, List of Design Firms Responding to RFS, Memo from Ms. Cronin to Board outlining office and maintenance procedures during COVID, Town of Acton remote meeting guidance, DHCD Public Housing Notice on COVID, housing consultant proposal, HUD COVID waivers