

ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION
Minutes Monday, November 16, 2020 – online via Zoom

Pursuant to notice given, a Regular Meeting of the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) was held on Monday, November 16, 2020 at 4PM via zoom. Present and constituting a Quorum for the purpose of conducting business were regular members Janet Adachi, Bernice Baran, Andy Richardt, Bob Van Meter, and associate members Dan Buckley and Corrina Roman-Kreuze. Jody Hodge arrived at 4:10pm.

Lara Plaskon from RHO 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:

- Jon Benson – Select Board; A few members of the public also joined the meeting.

Janet Adachi, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:03PM. Janet read the Covid-related guidelines for the meeting.

I. Regular Business

- Minutes – The minutes from the meeting of 10/19/20 were read. Bernice moved to approve the minutes and Andy seconded. Lara took a roll call vote – the motion passed unanimously.

• Financial Report

Nancy reported the following:

- Total ACHC assets as of 10/31/20 – \$76,379.48 (includes savings, checking, CD).
- Town is also holding CPA funds and gift funds.
- Bernice asked a question about the earmarked amount for the Mass Ave. project – this was approved a few years ago.
- Judy 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. Acton response has been good so far.
- Mortgage Assistance program started up using federal CARES funds. Liz Valenta from RHO is administering this in conjunction with Laura Ducharme (Town of Acton social worker). Applications have started to come in – there have been at least a couple from owners of deed restricted projects.

- **Chair Update**

Janet reported the following:

- Community Preservation Committee meeting was held 10/27 regarding draft CP plan for 2020-2021. Janet and AHA Executive Director Kelley Cronin attended, and affirmed revisions to Community Housing section that Liz Rust (RHSO) and Janet had agreed to regarding demographic updates and other small changes. CPC approved the Plan as revised. One CPC member had some comments about standard narrative in Community Housing section, which perhaps ACHC should revisit in coming year to discuss whether any need for updates/changes.
- Acton Mortgage Assistance Program: Proposed by Town Manager, working with RHSO and Laura Ducharme. Selectmen approved on 10/29. Program has \$60K in mortgage-assistance funds from federal CARES monies for grants of up to \$3K to residents with incomes up to 100% AMI (119K) who are struggling w/mortgage payments, December-January. Information posted on Town website.
- Anti-racism policy: Selectmen at special meeting on 11/12 adopted anti-racism policy that is posted on Town website – this is the culmination of some heated discussions, reflecting differing opinions in the community.
- ACHC meeting schedule: Meetings will continue to be virtual on Monday at 4:00 pm for the foreseeable future unless members unless members wish changes. Janet will draft proposed 2021 meeting schedule for review/discussion at December meeting. Assuming that Municipal Properties proceeds with usual annual meeting-room scheduling in January, Janet will submit 2021 room-reservation request for Room 126 in Town Hall.

II. **New Business**

- **Special Needs Housing, proposed study** – Bob and Andy provided an overview
 - 18 months ago, as part of the Housing for All group, Andy and Michael Biales identified that parents with adult children with disabilities have housing needs that are not being met
 - They identified a couple dozen families in town who have these needs and began to meet with them
 - ACHC applied for CPC funds last year to fund a feasibility study to assess need and determine feasibility of developing special needs housing in Acton, but it was not fully funded
 - DDS has been reluctant to collaborate too closely and share too much information since this effort has been ad hoc so far; it would be helpful for ACHC to be involved to lend some more formality to the effort
 - One of the main issues to tackle first is identifying the families who have this need

- Bob prepared a memo (included in the statement of documents for this meeting) that provides more details on this effort
- The plan is for RHO to help create an RFP to find a consultant to do feasibility study; a subcommittee of ACHC may also be created to help move effort forward
- Nancy suggested bringing someone from another town who has successfully developed a group home
- Question from the community re: why ACHC should apply for CPC funds rather than Housing for All. Bob explained that Housing for All is not an incorporated organization that can accept funds, execute contracts, etc.
- Motion to move forward with conferring with RHO on starting the RFP process – Bernice moved; Judy seconded – motion passed unanimously

- **Habitat for Humanity**
 - Proposal from Habitat for Humanity to rehab 3 School Street property to create one affordable housing unit (included in statement of documents for this meeting)
 - Proposal specifies that Habitat will be applying for CPA funding in the amount of 40K and will be requesting 60K of assistance from ACHC
 - There was some discussion among ACHC members regarding who would be attracted to live in this location/project
- **Community Preservation Act funding application, 2020-2021 (due 12/16/20)**
 - ACHC's CPA application and a list of how ACHC has spent CPA funds in the past is included in the statement of documents for this meeting
 - ACHC is requesting \$50K to replenish Community Housing Fund
 - ACHC's application considered the other requests that would be submitted from AHA (\$500K request for Main St. project) and others for affordable housing items
 - Janet reviewed the application that she prepared and requested comments from ACHC members and some discussion followed
 - Janet requested authorization to revise the application in accordance with Bob's suggestion regarding special needs housing; Bob moved to authorize Janet to revise and complete the application based on today's discussion, Bernice seconded, Lara took roll call vote and motion passed unanimously

III. Old Business

- **446 Mass Ave**
 - Steven Joncas still waiting on answer from DHCD regarding mini round of funding
 - HUD environmental review to be complete in mid-December

- **4 Cherry Ridge Road**
 - 11/11 Beacon article about “Come Home to Acton” project – effort spearheaded by contractor, Mark Starr, to provide a house, mortgage free, to a disabled veteran and his family
 - Site work has started and construction of the 3-bedroom, handicapped accessible ranch house is expected to be complete in summer 2021
 - Mark Starr is currently fundraising to complete the project
- **Other Updates**
 - Judy recently attended a housing webinar – MHP listening tour; She shared the following from the webinar:
 - Comments from participants in a variety of towns regarding how to move forward with affordable housing after your town has reached 10%
 - Many commented that affordable housing tends to be on the edge of town and is not really integrated with the rest of town
 - Participants raised concerns about NIMBYism
 - Interesting things are happening in Winchester- converting parking lots and commercial buildings into housing
 - Janet encouraged other ACHC to share any affordable housing related information that they have learned/participated in during future ACHC meetings

IV. Future Agenda Items

- **ACHC grant programs (capital assistance & closing costs)** – Janet is still working on updating forms for the capital improvement program
- **Fair housing: Continued discussion**
- **Other suggestions:** Janet suggested a discussion about how to be proactive about future housing projects now that Acton is at 10%, including identifying sites, etc.

Bob moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:38pm and Bernice seconded. Lara took a roll call vote – motion passed unanimously.

The next ACHC meeting will be on December 14, 2020.

STATEMENT OF DOCUMENTS PRESENTED AT THIS MEETING:

Agenda, October 19, 2020

Minutes from October 19, 2020

ACHC's CPA Application, including a list of how ACHC has used CPA funds in the past

Habitat for Humanity proposal for 3 School Street

Acton Mortgage Assistance Program Flyer

List of Housing Funds held by ACHC and the Town

Bob Van Meter's memo regarding special needs housing effort

ACHC monthly financial report