

## **SUDBURY HOUSING AUTHORITY**

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SHEILA M. CUSOLITO  
Executive Director

### **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**

July 12, 2023

The SHA met in open session at 4:35 p.m. Those present: Chair: T. Vitvitsky; Vice Chair: A. Lepak; Treasurer: S. Cline; Assistant Treasurer: S. Swanger; Member: F. Riepe; Executive Director: S. Cusolito  
Also present: Cambridge Housing Authority consultant Matt Zajac, via Zoom

The order of business was modified to take up unfinished business first.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**67-73 Nobscot Road Feasibility Update:** Chairperson Vitvitsky noted that during the time she's been involved with the SHA Board, she's learned of the significant number of sites that have been proposed for housing. She emphasized that while the Nobscot site poses some challenges, it is an available site. She called comments about isolation overblown, noting that living anywhere in Sudbury requires a car. She noted there have already been two votes on Nobscot, the first to move the project forward was unanimous. S. Swanger commented that his concern is with social isolation. He understands that the second vote, which was three in favor and two opposed, does not look good outwardly and he is prepared to change his vote in order to present a united front.

S. Cusolito clarified that the first vote was unanimous to move forward with negotiations with the Boy Scouts. The second vote followed the Nobscot Subcommittees's second vote recommending the project move forward exclusively as a rental development, with the support of the Housing Trust. The deliberations leading to the second vote included discussion of putting Nobscot on hold while sites not under current, active consideration be evaluated. Such sites included Broadacres Farm, Camp Sewataro and Commissioner F. Riepe's newly envisioned redevelopment of Old Meadow Road, for which he proposes a 10-unit development. M. Zajac noted that LIHTC funding, which represents a significant proposed source for Nobscot, requires a minimum development size of 12 units and that determining if the units have to be on a single site is beyond the scope of current feasibility undertakings.

S. Cusolito noted that the SHA was not informed of the results of its 705 Repositioning NOFA application, results of which were due to be announced today. M. Zajac commented that even in the absence of funding via the NOFA, there is still a path forward on Nobscot, as outlined in the pro forma distributed in April. In addition to sharing Mr. Swanger's concern about social isolation on Nobscot, F. Riepe mentioned the lack of amenities within walking or biking distance, as well as the unknown site development costs. Mr. Swanger is additionally concerned with the concentration of low-income families that isolates them from the general population, citing the preference for SHA's current family housing that is interspersed in various neighborhoods. Others disagreed that housing location is the primary cause of social isolation and cautioned against projecting onto others what constitutes an appropriate housing location. Additionally, given the struggle to identify other sites, scattered or otherwise, or development opportunities others consider it important to continue to explore Nobscot to inform the acquisition decision. Mr. Zajac

commented that one of the prospective development funders, Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston, ranks projects in part on creating and fostering social connections through partnership programs.

Mr. Zajac further noted that board unanimity is important to steward the project, both locally to Town boards and committees, as well as residents, and for funding considerations. Moreover, the significance of the undertaking will require multiple Board subcommittees to complete various tasks. Mr. Swanger and Mr. Riepe ultimately agreed that additional information is needed in order to assess the viability of development on Nobscot, adding that some idea of the Boy Scouts' asking price is also necessary. With that, the June 13, 2023 motion was reconsidered:

A motion was made by S. Swanger seconded by S. Cline, and unanimously voted, to enter into a purchase and sales agreement for 67-73 Nobscot Road with the Boy Scouts, contingent on receipt of results satisfactory to SHA regarding full site evaluation, including a full search of the property; an environmental study; title commitment; site plan development study; disclosure of any deed restrictions; and disclosure of the current status of any easements on or restrictions to the north driveway entrance; feasibility study on the south driveway; and a geotechnical study; with the financial support of the Sudbury Housing Trust.

S. Cusolito asked about the consequences of turning down the 705 NOFA funding if awarded, should SHA move in a different direction. Mr. Zajac spoke broadly, stating that it would be important to explain the context for such a decision. She asked for confirmation that it's premature to reconfigure the funding scenarios for any of the projects under consideration. Mr. Zajac suggested that as long as the SHA is comfortable with the costs of pre-development work, there is no reason at this time to modify funding scenarios for the projects under consideration.

Commissioners discussed next steps in terms of outreach to an appraiser, the Boy Scouts to get an idea of asking price, and an attorney to represent the SHA in negotiations. Commissioner F. Riepe volunteered to oversee these efforts. It was noted that purchases utilizing CPA funds cannot exceed the appraised value of the property.

Commissioners returned to a discussion of redevelopment of Old Meadow Road. The original approval was for development of one building on the site, requiring a prospective redevelopment to be considered at Town Meeting if the deed restriction allows for consideration to redevelop.

S. Swanger also wishes to pursue Broadacres, but others argued against doing so at this time, preferring to focus on the projects currently under consideration. S. Cusolito also cautioned that staff capacity precludes consideration of additional sites at this stage.

## **MINUTES**

None

## **FINANCIALS APPROVALS**

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger and unanimously voted, to approve the checks written in June 2023.

The May 2023 financial report was presented.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**FYE23 Capital Planning Close-Out:** Taken up following the Director's Report.

**Old Meadow Road Redevelopment:** Discussed under 67-73 Nobscot Road Feasibility.

**Rent Write-Offs:** A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by A. Lepak, and unanimously voted, to write off the debt of two 667 former residents in the amount of \$470.40 and \$101.

One 667 tenant vacated without notice in late January/February 2023 with a balance of \$470.40 and the other vacated owing a partial month's rent of \$101. The costs to collect exceed the balances due; however, the SHA has reached out to clear the debt of \$101.

**Public Housing Administration Notices:** S. Cusolito provided the link to the Notices published since the June 13, 2023 meeting. PHN 2023-08 announces a pilot program to outsource priority screening of CHAMP applicants. The pilot will be conducted on the State voucher program applicants, with a roll-out to the state public housing applicant review slated for September. Determinations will apply to all LHAs.

**Liaison Reports:** CPC: No report.

SHT: A. Lepak stated that RHSO representative L. Rust thinks if Nobscot goes to the P&S stage, the CPA funds award the SHT should go directly to the Scouts, rather than to the SHA. The motion made by SHT Trustee C. Howe was for general (SHT) financial assistance (for example, assessment, additional engineering), up to and including the P&S.

## **OPEN FORUM**

No comments.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Performance Management Review:** Based on a sample size of three applications received by mail, SHA received some findings related to the timeline and accuracy of CHAMP-entered applicant data. S. Cusolito noted that this work was outsourced to Mass NAHRO and that she has followed up with its executive director D. Brown-Rego. Given that SHA only received a total of 15 paper applications within the audit year, SHA will likely resume the data entry itself. It is not clear why only three files, rather than the five referenced for small LHAs, were audited. In any case, any errors, even on five applicants, would result in a finding due to the performance threshold. According to D. Brown-Rego, because NAHRO will no longer oversee priority/preference mailings, it's possible it will discontinue uploading applications on behalf of LHAs.

**RSC Report:** There were no questions or comments on the report.

**Cash Receipts:** The cash receipts were presented.

**Vacancies:** Currently, there are five vacancies at the Village. The two New Duplex units have been leased.

**Evictions:** One 667 matter has a court date of July 25. All cases start with mediation.

**Maintenance:** Because issues have arisen with both FISH 288066, 667 Kitchen Hood Ventilation, and FISH 288077, 2 Beechwood Exterior Improvements, maintenance staff must commit time to monitoring on-site work, in addition to attending to vacancy priorities and routine maintenance.

**Mass NAHRO Conference:** The conference is scheduled for September 17-20. The Housing Authority will cover costs for commissioner attendees.

**Billerica House of Correction Community Work Program:** The crew performed grounds work June 5-9 at the Village.

### **FYE23 Capital Planning Close-Out:**

**FISH 288066, 667 Kitchen Ventilation:** Neither the engineer, nor the contractor, measured the opening above the stoves, with the engineer specifying 24” hoods and the contractor failing to confirm the specification. As a result, the contractor ordered hoods that are too large. The engineer subsequently measured each opening, none of which measured 24”. Unfortunately, this error by both the engineer and the contractor results in additional costs to the SHA, related to both a Change Order and a restocking fee for the purchased hoods.

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously defeated, to approve FISH 288066, 667 Kitchen Ventilation, Change Order #1 in the amount of \$2,890.27 to change out 24” white finish hoods for 24” stainless steel finish hoods.

Because the SHA learned that the 24” hoods are too large for the opening, this Change Order was not approved. The SHA has since learned that the 21” hoods have been discontinued. S. Cusolito explored the financial consequences of scrapping the project, learning that it would cost approximately one-third of the project costs, roughly \$100K, to do so.

The SHA’s construction advisor indicated that neither the engineering firm, nor the contractor, is required to hold insurance to cover such errors. Commissioner F. Riepe opined that the engineer should be held responsible, regardless of its insurance coverage. S. Cusolito noted that both this project and the 2017 installation of heat pumps, which utilized the same contractor, point to a need to examine each unit that will be subject to construction owing to the variability in existing conditions.

**FISH 288077, 2 Beechwood Exterior Improvements:** A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to approve FISH 288077, 2 Beechwood Exterior Improvements, Change Order #2 in the amount of \$1,950 to repair existing asphalt, including its slope, on the walkway to the newly installed entry stairs.

S. Cusolito noted that this was a primary concern, noted to the project team from the outset, that was not incorporated into the original scope. She further noted issues with the contractor for working outside the SHA’s specified hours and for utilizing the resident’s power supply, resulting in power failures and possible property damage. While she wishes to keep the project moving forward, she plans to append a note to the project file to document the contractor’s failure to comply with posted work hours and to have available its own power supply. The EOHLIC-selected project manager opined that the contractor is not responsible for any property damage because it does not have a contractual relationship with the tenant; however, the contractor did not communicate to SHA a need for on-site power. Work hours and such needs are part of what is discussed at the project kick-off.

**FISH 288068, 667 & 705 Attic Insulation:** A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by A. Lepak, and unanimously voted, to authorize the Requisition #3 payment of \$8,475 to G.V.W., Inc. for FISH 288068, 667 & 705 Attic Insulation, associated with the Certificate of Final Completion.

At its March 14, 2023 Regular Session, the Board approved the Certificates of Substantial and Final Completion, as well as the payment to accompany the CSC, subject to approvals within the CapHub system. S. Cusolito commented on the exemplary work of both the architect and contractor.

**FYE23 Capital Project Administration Fees:** A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by A. Lepak, and unanimously voted, to authorize payment of FYE23 capital project administration fees to S. Cusolito as presented: FISH 288066, \$2,592; FISH 288068, \$6,000; FISH 288076, \$4,728; FISH 288077 \$2,424.

S. Cusolito noted that the small projects, such as FISH 288077, are those that typically consume the most staff time, but that there is no mechanism for fairly accounting for the time. As well, projects such as

Nobscot or grant-funded work do not provide for administrative fees, notwithstanding the significant staff time required.

FISH 288073 & 288076, SHA Feasibility (705 Single-Family Homes and Frost Farm) & 21 Great Lake Unit Rehab: The extension request on the vacancy waiver was approved today by Housing Management. The maximum 8-year extension was requested as part of the outreach around possible redevelopment. The redevelopment proposal was submitted to the State's development team on July 3. The proposal does not request anything from the State, but it is anticipated that it will lay the groundwork for discussions and support for the plan.

### **MEMBERS' FORUM**

No comments.

### **ADJOURN**

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to adjourn the July 12, 2023 Regular Session. The time was 6:35 p.m.

Yes: S. Cline

Yes: A. Lepak

Yes: F. Riepe

Yes: S. Swanger

Yes: T. Vitvitsky