



Town of Sudbury

Housing Trust

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MINUTES

February 8, 2024 AT 8:00 AM

VIRTUAL MEETING

Housing Trust Members Present: Chair Carmine Gentile, Vice Chair Robert Hummel, Jessica Cerullo Merrill, Kelley Cronin, Janie Dretler, Cynthia Howe, John Riordan, and Jack Ryan

Absent: None

Others Present: Community Preservation Coordinator Ryan Poteat, Director of Planning, Community Development Adam Burney, and Director of the Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO) Liz Rust

Mr. Gentile began the meeting at 8:02 AM

Board Operations

Review of October 12, 2023 meeting minutes:

Ms. Cronin made a motion to approve the October 12, 2023 meeting minutes. Ms. Dretler seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Gentile – Aye, Mr. Hummel – Aye, Ms. Cerullo Merrill – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, and Mr. Ryan – Abstain.

Review of November 9, 2023 meeting minutes:

Ms. Dretler made a motion to approve the November 9, 2023 meeting minutes. Ms. Cronin seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Gentile – Aye, Mr. Hummel – Aye, Ms. Cerullo Merrill – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, and Mr. Ryan – Abstain.

Review of December 14, 2023 meeting minutes:

Ms. Dretler made a motion to approve the December 14, 2023 meeting minutes. Ms. Cronin seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Gentile – Aye, Mr. Hummel – Aye, Ms. Cerullo Merrill – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, and Mr. Ryan – Aye.

Review of January 11, 2024 meeting minutes:

Ms. Dretler made a motion to approve the January 11, 2024 meeting minutes. Ms. Cronin seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Gentile – Aye, Mr. Hummel – Aye, Ms. Cerullo Merrill – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, and Mr. Ryan – Aye.

Review of January 24, 2024 meeting minutes:

Mr. Ryan Ms. Dretler made a motion to approve the January 24, 2024 meeting minutes. Ms. Cronin seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Gentile – Aye, Mr. Hummel – Aye, Ms. Cerullo Merrill – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, and Mr. Ryan– Aye.

Financial Update

Ms. Rust presented the December 2023 transactions. There were no abnormal transactions. Mr. Ryan made a motion to ratify the December financial transactions. Ms. Dretler seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Gentile – Aye, Mr. Hummel – Aye, Ms. Cerullo Merrill – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, and Mr. Ryan – Aye.

Housing Trust Initiatives

- **Discussion about possible changes to the Small Grant Program**

Ms. Rust spoke about the current Small Grant Program and explained the town had awarded an additional \$75,000 in ARPA funds to be used for small grants to individuals impacted by Covid. Because of this additional funding the maximum award was increased from \$5,000 to \$7,500. These funds have been fully committed. Ms. Rust stated that the Town of Sudbury had the longest running Small Grant Program in the area, the highest maximum award amount, and had awarded 75 small grants since 2008 averaging \$3,663. She suggested either lowering the maximum award amount or increase the amount of funds made available pointing out that this program was not CPA fund eligible; any increase in funding would come from lottery income and could not exceed that amount.

Mr. Gentile made a motion decrease the maximum small grant award from \$7,500 to \$6,000 effective February 3, 2024. Mr. Ryan seconded the motion.

Ms. Rust asked if the Trust wanted to wait until the new income limits were released in spring as the application is scheduled for an update in April.

Mr. Riordan had concern with the rising costs of materials and labor and thought reducing the maximum award to the pre-covid level may be to dramatic of a change. He asked how long the maximum award had been \$5,000. Ms. Rust looked back 10 years when the maximum award was \$3,000. It was unknown when the change occurred but was between 2013-2016. Ms. Rust will try to find the exact date and amount this change occurred.

Ms. Howe made a motion to amend the prior motion. Mr. Ryan seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Gentile – Aye, Mr. Hummel – Aye, Ms. Cerullo Merrill – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, and Mr. Ryan– Aye.

Ms. Howe made a motion to reduce the maximum small grant award from \$7,500 to \$6,000 beginning on March 1, 2023. Mr. Ryan seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Gentile – Aye, Mr. Hummel – Aye, Ms. Cerullo Merrill – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, and Mr. Ryan– Aye.

- **Review Small Grant Application 125**

Applicant 125 is requesting \$4,700 for the removal of carpeting that was beyond its useful life, creating a hazardous situation for an elderly resident and an asthmatic child living in the home. The work has been completed and it is unknown if multiple quotes were received.

Mr. Gentile made a motion to approve applicant 125's request for \$4,700. Mr. Ryan seconded the motion.

There were concerns raised about that this application. The work has been completed and paid for, is the need really there. When an emergency situation does arise and an applicant applies after they have paid for the repairs they are directly reimbursed; this is treated as income to the applicant and a 1099 will be generated. Ms. Howe asked how much had been spent on this applicant to date, Ms. Rust estimated \$21,000 but \$16,000 was awarded under the Home Preservation Program and only \$5,000 had been spent under the Small Grants Program, under the current rules, the applicant is eligible. The applicant has gone through this process before and was aware of the program rules. Ms. Cronin, Ms. Howe and Mr. Riordan all stated they wanted more information and asked that this be tabled until the next meeting. Ms. Howe asked the assessed value of the home. The home is currently assessed at \$247,000.

Mr. Gentile made a motion to table his previous motion until the March 14, 2024 meeting. Mr. Ryan seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Gentile – Aye, Mr. Hummel – Aye, Ms. Cerullo Merrill – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, and Mr. Ryan– Aye.

Ms. Cronin requested the last capital needs assessment done at this property.

Mr. Ryan would like the applicant asked why they did the work prior to applying.

Ms. Cronin would like the applicant asked if the received any other quotes

Discussion on creating housing units through buy downs or other means

Ms. Rust presented the current model of how a buy down worked. Currently, the Housing Trust would have a lottery approved by EOHLC, submit a fair market housing plan, contact those who have applied to the lottery, let them know that they will be working with the Housing Trust, the home will be in Sudbury but that we do not know which home or where it would be located in town. 6–12-month process with approvals needed. It is a difficult process to buy down. The other way is for the Trust to purchase a home that needs work, fix it up and sell it at a discount with a deed restriction keeping it affordable in perpetuity. A home could also be purchased with a buyer who executes the purchase and sales agreement. The Trust would then fund the necessary repairs. This can cause problems as the homeowner has more control, could be living in the home, costs change. The scale of renovation dictates when this works; often work is delayed and costs increase.

67-73 Nobscot update

There was no substantial update at this time. The reports from both Cambridge Housing and Beals and Thomas are not currently available.

Status of new Housing Production Plan work

The Housing Production plan will be having two more meetings before the Public Forum. The Public Forum will be held virtually on March 21, 2024.

Discussion about Community Preservation Act funding request/s & Warrant article/s

There was discussion regarding having a meeting with the Community Preservation Committee to make sure they understood that the Housing Trust needs close to \$1,000,000 to realistically accomplish their goals. This money is seed money, an example used was that with a million dollars the Trust could buy and renovate a property and when the property is ready to be sold, they would recuperate some of those funds to use on another project so future requests from the CPC would be substantially lower. Mr. Burney then went over some minor changes made to the warrant article which has been approved and voted on by the CPC.

Other or New Business

Mr. Riordan spoke about a seminar which was being held by CHAPA on February 29th and will offer some valuable information about financing and affordable housing. He encouraged everyone to attend.

Administrative Report

There was no administrative report presented at this meeting.

Public Comment

Amy Lepak stated that the Housing Authority did have the report mentioned earlier in the meeting. The Housing Authority believes there may be an error on the report but will be happy to share it as soon as the problem is resolved. Mr. Riordan stated he would like to attend the next meeting with Beals and Thomas.

Mr. Ryan made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Hummel seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Gentile – Aye, Mr. Hummel - Aye, Ms. Cronin - Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, and Mr. Ryan – Aye.

The meeting ended at 9:51 AM