

SUDBURY HOUSING AUTHORITY

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SHEILA M. CUSOLITO
Executive Director

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

October 12, 2021

The SHA met by remote participation open session at 7:00 p.m. Those present were: Chair: S. Cline; Vice Chair: S. Swanger; Treasurer: T. Vitvitsky; Assistant Treasurer: J. Cowan; Member: A. Lepak; Executive Director: S. Cusolito

Also present: Lisa Kouchakdjian, Commission on Disability

The agenda was taken out of order.

Disability Awareness Month: Lisa Kouchakdjian, Commission on Disability (COD): October is Disability Awareness Month, which the COD is actively promoting to the public, including board and committee members in Town. Ms. Kouchakdjian read from a prepared statement, having previously distributed pins symbolizing inclusion for those with disabilities. She noted that disability crosses all aspects of society, for instance, age race, socio-economic status, religious or political affiliation. She also noted that many brain-based disabilities, the most predominant disability for those between the ages 3-32, are not readily visible. Statistics indicate a high likelihood that all individuals will experience at least a temporary period of disability during their lifetime. Ms. Kouchakdjian thanked the Board for its service.

Minutes: A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by A. Lepak, and unanimously voted, to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2021 Regular Session.

Financials Approvals: A motion was made by J. Cowan, seconded by A. Lepak, and unanimously voted, to approve the checks written in September 2021.

NEW BUSINESS

Community Preservation Committee Annual Reports: Three reports, prepared to comply with the Town's CPC guidelines and representing the three CPA awards with unspent balances, were presented. Reports are due to the Town by October 15.

Public Housing Administration Notices: S. Cusolito provided a link to those Notices published since the September 21, 2021 Regular Session. The subject of the only Notice is the Budget Guidelines.

Liaison Reports: Following up on the SHA's September discussion around submitting a CPA request in the upcoming funding round A. Lepak sent a query to Planning Director Adam Duchesneau to learn of the SHT's intentions. She reported that the SHT hadn't considered an application for the upcoming funding round. There was some discussion of the possibility of an eventual joint application related to the Nobscot Road property.

There were no other reports.

OPEN FORUM

Tenant Board Member T. Vitvitsky reported on attending a recent meeting of residents of Musketahquid Village. There is some interest in establishing an official Local Tenants' Organization (LTO). Commissioner Vitvitsky clarified for the residents that she does not represent the tenants or a tenants' association on the SHA Board. She also encouraged attendees to participate in Town Meeting (ATM) as a way to become more involved in the community, reporting that some feel they would not be welcomed because of their housing situation. Ms. Vitvitsky noted that there is a significant population of Sudbury residents that is unfamiliar with the housing authority and that SHA resident participation at ATM might be beneficial to the SHA, as well as its residents, as a way to enhance familiarity. She also noted that her visitors are always impressed when they come on site to the Village. S. Cusolito recalled an ATM discussion around Sudbury Station a few years ago, at which a resident from Longfellow Glen made a powerful statement from the perspective of a public housing resident. She noted that some Village residents have expressed an interest in becoming more embedded in the Sudbury community. As well, there have been a few residents who have served on Town committees or working groups; however, the number of involved residents is quite low. She commented that a place to start would be encouraging residents to attend SHA Board meetings.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Net Meter Credit Contract: The executed contract between SHA and Lodestar Energy, voted in September, was presented. Credits will be purchased based on energy production from a solar farm on the Cape that is expected to be operational in 2022. She noted that energy costs have risen sharply, with pricing per kwh going from a current rate of \$0.086 to greater than \$0.11, for which the credits provide an offset. S. Cline asked who monitors SHA's receipt of savings. The savings will appear on SHA's energy bill based on a rate of \$0.02/kwh, followed by a direct payment to Lodestar for its share.

Energy Services Contract: Following September's vote, S. Cusolito is awaiting final pricing from IGS, a direct supplier that is expected to be somewhat greater than \$0.11/kwh. A final decision on the term has not been made. Recently, the board has favored 2-year terms, with the longest on file of 3 years. The IGS contract allows for a decrease in costs should energy costs plummet, with a provision that the term is extended.

Community Preservation Act Application: Commissioners discussed some revisions to the draft as presented. The submission is due tomorrow.

COVID-19 Update, Vaccination Policy: At its September 21, 2021 meeting, Commissioners voted a mandatory vaccination policy for all current and future SHA employees. S. Cusolito asked that the Board discuss expanding the policy to include considerations such as waivers with periodic testing, booster requirements, remote work options or staggered work schedules, consequences of refusal to vaccinate, noting that the policy as voted provided no shape to administering it. Some Commissioners apparently and incorrectly assumed that all current employees are vaccinated and opined that to protect the vulnerable SHA population, all employees should be vaccinated. S. Cusolito stated that much of the safety procedures SHA has in place—masking in units and shared office spaces; posting signage about the Town's mask mandate and encouraging residents to mask; remaining closed to walk-ins; utilizing air purifiers in the Community Room—are designed to protect both employees and residents. She stated that despite anecdotal knowledge that most residents are vaccinated, there is a significant degree of non-compliance among

residents with the Town's mask mandate in the public spaces at the Village and in the presence of employees. She also reported on some resistance by some staff members to mandatory vaccination. Commissioners opted for weekly testing for non-vaccinated personnel, with costs to be covered by the employee. Mention was made that some workplaces also have in place protocols for test-positive cases. A position on this and boosters will be considered later in the year or in early 2022. S. Cusolito was asked to draft a policy. Only a limited response was received from other LHAs queried about their vaccination policies. Only one of those responding LHAs was establishing a vaccination policy. There is still no information on whether the federal mandate applies as it relates to the New Duplex federal project-based subsidy.

SHA Feasibility Study Update: At SHA's request, Hancock is prioritizing Frost Farm and Great Lake, which was recently vacated. Commissioners Swanger and Vitvitsky, accompanied by S. Cusolito, met with residents of Frost Farm on September 28. Several residents opined about a preference, not only for structures that match the existing buildings, but for occupants that similarly match. As well, a desire to be a part of the Frost Farm association, including payments and possibly tying into the septic, was expressed as a way to support the existing infrastructure, including maintenance and repair costs, or as a cost-savings mechanism to SHA. Reference was made to issues related primarily to drainage, but also to the septic system. The consensus was an overall positive, productive meeting. S. Cusolito queried Hancock for pricing to assess the possibility and possible value of sharing a septic system. The additional investigation would cost approximately \$2,000. The board asked for Hancock's opinion of actual cost savings to tie in with the existing system before approving the additional investigation.

S. Swanger expressed interest in querying prospective development consultants. He shared that the Cambridge Housing Authority now provides consulting services to other LHAs. He asked Commissioners to consider forming a subcommittee to work on pre-RFP outreach to consultants. T. Vitvitsky expressed interest, but prefers the process commence when more information about the scope of the development effort is better defined. The consensus was to wait until more information is available from both the SHA's and the Nobscot feasibility efforts. In the interim, Commissioner Swanger will reach out to New Duplex project manager Rebecca Plaut Mautner and to learn more about the CHA's program.

67-73 Nobscot Feasibility Update: A. Lepak reported that Town Planner A. Duchesneau was preparing information on unit square footage to provide the engineering firm. The sizes are larger than SHA units and the DHCD minimums. It's likely that something closer to the DHCD minimums will be conveyed. RHSO specialist L. Rust circulated considerations related to financing and structuring construction of a mixed rental and ownership development. Costs to develop rental and ownership units vary significantly and will likely inform decisions around the designation of units for each program. A. Lepak attended a workshop sponsored by the Community Scale Housing Initiative (CSHI), which finances small-scale development, but has not financed a mixed rental and ownership development. The CSHI might be able to provide some preliminary support for the Nobscot effort when there is a better idea of the scope of development. SHA Nobscot subcommittee member A. Lepak will reach out to the Town Planner to schedule a subcommittee meeting.

Capital Projects Update:

FISH 288064, 667 Utility Cable: Final installations and connections are scheduled for October 25.

FISH 288066, 667 Kitchen Ventilation: In the bidding phase.

FISH 288067, Fairbank Cir vacancy renovation: On-site work stopped while moisture issues are investigated. An on-site meeting is scheduled for tomorrow to discuss test results.

FISH 288068, Attic Insulation: A planning document was submitted by the architect for DHCD's review.

FISH 288069, 21 Great Lake whole-house heat pump: The project was readvertised and outreach to HVAC contractors is planned to ensure a competitive response.

FISH 288071, Fire Alarm Upgrade: The Capital Plan was revised to step up the priority of this project, given concerns, including false alarms, with the original equipment. An interim repair is planned; however, delays in component availability prevent scheduling.

A motion was made by T. Vitvitsky, seconded by J. Cowan, and unanimously voted, to accept the low bid of \$7,067.02 from Convergent Technologies for interim fire alarm system repairs & component replacements at Musketahquid Village.

Three firms were solicited, with two responses received. Convergent Technologies also performs the annual preventive maintenance on the system.

FISH 288072, Air-Source Heat Pump Investigation: This marks the third such study of the faulty installations completed in 2017. Five of 18 units are offline, with a parts-only estimates between \$1,200 and \$2,300 to repair. The investigation will be funded through the Sustainability Initiative.

FISH 288073, SHA's Sudbury Foundation Feasibility Study: The dollar amount requires the project to be in the Capital Plan, but it (as well as the Sustainability projects—66, 68, 69, 72, 73) doesn't count toward capital benchmark spending or toward executive director time.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Cash Receipts: Receipts for August and September were presented.

Administrative staff: Training is proceeding at a steady pace. Former employee S. Bonney has offered to assist with both bookkeeping and CHAMP training.

Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) FYE21: The annual audit process has just begun. The SHA opted for a remote review.

Annual Plan: This is the second year of this requirement, which aligns the AUP, PMR, maintenance practices, budget process, board attendance, TAR, and the capital plan. Two deadlines this coming week will trigger the announcement of the public hearing, which will occur at the December 14 meeting.

SHERA Emergency Rental Assistance: State administrators audited one file this week, ultimately approving the request.

CHAPA Community Partnerships Q & A: No information or invitation has been received for this Friday's 10 am meeting. Commissioners Cowan, Cline and Swanger are unable to attend.

Town Forum: Notice of the October 21 forum to discuss the Town's Master Plan was circulated by the Planning Department.

Vacancies: No new vacancies.

Evictions: None pending.

Maintenance: All FYE22 state unit inspections have been scheduled to be completed mid-December, with 38/80 units completed by maintenance with the contracted inspector. Maintenance is also accompanying SMOC on New Duplex inspections.

S. Cline requested that an executive session update on the Fairbank Circle litigation be scheduled for the November meeting.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by T. Vitvitsky, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to adjourn the October 12, 2021 Regular Session. The time was 9:00 p.m.

Yes: S. Cline

Yes: J. Cowan

Yes: A. Lepak

Yes: S. Swanger

Yes: T. Vitvitsky