

SUDBURY HOUSING AUTHORITY

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SHEILA M. CUSOLITO
Executive Director

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

August 8, 2023

The SHA met in open session at 7:00 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

MINUTES

None

FINANCIALS

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

The FYE 24 Q1 MOD report was presented. It was explained that this was a financial report that does not reflect the work progress status. F. Riepe asked about FISH 288066, 667 Kitchen Ventilation, which was previously reported to have stalled because the installation space above the stoves was not measured by either the engineer or the contractor and the purchased equipment is too large for any of the openings. There had already been a Change Order on the table to swap out white-finish hoods for stainless steel due to long lead times for the former. S. Cusolito previously reported the approximate costs to cancel the project, an option that can still be considered. In addition to the waste of Housing Authority staff time, F. Riepe commented on the waste of public funds. Further, he noted that the designer is at fault and required to come up with a viable solution. S. Cusolito conveyed that even with the fix of measuring each opening to order hoods of the correct size(s), according to the SHA's construction advisor, the designer is not required to carry errors & omissions insurance and the SHA will still be required to pay for the additional costs, including restocking fees. Commissioners surmised that the only other option is to file a lawsuit.

S. Cusolito noted the same kind of challenges with the small project, FISH 288077, 2 Beechwood Exterior Improvements, where the contractor utilized the tenant's power, instead of bringing a generator, and apparently damaged personal property when the power surged, as well as increased the utility costs. Neither the architect, nor the contractor has been responsive to the SHA's requests to address these matters, including the option for the tenant to file a damage claim.

NEW BUSINESS

FYE24 Q1 Financial Report: The FYE24 Q1 Financial Report was presented.

Public Housing Administration Notices: T. Vitvitsky asked about PHN 2023-10, which outlines the High Leverage Asset Preservation Program (HILAPP), which provides funding for projects of a more extensive scope than those covered by conventional Formula Funding. S. Cusolito stated that it relates to the overall risk level of the development based on component aging, information that is captured in a state-supported database. She noted that early on, she explored the option to apply for funding for Musketahquid Village; however, all components had been given extended lifespans under the prior administration. Some effort to reverse that data to more accurately reflect current conditions has been undertaken, as it is the first step in determining eligibility; however, SHA's staff capacity and expertise would also require that it engage the services of a contractor to apply for such funding.

Liaison Reports: SHT: A. Lepak reported that SHT Chair C. Gentile recommended asking local attorney Josh Fox who he recommends to perform a certified appraisal of Nobscot. Mr. Gentile also noted that Mr. Fox would be interested in representing the SHA and Town on the Nobscot project. RHSO representative

L. Rust reported effective appraisal work from Hunneman Appraisers. The SHT voted to cover appraisal costs with the recently awarded Nobscot CPA funds. A meeting with Town Counsel will be scheduled to define the parameters that will allow for release of those funds. Mr. Gentile also opined that the Trust might pursue a purchase of Nobscot for eventual homeownership development, should the SHA decline to move forward. The Dutton Road unit is almost ready to be marketed for homeownership outside Habitat for Humanity. The Housing Production Plan meeting is scheduled for August 17.

OPEN FORUM

No comments.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

67-73 Nobscot Road Feasibility Update: The informal sub-subcommittee met on June 28 and July 20. C. Gentile reached out to attorney J. Fox for an appraisal contact. S. Cusolito noted that CHA can also oversee the appraisal. She noted that use of CPA funds limits the offer price to no more than the appraised value. The sub-subcommittee met with Town Counsel on July 26. Town Counsel expressed concern with the language of the Town Meeting article and will advise after further review. He also recommended reaching out to the CPC to ensure its support for utilizing the funds for an all-rental development, as well as an overview presentation of the prospective development plan to the Select Board. L Rust suggested utilizing already voted SHA CPA funds for acquisition, holding the newly awarded Nobscot funds for subsequent steps if the process moves forward.

In a subsequent meeting with Town Counsel, S. Cline reviewed the language of the Town Meeting article, which does allow for an all-rental development. They further discussed that the Town Meeting vote allows for a broad number of uses of the CPC funds, including purchase, but that the purchase costs were better covered by SHA's previously voted CPA funds. S. Cline outlined that the funds could either be left with the Town, with access by submission of invoices, or by transferring the funds to SHT, with any unused funds reverted. She prefers the first option, but noted that it's up to the SHT and Town Treasurer to determine the best mechanism.

S. Cusolito reported that EOHLC followed up with some questions on the NOFA. Responses, as well as a query on the new timeline for decisions, were submitted. The decision-making process had been modified, resulting in a timeline that puts award announcements out by another couple of weeks. There was some discussion about options for moving forward without the NOFA funding. CHA's pro forma did include some options for development absent the NOFA funding. There's also interest in scoping the work that would be needed on the Pine and Old Meadow units to get them ready for sale, should the NOFA response succeed. F. Riepe will reach out to attorney Josh Fox to initiate the appraisal process and reach out to the Boy Scouts.

SHA Feasibility Study: 705 Redevelopment: The request to extend the vacancy waiver on 21 Great Lake was approved by EOHLC. A meeting with HLC to discuss the redevelopment plan, scheduled for last week, was postponed, but not yet rescheduled.

S. Cusolito also noted that SHA is nearing the end of the agreed-upon tasks under Task Order #1 for this project (as well as Nobscot). A proposal for an extended task order is under preparation. T. Vitvitsky requested preparation of a table outlining all projects currently under active consideration. The Board previously elected to discontinue active consideration of development on Frost Farm. As part of closing that project out, CHA requested that Hancock prepare a concept design with eight units and summarized options based on work to date. Although funding sources expand with a minimum unit count of eight, SHA Commissioners were unimpressed with the Hancock design, preferring those limited to six units total. S.

Swanger will inform the Frost Farm leadership that development considerations are on hold for the time being.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

Cash Receipts: The cash receipts were presented.

750 Annual Recertifications: The Recertifications were completed for an August 1 effective date.

Staffing: The waitlist position will be filled by a new part-time employee starting August 21. A second interview is scheduled for the occupancy position.

Net meter credits: The first payments should arrive soon, with the credits dating back to May 2023.

Agreed Upon Procedures: A contract was signed for the AUP audit, which will occur in October. This is the second year with the firm Lisa Fallon, CPA P.C.

Capital Projects:
FISH 288066, 667 Kitchen Ventilation: earlier discussed.
FISH 288067, 705 Vacant Unit Rehab: warranty work has been completed.
FISH 288068, 667 & 705 Attic Insulation: project is complete and in the warranty phase.
FISH 288072, 667 ASHP Evaluation: the engineer and consultant are slated to be on site next week.
FISH 288077, 2 Beechwood Exterior Improvements: earlier discussed.

Vacancies: Currently, there are six vacancies at the Village. S. Cusolito reported that she individually prescreened 363 667 applicants, with a very small yield of viable applicants. Most mail is returned as undeliverable, but it's also the case that applicants do not respond if their interest in a particular housing authority is not strong. The CHAMP process requires streamlining and accounts for significant delays in filling vacant units. T. Vitvitsky commented that this is another example of legislation aimed at solving a problem leading to creation of additional problems. She noted that at Town Meeting, a community member questioned the need for additional units, when there are units currently vacant. Given that the current vacancies do not negate the need for additional housing, the query is valuable in establishing the framework for SHA's responses to such public comments, especially in light of the challenges with the CHAMP process. The state recently contracted with a third party to review applicants for priority, with decisions applicable to all LHAs. This will diminish a significant amount of local screening time, which will ultimately shorten the timeline for occupancy. The firm will not determine local preference; however, that preference has been masked by the inordinate number of priority claims and, because groups of applicants are simultaneously screened, response time becomes the determining factor.

Evictions: SHA mediated one 667 matter on July 25. A nine-month window of "good behavior" was defined. If the conditions are met, the current matter will be closed.

Maintenance: Annual inspections are scheduled to start this week.

MEMBERS' FORUM

S. Swanger reported receiving queries about a tenant complaint that was posted on Facebook. S. Cusolito noted that the SHA is not a party to complaints posted on social media and does not engage with tenants through such platforms. She reminded the Board that SHA addresses matters with confidentiality and that there is, unsurprisingly, another side to any story. T. Vitvitsky commented that the best mechanism for countering such negative postings is for the Tenant Organization to be more involved within the Town, including attending Town Meeting. S. Cusolito also noted that sometimes, residents do not understand their responsibilities as tenants of a public agency, or misunderstand advisories provided by SHA. She also noted that SHA does not go through the investment of time and resources to house individuals and families, only to un-house them without intermediate steps to ensure preservation of tenancies.

T. Vitvitsky reported that she oversees collection of batteries for disposal and plans to publish a thank-you to residents for their participation.

F. Riepe asked for the contact information for the Nobscot Scout representative, Hank Rauch.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to adjourn the August 8, 2023 Regular Session. The time was 8:30 p.m.

Yes: S. Cline

Yes: A. Lepak

Yes: F. Riepe

Yes: S. Swanger

Yes: T. Vitvitsky