

# SUDBURY HOUSING AUTHORITY

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## MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

September 12, 2023

The SHA met in open session at 7:00 p.m. Those present: Chair: T. Vitvitsky; Vice Chair: A. Lepak; Member: F. Riepe; Executive Director: S. Cusolito

Also present: Matt Zajac, Cambridge Housing Authority (development consultant, virtual)

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### **SHA Feasibility Study & Nobscot Feasibility Study, Matt Zajac**

SHA Feasibility 705 Redevelopment: Mr. Zajac summarized a series of positive meeting and email exchanges with the EOHLC, which gave its approval to move forward with the proposed redevelopment. EOHLC also provided guidance on the number of properties to move through the design process and mechanisms to undertake a phased approach.

Cambridge Housing Authority updated its August 25, 2023 memo on Task Order #1 completion and proposed Task Order #2 scope with its memo dated September 5, 2023. The Task Order #2 scope allows for project management services through construction loan closing on the 705 redevelopment. The recommendation to start with two of the four units was noted, as was the recommendation to form a LLC that would be an affiliate to SHA and to which the properties would be conveyed for development. Cambridge will draft an outline of the conveyance process, with specific attention on an interim conveyance mechanism. The SHA would maintain full control of the entity. It was emphasized that the properties would not be sold or transferred to a third party. The conveyance will allow for procurement relief enacted by the Baker administration.

Mr. Zajac confirmed that the budget under Task Order #1 has been expended, excepting costs outlined under additional expenditures, and that the cost listed in Exhibit C, related to Task Order #2 would cover the development of the two properties, even if staggered within a phase. S. Cusolito had requested the addition of assistance with community engagement to Task Order #2. She distributed recent communications from neighbors, including an inquiry about purchasing a portion of the Beechwood Ave property. Mr. Zajac agreed that this is the optimal time to develop a plan for community engagement.

Nobscot Feasibility: The SHA's application to HLC under the 705 Repositioning NOFA, PHN 2022-20, was unsuccessful, though official word has not been received. EOHLC provided informal feedback on concerns with the site, originating with the technical assistance work performed by MHP. Although SHA received no report following a 2020 site walk, MHP outlined for EOHLC a concern centered on the topography and potential for bedrock. As a follow-up to the NOFA decision, CHA has scheduled a meeting with MHP to discuss initial concerns and the subsequent work executed by both Beals + Thomas and CHA. Following that, CHA will request a debriefing from EOHLC and outline anticipated additional assessments, such as geotechnical borings when the site is under contract.

F. Riepe reported that SHA has engaged an attorney, Josh Fox, to begin negotiations with the Scouts. Already underway is a legal analysis of the easements, with particular focus on the physical requirements for the driveway for the new development. The appraisal is to follow. Mr. Riepe also noted the need for a grading analysis, including for the driveway. Cambridge recommends continuing with negotiations to determine if there's a way to put the property under contract while pursuing further analysis and engineering work. The concern is expending funds for soil work and a detailed grading study prior to knowing details such as if the timeline to closing is compatible for all parties, if access prior to closing will be granted, or if the asking price fits within SHA's limit.

Discussion of the Beals + Thomas information on the driveway grading ensued. All agreed that the grading analysis requires refinement, as does the cost estimate. A. Lepak commented that this was to occur via Task Order #1 as outlined as she understood it. Mr. Zajac responded that Beals + Thomas determined that a driveway could be built within an 8-10% gradient, which fits with subdivision regulations, as well as provided a broad calculation of costs. He reiterated that any more detailed cost or grading analysis would be premature. Mr. Riepe noted that excavation costs will be significant and were not included in the estimate. Mr. Zajac responded that those costs were built into the costs included with SHA's funding application.

Commissioners briefly reviewed development options, focusing on those without homeownership units and based on costs without the NOFA funding award. Cambridge Housing Authority has suggested assigning SHA's awarded CPA funds to both Nobscot (approximately \$800K) and the 705 redevelopment (approximately \$250K). The CPA award to SHT for Nobscot is not yet included in the total available. S. Cusolito outlined that the SHA Board must consider its willingness to fund the project in the absence of the NOFA or a similar funding award. Additionally, the role of the SHT must be defined, for instance, in splitting costs and weighing in on decisions for the Task Order #1 amendment and any subsequent activities.

Mr. Zajac noted that if SHA receives positive feedback from MHP and EOHLC for consideration in a future funding round, the chart of development scenarios will be updated. The update would include removing the options related to 705 disposition and adding the CPA funds awarded to the SHT.

In terms of Task Order #1 close-out, the budget of \$10,000 was exceeded in large part by the preparation of the response to the 705 Repositioning NOFA. The total additional cost is \$13,822, which would be split 50:50 between SHA and SHT if the latter agrees. A proposal for \$805 to cover a meeting with MHP was also submitted by CHA. Finally, CHA outlined a proposed scope for Task Order #2, but does not recommend engaging its services until the project is under contract and the State communicates its opinion on the project's viability. S. Cusolito noted that the SHA has also initiated the appraisal and owner outreach, both through Attorney Fox and that the Board should consider adding community engagement to the Task Order #2.

Discussion on the need for more information related to the driveway resumed. F. Riepe also prepared an alternative layout to that prepared by Beals + Thomas, which he found insufficient. Mr. Zajac offered to communicate with Beals + Thomas the additional information desired, along with conveying the alternative drawings. The response will be distributed for SHA consideration prior to authorizing Beals + Thomas to execute the work.

**FYE24 Q1 TAR:** The FYE24 Q1 TAR was presented. The quarterly financial report was voted at the August 8, 2023 Regular Session.

## **MINUTES**

A motion was made by A. Lepak, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to approve the minutes of the May 9, 2023 and June 13, 2023 Regular Sessions and to approve without release, the minutes of the May 9, 2023 Executive Session.

## **FINANCIALS**

A motion was made by A. Lepak, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to approve the August 2023 checks.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Cambridge Housing Authority Consulting Services Proposals:** A motion was made by A. Lepak, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to approve the Cambridge Housing Authority Amendment to Task Order #1, 67-73 Nobscot Road Feasibility, including the additional fees totaling \$13,822, all as outlined by Cambridge Housing Authority.

S. Cusolito recommended the Board approve the payment totaling \$13,822 to include the possibility it will cover the entire cost if SHT elects against the 50:50 split. She also recommended Commissioners consider utilizing CPA funding moving forward, rather than continue to spend down reserves. This is a separate discussion that should involve all Commissioners. A. Lepak continues to question whether all work was completed under Task Order #1, particularly that related to the driveway, but acknowledged that additional qualitative information had been received not long ago. She also noted the absence of earthwork information, but that the Task Order #1 might be interpreted as outlining, rather than obtaining, additional information. Finally, in order to prevent or limit the volume of additional work executed in advance of receiving cost estimates, as well as ensure that all originally outlined work is completed, S. Cusolito has asked CHA to invoice with greater frequency and to specify when a task is outside the agreed upon Task Order.

A motion was made by A. Lepak, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to approve the Estimate of Additional Hours for 67-73 Nobscot Road Task Order #1 in the amount of \$805, the purpose of which is to confer with MHP on its concerns for development of the subject property.

S. Cusolito noted that a meeting was already scheduled by CHA. She reiterated that it is preferable for the Board to review cost proposals *prior to* additional work being scheduled. She also commented that SHA has not received a formal notice about its NOFA application; however, Commissioners agreed that the discussion with MHP is necessary, even if the Board elects to move forward without the NOFA funding.

A motion was made by A. Lepak, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to approve the 705 Redevelopment Task Order #2 as outlined in the CHA memo dated September 5, 2023 in the amount of \$86,970.

A memo dated August 25, 2023 outlining the status of the Frost Farm project was circulated, but not discussed. CHA previously communicated that the SHA can fund two of the three development efforts under consideration. The Board previously elected to hold on Frost Farm development plans.

**2 Beechwood Ave Inquiry:** The SHA received a second inquiry from the neighbor on Oakwood Ave whose property borders 2 Beechwood in the rear. There is interest in purchasing the strip of land that borders Willis Lake. The neighbor previously inquired last December. At that time, the Board conveyed that it wishes to retain the parcel, given that it has been difficult to identify other parcels in town for potential development. The Board agreed by consensus to invite the neighbor to an upcoming meeting.

**Housing Resident Support Services:** Tabled

**Rent Write-Offs:** A motion was made by A. Lepak, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to write off two 667 rent balances resulting from the death of the tenants, in the amounts of \$211 and \$498.

**New Duplex Program Update:** SMOC made a decision to void a new admission for 11 Ford Road because the incoming tenant did not physically move into the unit before giving notice to vacate. The tenant did sign a lease, was provided keys, and transferred utilities to their name. Voiding the new admission triggered the removal of the unit from the HAP contract because the unit was not re-occupied within 120 days, as required by the contract. This also resulted in SMOC's request to have rent payments totaling \$5,468 returned. The SHA received word that the tenant was unable to arrange for caregivers in

this area, but believed the tenant was providing a written 30-day notice of intent to vacate. S. Cusolito will draft a summary of its position to distribute to SMOC and EOHLC.

**AUP Preparation:** The SHA anticipates scheduling the audit, which covers FYE23, in October.

**Public Housing Administration Notices:** S. Cusolito distributed the link to the Notices, including the budget guidelines for FYE25.

**Liaison Reports:** SHT: A. Lepak reported that the SHT approved paying for the Nobscot appraisal at its August 10, 2023. Chair C. Gentile advocated for SHT's reconsideration of acquiring Nobscot, should the SHA decline to purchase.

The SHT received an offer of land off Pokonoket Ave, but it will likely be used as conservation land, rather than housing. The 490 Dutton Rd repairs are progressing so that the unit can be sold to an income-qualified buyer outside the Habitat for Humanity program. The Housing Production Plan update was initiated at an August 17, 2023 meeting facilitated by consultant Jennifer Goldson. Two community engagement meetings are anticipated, one in fall and one in winter. Ms. Lepak cited non-age restricted housing, low-income housing, and units of varying size as goals. Currently, Sudbury has 123 units in excess of the mandated "10%".

### **OPEN FORUM**

Rick Lane, 55 Hudson Rd, wants to make sure Tippling Rock will not be affected by development on Nobscot. Brenda Erickson, 55 Hudson Rd, asked why the Village decks had not been cleaned this summer as approved over the winter. Marvin Waldman, 55 Hudson Rd, commented on the well-maintained grounds, but complained the trees around the perimeter drop a lot of sap on parked cars. He suggested the trees be trimmed back. Brenda Erickson, 55 Hudson Rd, asked what happens if there's property damage, for instance, from a tree falling, extensive enough to make a unit uninhabitable. Charlene Shelton, 55 Hudson Rd, commented on the safety conditions of the balconies. Ms. Shelton also indicated that there are problems with mold at the Village, particularly on the exterior building surfaces. She opined that she would like more attention paid to the existing residents and properties, rather than have so much attention on new projects. She wondered what actions tenants can take to increase part-time staffing hours. Brenda Erickson, concurred, reiterating the frustration with the significant amount of time, energy and money spent on the future, with the focus on development and future tenants, when the existing buildings cannot be properly maintained with current staff capacity. Tenants acknowledged this is a state-wide issue. They also wondered if there is a mechanism to phase redevelopment at the Village. Tom Martin, 55 Hudson Rd, mentioned that cleaning his patio with bleach is effective.

S. Cusolito noted that in one of her first workshops, participants were advised to take care of the existing portfolio and the existing residents before attempting to develop more housing. She noted she is absent to existing tenants more than she would like. She also stated that much of what has been discussed can be a primary focus at an upcoming meeting between Village residents, resident leaders and staff.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

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

**RSC Report:** The Board suggested moving to a quarterly report format.

**Capital Plan:** Two 667 ADA projects were approved under a Plan revision: installation of additional automatic door openers in the Community Building and Building 10; replacement of the original carpet in a second-floor unit. SHA's RCAT project manager will be on site to review unit conditions at the Village to scope projects. The current priority is to start on the 667 fire alarm system upgrade with input from the Fire Department.

Housing Collaborative: Police Chief Scott Nix is taking the lead on scheduling for housing professionals and advocates to resume meeting regularly, something that was discontinued during the pandemic. RSC L. Abraham will represent the SHA.

Housing Inquiries: SHA receives a significant number of inquiries about voucher-based housing, which it does not administer. S. Cusolito sent a request to the State to correct and clarify some of the information that appears on its website, in hopes of making it easier for prospective applicants to reach the correct agency.

Zoom Subscription: The waiver for public meetings to be held remotely continues. While SHA prefers to meet in person, Commissioners were in favor of continuing with the subscription.

NAHRO Conference: S. Cusolito will attend.

Vacancies: Currently, there are seven vacancies at the Village and some anticipated transfers of family tenants. S. Cusolito noted that the SHA now has access to census data through CHAMP that will inform to whom vacant units are marketed if the minority placement goal is not satisfied. With recent turnovers, the SHA has observed an increase in racial minorities, greater diversity in ethnic identity, and overall lower household incomes. The diversity in family profile and non-traditional families remains. The SHA is also currently housing two mixed-status families.

Evictions: No new cases pending.

Maintenance: Annual inspections and vacancy work are currently prioritized.

## **MEMBERS' FORUM**

Notice of the Fall Fest from the Town was distributed.

T. Vitvitsky reported that she will be traveling to Ukraine September 24, returning November 14.

## **ADJOURN**

A motion was made by A. Lepak, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to adjourn the September 12, 2023 Regular Session. The time was 9:25 p.m.

Yes: A. Lepak

Yes: F. Riepe

Yes: T. Vitvitsky