

SUDBURY HOUSING AUTHORITY

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SHEILA M. CUSOLITO
Executive Director

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

April 9, 2024

The SHA met in open session at 7:10 p.m. Those present: Chair: T. Vitvitsky; Treasurer: S. Cline; Assistant Treasurer: S. Swanger; Member: F. Riepe; Executive Director: S. Cusolito

Absent: Vice Chair: A. Lepak

MINUTES

A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2023 Regular Session.

FINANCIALS

A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by S. Cline, and unanimously voted, to approve the checks written in March 2024.

The FYE24 January financial report was presented.

NEW BUSINESS

FISH 288071, 667 Fire Alarm Upgrade: In January, S. Cusolito communicated with SHA's HLC project manager that the project funding allocation seemed low relative to the scope of work. She explained that the SHA requested the design include replacement of expired peripheral equipment, such as emergency lighting, as well as removal of components that will be obsolete following the upgrade of the life safety equipment. The HLC engineer who drafted the scope of services had suggested conferring with the design engineer about including peripheral items in the project scope, particularly around removal of remaining medical pull cords. The assigned design engineer did incorporate all peripheral work in the schematic design.

SHA received word last week that the Schematic Design was reviewed and approved by the HLC engineer at a cost of \$445,489 with a recommendation to limit the scope to life-safety equipment only, given project costs. S. Cusolito met with the HLC PM and BLW design engineer, this morning. The submitted schematic design reviewed and approved by HLC included all peripheral work. With that, the HLC PM will confirm that the funding is sufficient to cover the project.

Public Housing Administration Notices: S. Cusolito provided a link to the published notices.

Liaison Reports: S. Cusolito reported she was contacted by the consultant working on the Housing Production Plan. She sent information by email and followed with a phone discussion. Much of the focus is on accessible units; however, she noted a broader need for units with aging-place features as the predominant need. She subsequently sent information related to the status of both the Frost Farm work and the 705 redevelopment effort.

CPC: S. Cline reported that the Select Board approved all CPC articles for the Town Meeting consent calendar.

OPEN FORUM

No comments.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

FYE24 Budget Revision: A technical issue with the HLC submission mechanism prevented on-time submission; however, no penalty is expected.

SHA Feasibility Study, 705 Redevelopment: Following its initial review of SHA's application in response to PHN 2023-19, HLC sent CHA some clarifying questions. S. Cusolito worked with CHA to address the questions, which centered on a request for additional justification for the proposed unit bedroom profile, particularly in light of removal of the four-bedroom unit; the nature of the anticipated zoning relief; clarification around CHA's involvement with respect to the larger project scope involving four 705 units; clarification on the proposed mechanism of operating support for the 705 replacement units; and overall development costs. S. Cusolito noted that she was discouraged by some of the questions, as she had expressed similar concerns, particularly around unit bedroom profile and operating support for the replacement units. Amongst other information, she provided CHA information on reserves for both New Duplex and the SHALIP unit for comparison with the financial projections made for this project.

Responses were submitted to HLC last week, with preliminary positive feedback. The response included a shift in the allocation of CPC funds between this project and Nobscot. In addition to a concern with the shift in the CPC fund allocation, Commissioners share the concern about operating support for the 705 replacement units, should it prove unsustainable, as the vision is to house those at or below 30% AMI.

S. Cusolito reported on the positive exchange around the project and continuation of PILOT following redevelopment at the April 2, 2024 meeting of the Select Board. Select Board members offered excellent comments and questions, and ultimately voted in favor of continuing PILOT without committing to a specific formula.

Abutter outreach letters were mailed yesterday to those within 300 feet of each of the four properties. The information sessions are scheduled for April 22 and April 29. Commissioner attendance was confirmed and requires the sessions be posted, notwithstanding that no deliberations of the Board will occur. S. Cusolito requested interested parties RSVP on attendance, given the limited room size and parking. She has arranged for overflow parking at the Police Station. As the Chair of the SHA Board, T. Vitvitsky will moderate the meeting. The abutter communication reads that CHA and S. Cusolito will give the presentation, but S. Cusolito suggested that Commissioners will likely want to speak for themselves and that she sees her role as providing specific data or SHA-connected explanations in response to questions. She emphasized the importance of conveying that this is the first step in engaging the neighborhood and that input would be sought as milestones are reached. Commissioners also noted the importance of emphasizing that SHA's practice of designing housing that fits within the neighborhood and that the design work has yet to commence, with the project requiring approval from the ZBA.

Commissioners discussed possible concerns of increased "low-income" housing, effects on property values, quality of tenancies, landscaping, and SHA's ability to maintain the structures. Given the small scale of development, housing density should not be a concern. Studies reflect on average higher property values for private homes adjacent to affordable housing. Given the significant scrutiny during applicant screening

and annually for tenants, there is a greater probability of quality occupants than in private rental or owner-occupied units. Finally, S. Cusolito suggested this project would be an opportunity for SHA to evaluate a shift to assuming responsibility for landscaping, as she has had longstanding concerns with tenants' ability to maintain the properties beyond mowing, raking and snow removal. She noted the likely confusion around the funding shortfall that typifies state public housing and that has led to an inability to adequately keep up the portfolio and the current funding initiatives specifically designed to allow state public housing stock to exit the program by accessing these funding sources to improve and expand housing stock. She offered to prepare some talking points, to which Commissioners could add their own. Alternatively, the meetings could be formatted entirely as listening sessions, with follow-up provided afterward.

Finally, CHA requested clarification on its need to participate in Town Meeting for the CPA funding request. S. Cusolito reiterated that it will be determined on the first night whether the CPC article will be pulled from the consent agenda. SHA would like CHA to be available on Tuesday to make the presentation if it occurs that night, or Wednesday if it does not. S. Cline is looking into whether presentations will be pre-recorded this year, including if the mechanism would allow for CHA to participate in that.

67-73 Nobscot Road Feasibility: SHA received a preliminary analysis from the second budget extension on Beals + Thomas' work. Commissioner Riepe responded with clarifications to direct the remainder of the work.

S. Cusolito submitted invoices to the Town, including those that would be paid either as the final part of the 50:50 split, or from the \$438K CPA fund allocation to the Trust. The Town requested additional back-up that was not supplied when the SHA was reimbursing the Town prior to CHA's involvement. A mechanism for submissions was subsequently established: all invoices being paid from the CPA allocation will be submitted to the Town for direct payment to the contractor. The remaining invoices under the 50:50 split will be resubmitted for reimbursement by the Town to SHA.

S. Cline asked Director of Planning and Community Development Adam Burney and Community Preservation Coordinator Ryan Poteat about the possibility the SHA and SHT could hold a joint meeting that is separate from the regularly scheduled Trust meeting. The hope is to meet once or twice a year, with sufficient time to discuss housing strategy and related activities, as well as coordination around CPA funding requests.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Cash Receipts: The cash receipt report was presented.

RSC Quarterly Report: The RSC quarterly report was presented.

Vacancies: The two-bedroom unit on Pine Street that was vacated mid-April was offered to both mixed-status New Duplex families as a way to reduce the rent burden, but both declined. SHA made the decision to discontinue the rent relief waivers and re-set the rents at the SMOC-determined rates, effective May 1. CHAMP screening of 50 applicants, all claiming priority, is underway. Four vacancies remain at the Village. The waiver requirements have changed with the wind-down of the vacant unit initiative.

Evictions: No new actions; however, SHA has issued several Tenancy At Risk notices for non-payment that require a meeting with the tenant to determine a course of action. Those who have applied to RAFT for assistance are being declined, as a Notice to Quit is now required, a requirement that was waived during the pandemic.

Maintenance: Pension eligibility requirements dictated that the part-time maintenance person reduce his hours until he is in a position to increase them permanently. Taunton Housing Authority referred five

applicants last week; however, three do not live within a reasonable distance of Sudbury to accommodate optimal after-hours response. SHA has requested a further review of the applicant pool.

MEMBERS' FORUM

No comments.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to adjourn the April 9, 2024 Regular Session. The time was 9:00 p.m.

Yes: S. Cline

Yes: F. Riepe

Yes: S. Swanger

Yes: T. Vitvitsky