

SUDBURY HOUSING AUTHORITY

55 HUDSON ROAD
SUDBURY, MASSACHUSETTS 01776
director@sudburyha.org

SHEILA M. CUSOLITO
Executive Director

PHONE: 978-443-5112
FAX: 978-443-5113

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

May 14, 2024

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

Absent: Treasurer: S. Cline

MINUTES

A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by A. Lepak, and unanimously voted, to approve the minutes of the following Sessions:

| | |
|---|---|
| October 4, 2023 Special | December 14, 2023 Joint SHA/SHT |
| October 4, 2023 Executive (without release) | December 19, 2023 Regular |
| October 13, 2023 Regular | December 19, 2023 Executive (without release) |
| November 14, 2023 Regular | May 3, 2024 Special |
| November 14, 2023 Executive (without release) | |

FINANCIALS

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

NEW BUSINESS

FYE24 Year-End Financial Report: A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to certify to compliance with notification procedures for federal and state lead paint laws as presented and in the words of the certification.

A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by A. Lepak, and unanimously voted, to certify to both the FYE24 Top Five Compensation Form and the Year-End and Tenants Accounts Receivables Data as presented and in the words of the certification.

A. Lepak asked why the SHALIP management fee was higher than budgeted. S. Cusolito will follow up with the fee accountant.

FISH 288066, 667 Kitchen Ventilation: A motion was made by A. Lepak, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to approve the Certificate of Substantial Completion for FISH 288066, 667 Kitchen Ventilation.

The CFC was not submitted.

Board Member Elections: A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to approve the slate as presented: Chair: A. Lepak; Vice Chair: S. Cline; Treasurer: S. Swanger; Assistant Treasurer: F. Riepe; Member: T. Vitvitsky, effective June 1, 2024.

The slate represents the SHA Board's tradition of one-year rotation.

Housing Production Plan: A. Lepak distributed the draft plan on April 18. Few comments were received by the initial deadline of May 1 and several stakeholders have requested more time to review. The SHT asked also for an expanded property list. Commissioners discussed the Blue Ribbon Housing Site Selection Report, published in 2003, as a starting point. Many of the properties listed were subsequently designated for other uses. In 2017, the SHA updated a property list, primarily Town-owned parcels, most recently reviewed in 2021. S. Cusolito suggested this could be added to any existing lists held by the Town.

Section 8 Vouchers: At a recent SHT meeting, State Representative Carmine Gentile suggested the SHA might pursue mobile voucher administration as a mechanism to increase affordable housing opportunities and possibly add to the SHI. Potential applications include Meadow Walk and Coldbrook Crossing. All communities surrounding Sudbury administer mobile vouchers, while Sudbury uses SMOC. SHT Trustee and Action Housing Authority Executive Director Kelley Cronin noted some complexity to the qualification process. T. Vitvitsky will request that Representative Gentile provide additional information on the process.

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

Liaison Reports: SHT: The SHT was provided the most recent Beals + Thomas driveway engineering cost analysis for Nobscot. The general opinion was the \$5.1M is too high to make development feasible. Both John Riordan and Carmine thought it might be worth pursuing development on the lower portion that would not require the driveway work. Director of Planning and Community Development suggested the site for Habitat for Humanity.

CPC: No report.

OPEN FORUM

Susan Taricani, 7 Beechwood Ave, asked if the SHA has considered rehabbing 21 Great Lake for occupancy instead of leaving it vacant. She wondered if there's funding, including through the Town, to repair the property and if the neighborhood could assist in the work, calling it a sensitive issue for the neighborhood to block development.

Commissioners noted the highly regulated environment of engaging contractors, the restrictions on uses of CPA funds for repairs and the need to consider long-term sources of subsidy that come with funding such as that sought for the redevelopment.

Ms. Taricani asked if CHA could research funding sources for options other than for duplexes, given the neighborhood's resistance to them.

Commissioners commented that CHA is an expert in the field, aware of funding opportunities, and that the State's goal is to offer funding that ties improving conditions of the State portfolio to increasing the number of units, a model of redevelopment that has precedence in Sudbury. Currently CHA is working on a proposal to engage an architect in order to gain more information on options for the sites.

Ms. Taricani noted that it seemed to involve a lot of money that she wishes would go toward renovation. She asked if a duplex went in on Great Lake, could it serve as a revenue stream to keep the other sites as improved single-family homes.

Commissioners commented that a corner lot lends itself easily to a duplex and that the duplexes envisioned could be configured similarly to single-family homes with accessory dwellings. At this time, the SHA requires more information on each site to be in a position to present it to the ZBA.

Rebecca Karlinski, 11 Basswood Ave, asked if SHA could apply for the project funding without having an architect and if the SHA intends to explore other properties for development.

SHA confirmed it had applied for the project funding and has, over time, exhaustively studied other parcels for development, some of which are referenced in the earlier discussed Housing Production Plan.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

SHA Feasibility Study, 705 Redevelopment: S. Cusolito asked if the Board would approve a transition to using awarded CPA funds rather than reserves for project payments moving forward.

A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by A. Lepak, and unanimously voted, to utilize awarded CPA for costs associated with the Redevelopment of Single-Family Homes.

S. Cusolito reported she sent the conveyance request letter to the State last Friday and has not received a response. Separately, HLC reached out via CHA to ask if MRVP vouchers would be considered, rather than Project-Based Vouchers. The MRVP vouchers apparently offer a lower administrative burden for HLC than PBVs. S. Cusolito communicated to CHA that the MRVP vouchers would be acceptable, but asked for confirmation on which agency would administer them and if the % FMR is comparable to that with PBVs.

Commissioners affirmed their May 3, 2024 position that they do not wish to issue a communication to boards and committees, or to abutters, in response to the pre-Town Meeting communications distributed by abutters. There was no comment on the May 7 email from abutter Hoyt Davis, in which an interest in partnering to retain the single-family homes was expressed. Commissioner A. Lepak entered additional detail on the drafted talking points.

67-73 Nobscot Road Feasibility: The final engineering analysis from the second budget extension on Beals + Thomas' work was received and puts the site costs at \$5.1M. Commissioners agreed by consensus that the cost per unit seems too high to make development feasible, but asked that the engineering analysis be sent to CHA for its inclusion of dwelling construction costs and any sense about financial feasibility. S. Cusolito noted that CHA has stepped off the project pending site control and a design plan for the property, though CHA did offer to perform specific tasks requested by SHA on a fee basis. Commissioners indicated an interest in a high-level assessment.

S. Swanger reiterated his interest in continuing to pursue the 705 redevelopment and perhaps Frost Farm or other parcels such as Broadacres. There was some discussion around the greater need for one-bedroom, non age-restricted housing relative to units with four or more bedrooms based on wait list data, community needs, and to increase flexibility to transfer over-housed tenants.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Cash Receipts: The cash receipt report was presented.

FYE24 Budget Revision: Approval for the revision was received April 16, 2024.

FYE25 Budget Proposal: Approval for the budget was received April 25, 2024. It includes a new administrative position. It's hoped that this will allow for a better applicant pool than the longstanding position that requires too diverse a skill set, as well as too many demands. It's also hoped that later in the year, a full-time groundskeeper/custodian position can be added that better reflects the job functions and additional time needed for maintenance.

667 Tenant Survey: The results of the Fall 2023 survey were presented. S. Cusolito is disappointed that the overall performance of the Housing Authority is lower than in 2019, which she attributes to her time spent on development tasks and which 667 tenants have noted as a lack of access to her.

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.

State Appointee: A representative from the State Boards and Commissions contacted SHA to initiate the process of reappointing Commissioner A. Lepak. This is the first contact since the process was initiated in January,

705 Annual Recertification: The process of recertification is underway with packets delivered yesterday and paperwork due by June 11.

667 Annual Recertification: There were a significant number of 667 tenants who did not respond by the deadline or in time to have rent calculated effective April 1. In several instances, the SHA issued Tenancy At Risk notices, several of which resulted in family members stepping in to assist.

Fire Response: Two fire calls occurred recently: a New Duplex resident left an in-use air fryer unattended that caught fire, destroyed the kitchen stove and hood. The fire report indicates burning food was the cause. A car belonging to a 667 resident who has not driven it in many months caught fire when a family member started it. The fire department indicates accumulated pine needles as the likely cause.

Vacancies: As of today, all units at the Village are occupied. It is hoped that the 705 unit at 62 Pine will be occupied by the 5/23/24 expiration of the vacancy waiver.

Evictions: Possible actions against two New Duplex residents and three 705 families for non-payment. Tenancy At Risk notices and meetings have occurred; however, in most cases, the tenants have not been responsive. SHA was successful in one case in arguing against the requirement to have a Notice To Quit issued to access RAFT funds: the applicant had made multiple significant payments toward the rent balance. Other tenants who are not making payments have asked SHA to issue the Notice To Quit so their applications will not be denied. SHA takes issue with the appearance of a partnership, but is also concerned with the significant amount of time and expense involved, as well as initiating a legal process that may not have the desired result of preserving the tenancy. Commissioners asked if the legal process stops if the debt is cleared, which was confirmed.

Maintenance: Annual inspections are due to begin, this year with the family units to start and likely outsourced. Groundwork at the Village was recently completed by the Billerica House of Corrections work crew.

FISH 288081, 667 Water Main Gate Valve and Water Meter Replacement: The engineering site visit is scheduled for this week.

FISH 288071, 667 Fire Alarm Upgrade: The project should be ready to bid soon.

MEMBERS' FORUM

Commissioner F. Riepe reiterated the scope of the request to CHA around Nobscot: SHA is not requesting a document review, just the bottom-line analysis of feasibility when the cost of the dwelling unit construction is included.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by A. Lepak, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to adjourn the May 14, 2024 Regular Session and move to Executive Session to discuss real property, for to do so in open session may compromise the position of the Housing Authority, not to return to open session. The time was 9:00 p.m.

Yes: A. Lepak

Yes: F. Riepe

Yes: S. Swanger

Yes: T. Vitvitsky