

SUDBURY HOUSING AUTHORITY

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SHEILA M. CUSOLITO
Executive Director

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

December 10, 2024

The SHA met in open session at 7:05 p.m. Those present: Chair: A. Lepak; Vice Chair: S. Cline; Treasurer: S. Swanger; Assistant Treasurer: F. Riepe; Executive Director: S. Cusolito

Also present: Janice Milley, 22 Basswood Ave; Candice Obraztsov, 61 Lakewood Dr; John Sisk & Alicia Carillo, 68 Basswood Ave; CJ Davis, 5 Oakwood Ave; Paul & Jen Fioretti, 47 Basswood Ave; Susan Taricani, 7 Beechwood Ave; Sarah Kelly, 19 Oakwood Ave

Absent: Member: T. Vitvitsky

MINUTES

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to approve the minutes of the September 10, 2024 and October 8, 2024 Regular Sessions and the November 12, 2024 Regular Session as amended.

FINANCIALS

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

NEW BUSINESS

FYE26 Annual Plan Public Hearing: There were no SHA residents or officers of the MVTO in attendance at the Public Hearing. S. Cusolito reported that only one resident attended the November 26 meeting, scheduled to review the Annual Plan with the MVTO and to entertain other matters of interest to the broader resident population. The resident who attended was provided requested information on the annual inspection schedule. A subsequent meeting on December 6 yielded some good suggestions for projects that might be appropriate for the work crews from the Billerica House of Corrections. These include custom-cutting and reinstallation of cabinet shelves removed to install kitchen hood ductwork, common area painting, repainting parking lines and numbers, and installation of new deck top rails. The most significant interest of the Musketahquid Village community is comprehensive improvements to the building exteriors, including windows. S. Cusolito noted that in the last twelve years, there have been several selective improvements to building exteriors, which is all that typical Formula Funding covers, but that leaves each building requiring significant additional work. She recommends an application for funding such as offered through EOHLIC's HILAPP; however, she noted that it would require that the Board hire a consultant to develop the submission, given competing priorities and staff capacity. Commissioner S. Cline commented that she'd like to see the Village buildings painted in the nearer term.

S. Cusolito reported no comments received from family residents, but that there is a longstanding project on the plan to replace existing sheds and overhangs on the 1990-built structures. RCAT is assisting in shaping this project.

C.J. Davis, 5 Oakwood Ave asked why the CPC funds are not listed as part of the capital plan. S. Cusolito stated that generally the funds are listed as the projects are added to the plan and that although there exist awarded CPA funds, the capital plan does not currently include a project that will utilize the funding. Further, Ms. Cusolito stated that there is an existing FISH (capital) project in place that reflects the pre-

development work performed to date. She noted that CPA funding was not utilized for this work and that the assigned funds had been expended.

Regarding the operating budget, Matt Allen, 16 Oakwood Ave, stated that it looks as though SHA is operating at a deficit according to the operating budget presented in the Annual Plan. S. Cusolito stated that SHA is always at an operating surplus. She offered that the operating budget presented in the Annual Plan might include financial elements within the accounting categories that differ from those that appear on the operating statements SHA reviews. She'll follow up to identify those elements. Mr. Allen asked why the SHA maintains such a high reserve. He also asked about the rationale of expending \$37K on a recently completed project at 2 Beechwood Ave, as well as an earlier heating system project at 21 Great Lake, given the interest in redevelopment. Commissioner Lepak stated that SHA has been spending reserves on various projects and that the heating system can be reused. S. Cusolito noted that a significant portion of unexpended funds in the operating budget relates to being understaffed. She stated that SHA is not the only stakeholder/decision-maker in determining project priorities: SHA's vision for a redevelopment project did not negate its responsibility to carry out certain projects. She outlined the improvements covered under the Beechwood Ave project.

Susan Taricani, 7 Beechwood Ave, asked how many single-family homes will be in SHA's portfolio following redevelopment. SHA responded that there will be two single-family homes in non-State programs.

Candice Obratzov, 61 Lakewood Dr, stated that she and her husband demolished their existing home to build another single-family home and had to make some compromises based on ZBA concerns, including staying in line with existing homes in the neighborhood. She asked if the duplexes are definitely happening. Commissioner Swanger stated that SHA is looking to hire an architect to further explore the option to build duplexes.

Alicia Carillo, 68 Basswood Ave, asked if the duplexes can be discussed during the open forum. SHA specified only new questions or comments will be taken.

A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to approve the FYE26 Annual Plan as presented.

The FYE26 Annual Plan public hearing was closed.

State-Aided Property Boiler & Machinery and Crime Insurance Renewal: A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to approve a payment not to exceed \$24,500 for insurance coverage for the state-aided portfolio.

The invoice for the state-procured insurance has not been received, but payment is due by the end of the month. The cost increase over last year is 7.5%, for an anticipated premium of approximately \$24,200. S. Cusolito recommended taking a not-to-exceed vote in the absence of the invoice.

FYE25 Q2 Financial Report: A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by S. Cline, and unanimously voted, to approve the FYE25 Q2 Financial Report.

The report was submitted last month as required. The Board is not required to vote its approval, only to review. Its vote represents its standard practice. The FYE25 Q1 MOD report and FYE25 Q2 TAR were also presented.

FISH 288071, 667 Fire Alarm Upgrade Change Order #1: A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by S. Swanger, and unanimously voted, to approve Change Order #1 in the amount of \$52,359.68 for FISH 288071, 667 Fire Alarm Upgrade, to include purchase and installation of an additional heat detector in each apartment as requested by the Sudbury Fire Department.

Although the installation exceeds current code, it will mimic the existing system. It was the understanding of the SFD and SHA that the upgrade would retain this feature.

New Duplex & SHALIP Rent Increase Requests: A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to approve a request for a New Duplex program (one 3-bedroom and 10 2-bedroom units) rent increase to the highest approvable amount, less the applicable utility allowance, as determined by the market analysis performed by South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC).

S. Cusolito stated that SMOC no longer provides information on the current approvable rents in advance of requests. The New Duplex program, which has a project-based subsidy, requires the request to align with the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract, which renews in January. She noted that annual increases are recommended to avoid drastic changes. She emphasized that only the subsidy portion of the rent is affected by the rent increase, not the tenant portion. The SHALIP rent increase request ties to a mobile voucher and can be made on the anniversary of the lease.

2025 Meeting Calendar: A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to approve the 2025 meeting calendar with a correction of the December 2025 meeting date to December 9.

Leave Time Carry-Over Request: A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to approve the carry-over request of S. Cusolito for unused leave time from 2024.

S. Cusolito outlined that the Board has previously approved carry-over from prior years and that she has a little over 17 days from the current year that are unlikely to be used in the remainder of 2024.

Covid Vaccination Policy Amendment: A motion was made by S. Cline, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to approve the Covid Vaccination Policy as amended.

S. Cusolito proposed the amendments to reflect the current conditions and recommendations. The original policy was implemented in February 2022.

Public Housing Administration Notices: S. Cusolito provided a link to the published notices. In addition to the Notice about the State property insurance program, EOHLC announced Compliance Reserve awards for installations of aging-in-place features during 667 unit turnovers. S. Cusolito commented that she had emphasized the need for such features across SHA's portfolio to the Housing Production Plan consultants. She also noted that SHA added a capital project for lever door handle installations in all Village buildings and currently handles some installations as approvable without deliberation under its Reasonable Accommodation Policy.

Liaison Reports: SHT: The SHT learned that it had \$900,000 in CPA funds that hadn't been posted to it. The SHT subsequently voted to reduce its current CPA fund request from \$750,000 to \$260,000. Director of Planning and Community Development Adam Burney suggested the SHA request a Town-owned parcel on which a homeownership duplex could be built as an alternative to purchase of an existing home. No decision was made on adding the request for a Town-owned parcel on the 2025 Town Meeting warrant.

The SHT reviewed the housing flash vote data. Nine hundred responses were received, but only 600 answered the survey questions. The Trust also discussed establishing a home maintenance program to augment the small grant program to cover maintenance that falls outside CPA fund eligibility. Trustee J. Riordan called attention to property on Concord Road near the Concord line, for sale at \$900,000 through William Raveis. Most of the nine acres is within the flood plain, with approximately 0.5 acre developable.

CPC: S. Cline reported that CPC has been conducting public hearings on the FY26 CPA fund requests. It has heard from the Housing Trust; Historical Commission and Facilities Director, the latter related to Hosmer House and Fairbank Community Center. At its upcoming meeting it will hear from the Hop Brook Protection Association, the Facilities Director related to Hosmer House, and the Housing Authority. In January, the CPC will determine which proposals will advance to Town Meeting.

OPEN FORUM

C.J. Davis, 5 Oakwood Ave commented on 11 Great Lake Ave, which recently sold for \$495,000. He wonders what considerations SHA is giving to purchasing single-family homes. S. Cusolito gave an overview of SHA's significant efforts to acquire single-family homes, which resulted in the acquisition of 16 Willis Lake. In addition to constraints on purchase price, SHA must establish a program through which the purchased unit will be administered, as well as consider how the unit will be financially sustained. Commissioner Cline emphasized that revenue only from rents capped at 30% of tenants' income is insufficient. S. Cusolito remarked that purchasing single-family homes as Mr. Davis outlined mimics how the four units under the proposal were acquired. The State has created funding opportunities, such as the awarded PHI, to reposition or recharacterize State units, in large part because the State program is insufficiently funded to address ongoing needs. She stated that any newly acquired or developed property requires funding not just for acquisition or creation, but for operations to augment rent revenue. She stated that the PHI grant awarded to SHA includes such an operating subsidy to ensure program sustainability.

Susan Taricani, 7 Beechwood Ave, reiterated her interest in preserving the remaining single-family homes in SHA's portfolio. S. Swanger noted that he favors developing on Town-owned properties, such as was done with the 1990s duplex development; however, over the years, each parcel put forward for such purpose has been denied by the Select Board. He suggested abutters could lobby the Town for such use on selected sites, referencing a parcel adjacent to the middle school and another that's part of the DPW site.

Russell Ward, 75 Pinewood Ave, asked why there's such an aggressive attempt to create more units. Commissioners cited the extensive homeless population, as well as an interest in creating additional opportunities to house low- and moderate-income families who wish to move to Sudbury. Also noted is the responsibility for the Town to participate in addressing the housing crisis in Massachusetts. In Mr. Ward's opinion, Sudbury only needs the Housing Trust, not the Housing Authority. He asked at what point the SHA is able to bypass the Zoning Bylaw. Commissioner Lepak stated that the ZBA could deny the SHA's project because currently, the Town has met the 10% affordable unit minimum required of all communities; however, SHA can request a comprehensive permit because all units created will be utilized as affordable housing and generally, zoning boards look favorably on local initiatives that create affordable housing. She corrected Mr. Ward's statement that the project is a violation of the zoning bylaw by stating that the SHA will need to request a variance of the ZBA, just as might be required of any owner. Commissioner Riepe noted that the State's zoning law amendments around accessory dwelling units (ADUs) will go into effect in a few weeks and will require Sudbury to amend its Bylaw to align with the more flexible rules around ADUs carried in the State regulation. The change will allow every single-family lot to accommodate two dwelling units by right.

Alicia Carillo, 68 Basswood Ave, asked if it's likely SHA will make annual requests of the Town for CPA funds in the range of \$450,000 for the duplex project. Commissioner A. Lepak stated that the Town will not be supporting these properties once they're built. Ms. Carillo then read from a prepared statement, reiterating comments on the appearance of "NIMBY-ism", concerns on neighborhood density, preference for preservation of single-family homes, and general support for affordable housing.

A Sudbury resident stated that the deed restrictions on the 1990-built duplex sites expired in 2020. In his opinion, Pine Lakes is not the right option for development. He believes the Pine, Old Meadow and Fairbank sites are a better option. Commissioner Swanger observed that abutters have asked SHA to accept in good faith that they do not oppose affordable housing. He requested they extend that good faith to the Housing Authority. He stated that their neighborhood has not been targeted for evil purpose and that the SHA is trying to address the need for affordable housing with very limited tools.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

SHA Feasibility/705 Redevelopment: S. Cusolito stated that the Ground Lease and Contract for Financial Assistance (CFA) were reviewed by EOHLIC, which requested minor revisions to the language of the

Ground Lease. The Board previously authorized S. Cusolito to sign on behalf of the Housing Authority. The documents will be returned to EOHLC tomorrow, along with the operating proforma. EOHLC is a party to the CFA. As soon as EOHLC signs, the SHA will be authorized to convey the properties to the LLC and advertise for design services.

The design services RFP was updated to reflect the Board's preference to outline total development costs vs. construction costs. Commissioner Cline asked who would issue the RFP. S. Cusolito responded that formal advertisement would be handled by CHA, but other forms of advertisement might also be required.

S. Cusolito reported that both a community member and SHA resident have agreed to serve on the designer selection committee. The Design Review Board has not yet accepted SHA's request to assign a member.

A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to approve the updated Request for Proposals for Design Services as presented.

FY26 Community Preservation Act Project Submission Update: S. Cusolito is preparing a presentation for the December 18 CPC public hearing, hoping to reuse existing slides. She noted some questions around cost-benefit analysis of redevelopment vs rehab. She plans to use some figures from recently completed projects that addressed needs *not* covered by the architect's outline of improvements to 21 Great Lake Drive. The \$137K figure for improvements omitted more capital work than it covered.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Cash Receipts: The cash receipt report was presented.

Options for Recorded Meetings: S. Cusolito noted that this meeting is being recorded by Sudbury TV. She went on record to state that she was not in favor of recording SHA's meetings until after the new year, to provide time for her to receive training, as well as to meet with Village residents, neither of which has occurred. She emphasized it would have been better form to outline for residents the changes to the Community Room use, configuration, and equipment installations in this shared space *prior* to the scheduling the recordings. She stated that there was communication from Pine Lakes resident Matt Allen pressing to start recording tonight and that Sudbury TV agreed to do so.

ZBA Approval of Pine Lakes ADU: SHA received notice of the ZBA's approval of an ADU at 15 Willis Lake.

Payroll Provider Change: As reported in November, SHA will change providers from Paychex to Harpers starting with the first pay period of 2025. S. Cusolito asked all Commissioners to provide signatures for use on payroll direct deposits.

Nobscot Legal Bill: An invoice for \$1,230 for Nobscot legal services and the cost of the appraisal was received yesterday. S. Cusolito asked Planning and Community Development Director Adam Burney if SHA could submit the invoice for reimbursement from the CPC allocation for Nobscot. Director Burney stated that it is too late to do so. She suggested an option to split the cost equally with SHT from the remaining funds each entity voted to set aside for Nobscot. She also noted that the Trust had agreed to cover the cost of the appraisal in its entirety. Commissioner Lepak will request some discussion at an upcoming SHT meeting.

HUD Smoke and CO Detector Installations: Last week, SMOC notified SHA of updated HUD-issued requirements for smoke and CO detection equipment. SHA plans to purchase appropriate detectors and outsource the installations. She noted that SHA is unlikely to meet the December 29, 2024 installation deadline.

Conflict of Interest Training: All Commissioners should have received a notice to either take the online conflict of interest training, or acknowledge receipt of the conflict of interest summary. She suggested contacting the Town Clerk's office with any questions.

Vacancies: One 667 resident vacated November 30 with 30-day notice. SHA was unsuccessful in screening an under-60 applicant using the list that yielded the two most recently housed individuals. A second list of the required minimum 50 applicants was recently pulled. The 705 unit on Pine Street is now occupied. A 705 family occupying one of the single-family homes has signed a lease for the unit on Fairbank Circle. The family was already on a wait list to transfer and was given the option to move now or to wait until the redevelopment is further along.

Evictions: The NTQ issued to a New Duplex resident in mid-October will be filed with the courts. A second New Duplex resident received a 30-day NTQ at the end of November.

Maintenance: Interviews for the full-time position are underway.

FISH 288081, 667 Water Main Gate Valve & Meter Replacement: The kick-off meeting is scheduled for tomorrow. SHA is considering hiring a local plumber to change out secondary valves at the Village coinciding with the shutdown for work on the main.

MEMBERS' FORUM

S. Cusolito volunteered at a fundraiser for Metro Housing Boston. The entity provides housing resources and advocacy for residents of Boston and surrounding communities. She noted that NSP is a donor to the organization and that there were many familiar housing advocates among the guests..

ADJOURN

A motion was made by S. Swanger, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to adjourn the December 10, 2024 Regular Session. The time was 9:00 p.m.

Yes: S. Cline

Yes: A. Lepak

Yes: F. Riepe

Yes: S. Swanger