

SUDBURY HOUSING AUTHORITY

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MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL, JOINT MEETING WITH THE SUDBURY SELECT BOARD

June 30, 2026

The SHA met jointly with the Sudbury Select Board in open, virtual session at 8:00 p.m. Those present for SHA: Vice Chair: T. Vitvitsky; Treasurer: A Lepak; Assistant Treasurer: F. Riepe; Member: S. Cline; Executive Director: S. Cusolito

Those present for the Select Board: Chair: J. Dretler; Vice-Chair: R. Gargeya; Members L. Kouchakdjian, D. Carty, C. Russo; Town Manager A. Sheehan; Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director V. Garofalo

Select Board Chair J. Dretler explained that SHA wishes to appoint an applicant to fill a vacancy on its Board for a term that expires May 31, 2027. Three candidates were interviewed.

Alicia Carrillo, 68 Basswood Ave

Ms. Carrillo recognized outgoing Commissioner Steve Swanger for his commitment to affordable housing efforts. She also recognized candidates Cynthia Howe and Susan Asbedian-Ciaffi, as well as the support for her and the other candidates expressed during public comments. Ms. Carrillo has lived in Sudbury since 1988, has volunteered in the schools and coached soccer, has a background in teaching, and hopes to age in place.

She stated that while affordable housing is an important topic, it is not more important than everything else. She believes this perspective is important to balance what she called the “whatever it takes” approach of SHA’s more experienced board members, in her view, illustrated by the current proposed project for the Pine Lakes neighborhood, where she lives, and which she characterized as the most densely populated neighborhood in Sudbury. She opined that the family-friendly Pine Lakes neighborhood has experienced a history of marginalization and emphasized the need to protect vulnerable, marginalized neighborhoods from being “steamrolled” by government agencies, a perspective she believes will be valuable to SHA.

Select Board Member C. Russo asked Ms. Carrillo how many SHA meetings she’s attended in the last year. Ms. Carrillo responded that she only missed one meeting. Mr. Russo asked Ms. Carrillo her opinion of SHA’s strategy and how she might change it, focusing specifically on housing development. Ms. Carrillo stated that she would support development on appropriately sized lots, as has been previously accomplished by SHA. She reiterated that Pine Lakes is a densely populated neighborhood with small lots, characterizing further development as an unfair burden on existing Pine Lakes families. She favors updating the existing single-family homes utilizing recently voted Town funds and previously voted CPA funds. She favors development on Fairbank Circle, rather than Pine Lakes.

Select Board Member D. Carty asked for Ms. Carrillo’s opinion of the goal of SHA to create affordable housing. Ms. Carrillo stated that developing additional affordable housing is a worthy goal; however, she considers maintaining existing properties a higher priority, citing the fact that the Town currently exceeds the state-mandated threshold of 10%, currently standing at 11.88%. She expressed interest in understanding statements that the actual percentage of affordable housing stock is lower than 10%, whether that is being reimaged at the state level to a higher percentage, and what part SHA might play in that. She favors SHA prioritizing staffing and maintaining existing properties, rather than pursuing development. Ms. Carrillo

further opined that, notwithstanding waitlist trends, there will always be applicants that favor the single-family home housing model. Following those priorities, if SHA can obtain funding for development, she favors such development on SHA-owned sites, but only on lots of appropriate size.

Select Board Vice-Chair R. Gargeya asked for any additional comments on SHA priorities. Ms. Carrillo acknowledged the importance of SHA's work. She opined that her feedback is often not what SHA finds helpful, but she is willing to serve as that voice.

Select Board Member L. Kouchakdjian asked Ms. Carrillo to confirm that she generally supports duplex development, but only on appropriately sized lots. Ms. Carrillo confirmed, again citing Fairbank Circle as a larger parcel already developed with multi-family housing that, in her view, could better accommodate additional duplex housing. She stated that she is not in favor of any high-density development in settled residential neighborhoods, nor does she see that supported by others in Town. Ms. Kouchakdjian recognized that duplex-style homes are of value for aging in place and wondered if Ms. Carrillo would object if a neighbor other than SHA sought such development. Reiterating her earlier statements that Pine Lakes is densely populated, Ms. Carrillo stated she would object on lots comparable in size to SHA's, noting that it might set a precedent for duplex development throughout the neighborhood, but would not object to duplex construction of larger Pine Lakes lots.

Select Board Chair Dretler asked Ms. Carrillo how she would handle making decisions that are unpopular with some residents. Ms. Carrillo stated that it would depend on which side she is voting on, noting that she's aware that boards and committees sometimes make unpopular decisions that are not unanimous. She would endeavor to evaluate with full transparency and consideration of multiple perspectives to make the best decision for the Town.

There were no questions from SHA.

Cynthia Howe, 36 Birchwood Ave

Ms. Howe thanked Ms. Carrillo and those others who spoke kindly. Her family's presence in Sudbury goes back several generations, with members among the first to settle in the Pine Lakes neighborhood. In her opinion, there is no question that additional affordable housing is needed in Sudbury, but she emphasized that the Town must take a balanced approach. She commented that arguments could be made that Pine Lakes in particular is both the best and worst place to put affordable housing. She stated that the SHA has a greater duty than just one proposed development, noting that parcels for future potential development often come before the SHA and SHT, on which Ms. Howe served for ten years. Ms. Howe believes her personal and professional qualifications are well suited to serving as a commissioner to look not only at Pine Lakes development, but also the current and future management of the existing affordable housing, coupled to creating additional housing. Ms. Howe practiced law prior to entering the affordable housing field in 1997 and has worked at both the state and municipal level in both the public and private housing sector. She currently works at Medford Housing Authority as a compliance administrator.

Select Board Member C. Russo asked Ms. Howe how many SHA meetings she's attended in the last year. Ms. Howe responded that she had attended two regular sessions, as well as several forums and joint meetings with the SHT. She also noted her participation on the original designer selection team that consisted of staff, commissioners and members of the public. She stated she was not involved with the proposal development. Mr. Russo asked Ms. Howe her opinion of SHA's current strategy and what she might advise. Ms. Howe stated the SHA's priority is to focus on management and oversight of its existing portfolio and additionally to create additional housing to stay ahead of the "10%". Specific to the Pine Lakes proposal, she believes earlier, more effective, and more inclusive communication from both SHA and abutters would have been beneficial.

Select Board Vice-Chair R. Gargeya asked for any additional comments on SHA priorities. Ms. Howe reiterated that management and oversight, as well as advocacy for development, is important.

Select Board Member D. Carty asked Ms. Howe what she thinks should happen with the existing four homes in the Pine Lakes neighborhood. Ms. Howe stated that she has not discussed the project in any detail with either abutters or the SHA, beyond what was presented at this year's town meeting and the initial presentation by the SHA. She also noted she has not examined any of the pre-development engineering or other documentation, and thus, feels unqualified to give a comprehensive answer. She did opine that the properties provide an opportunity, with some lending themselves to either duplexes or ADUs, but that she considers one lot too small for either.

Select Board Member L. Kouchakdjian asked Ms. Howe for comment on the value of duplexes and ADUs to aging in place considerations. Ms. Howe responded that duplexes and ADUs are critical in this regard, adding that her mother lives next door to her in a home with a permitted ADU that currently houses a Town employee, but where she lived prior to relocating next door. If she were not able to live so close, she stated it's likely she would live in a duplex or an ADU. She noted that the SHA has several duplexes, that there are several others in town, including in Pine Lakes, and that there are also a number of ADUs in town and including in Pine Lakes. She considers these good options for the town as a whole, not just Pine Lakes. Ms. Howe further noted the Town's longstanding bylaw allowing for accessory units, in place well before the state considered it and at the time, specifically to house family members. Ms. Kouchakdjian asked Ms. Howe if she would support building additional duplexes on small lots in the Pine Lakes area in order to allow for aging in place or disability needs. Ms. Howe stated that she would support ADUs and that duplexes would require more complex considerations to be approved. She noted that both she and her mother built their current homes and she is well aware of the complexities of building in Pine Lakes, including consideration of conservation and wetlands restrictions. She further noted that septic capacities for particular lots do not always follow the number of bedrooms or people housed on the lots.

Select Board Member D. Carty asked for clarification on the timeline around which Ms. Howe became aware of the redevelopment project. Ms. Howe stated she believes she learned of it conceptually a few years ago when it was presented to the SHT for funding support. She learned of neighbors' opposition through Facebooks post and was asked to serve on the designer selection committee, until then, not realizing how far the project had come. She is in agreement with some concerns expressed by abutters, but not with others and will need additional information to fully take a position on the proposal.

SHA Commissioner S. Cline asked Ms. Howe to elaborate on her public and private sector housing experience, which spans 30 years. Ms. Howe noted that in the private sector, spanning 15 years, she was a multi-site, then a regional manager for Peabody Properties, with a portfolio that included affordable units with project-based vouchers or involving tax credits. She then became a vice president at Barkan Management, which managed the Coolidge at the time. She worked in public sector housing starting in 1997, when she became the executive director of the Grafton Housing Authority. She then became the ED of the Needham Housing Authority, during which time, a 60-unit property was redeveloped. During her tenure, Needham assumed responsibility for Wellesley Housing Authority, resulting in a dual ED role. She then took on a series of contract roles and for the recent three years, has worked in program compliance at Medford Housing Authority. She is familiar with housing programs administered through both state and federal regulations, as well as tax credit and voucher programs. In addition to her professional undertakings, Ms. Howe has spent the last ten years volunteering on the Sudbury Housing Trust. Ms. Cline asked if her work on the Trust exposed her to the work of the Housing Authority. Ms. Howe stated that she believes the Trust and the Housing Authority are working together more closely, which benefits both entities in carrying out their respective affordable homeownership and rental opportunity roles. She

mentioned starting on the Housing Trust during the time it was developing three affordable ownership units on Maynard Road and that she completed her service just as SHT was purchasing a single-family home to sell as an affordable ownership unit. Ms. Howe reiterated that she needs more information in particular on the Pine Lakes proposal, further acknowledging that public service and personal opinion are not always the same.

Select Board Chair J. Dretler asked Ms. Howe how she would handle making decisions that are unpopular with some residents. Ms. Howe stated she has thought a lot about this relative to the Pine Lakes proposal. Her understanding is that the proposal is in flux. She further stated that the support of her neighbors is also an important consideration. Moreover, she noted that even amongst supporters or opponents there are differences of opinion. She stated that she is generally supportive of duplexes.

Susan Asbedian-Ciaffi

Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi has been a resident of Sudbury since 1995. She has volunteered in the schools, the Food Pantry, and coached soccer. She has also served on several town committees, including just completing more than ten years on the CIAC. Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi has worked in finance and accounting for 30 years. She believes the need for affordable housing, both in Massachusetts and nationwide, is an important issue. She coupled this need with what she's experienced volunteering at both the Food Pantry and Household Goods in Acton. She commended SHA on several well-done duplexes, calling them important in addressing the need for housing and suitable for Sudbury. She would favor more of that type of housing.

Select Board Vice-Chair R. Gargeya asked Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi to elaborate on her comment relating to housing availability; affordability; and inventory, as well as SHA priorities. Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi stressed the importance of housing maintenance, coupled with the importance of creating new housing opportunities. She opined that there shouldn't be a gap for those working in Sudbury to live here.

Select Board Member C. Russo asked Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi about how many SHA meetings she had attended in the last 12 months. Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi responded none, but is familiar with housing proposals. Mr. Russo asked Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi her thoughts on SHA's recent strategy and how she might change it. Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi reiterated her position on the need to continue building inventory in thoughtful and purposeful manner that is in keeping with lot size and the community.

Select Board Member D. Carty asked Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi about her membership on the CIAC. Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi responded that she will no longer serve on CIAC. Mr. Carty asked Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi what she thinks should happen with SHA's four homes in the Pine Lakes neighborhood. Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi responded that while she's familiar with the area, she is not familiar with the details of the plans for each of the properties. She is not opposed to duplexes, which she stated can be done in a non-intrusive manner.

Select Board Member L. Kouchakdjian asked Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi her impression of duplexes and ADUs in meeting aging in place needs. Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi responded on the value of such housing in meeting that need, as well as the need for starter homes. She reiterated that the homes would need to be appropriate in scale and design for both the lot and the neighborhood. Ms. Kouchakdjian asked if Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi saw any advantage over the other two candidates in not living in the Pine Lakes neighborhood. Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi responded that she'd likely bring more objectivity to the project, which she called equalizing.

SHA Chair T. Vitvitsky commented that over the years SHA has tried to obtain buildable lots in Sudbury, with no success. SHA Commissioner S. Cline acknowledged Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi's response to an earlier question that she would need more information on the Pine Lakes plan to inform her decisions on the

project. the site and related proposals must be studied and vetted before next steps could be taken. Ms. Cline asked what inspired Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi to apply to the SHA board, to which Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi responded that she wishes to continue her municipal volunteerism, now having stepped off the CIAC. She also restated her belief in the importance and need for affordable housing.

Select Board Chair J. Dretler asked Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi how she would handle making decisions that are unpopular with some residents. Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi stated she does not have a problem explaining an unpopular point of view or decision.

Select Board Member C. Russo stated that SHA must keep in mind its original goals, emphasizing that Ms. Carrillo's perspective would be of value to SHA. Referring to other prospective development projects, Mr. Russo stated his hope that whoever is appointed will be willing to offer a perspective geared toward compromise. SHA Commissioner S. Cline commented that two candidates are residents of the Pine Lakes neighborhood, capable of offering their perspective and two candidates have served on municipal committees and boards. She identified Cynthia Howe as the intersection of these desirable qualifications, with the additional benefit of extensive experience working in the affordable housing field, both public and private. Ms. Cline further highlighted that Ms. Howe indicated she needs to review SHA's proposal to inform her position on it, additionally emphasizing that even for the SHA, the redevelopment is at the proposal stage, with community input welcomed. Select Board Member D. Carty has no doubt about Ms. Howe's qualifications, but is concerned with housing work within communities that are unlike Sudbury. He believes it's time for new voices and expressed dismay that SHA commissioners did not ask questions of Ms. Carrillo. Select Board Member L. Kouchakdjian commented on Ms. Howe's investment in the Pine Lakes community, coupled with her experience in the housing field and support of property maintenance. Select Board Member R. Gargeya believes Ms. Howe's combination of professional experience, experience living in Pine Lakes, as well as her expressed ability to consider SHA initiatives on her own terms makes her the best of three qualified candidates. Select Board Chair J. Dretler added that Ms. Howe worked for the Town of Grafton which is a community similar in size to Sudbury.

A motion was made by D. Carty, seconded by C. Russo and voted as follows, to appoint Alicia Carrillo to the SHA Board of Commissioners, term to expire May 31, 2027: SHA Commissioners T. Vitvitsky, F. Riepe, A. Lepak, and S. Cline opposed; Select Board Members D. Carty and C. Russo in favor; Select Board Members L. Kouchakdjian, R. Gargeya, and J. Dretler opposed. The motion to appoint Ms. Carrillo failed 2-7.

A motion was made by S. Cline , seconded by F. Riepe, and voted as follows, to appoint Cynthia Howe to the SHA Board of Commissioners, term to expire May 31, 2027: SHA Commissioners Vitvitsky, Riepe Lepak; Cline; Select Board Members Russo, Kouchakdjian, Gargeya, Dretler in favor; Select Board Member Carty opposed. The motion carried 8-1.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by T. Vitvitsky, seconded by F. Riepe, and unanimously voted, to close the joint meeting of the Sudbury Housing Authority and Sudbury Select Board. The time was 9:30 p. m.

Yes: S. Cline

Yes: A. Lepak

Yes: F. Riepe

Yes: T. Vitvitsky