MINUTES

DECEMBER 23, 2020 AT 8:34 AM

VIRTUAL MEETING

Housing Trust Members Present: Chair Cynthia Howe, Vice Chair John Riordan, Kelley Cronin, Janie Dretler, Carmine Gentile, and Robert Hummel

Housing Trust Members Absent: Susan Scotti

Others Present: Director of Planning and Community Development Adam Duchesneau, and Director of the Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO) Elizabeth Rust

Ms. Howe called the meeting to order at 8:36 AM.

1. Minutes
a. Approve Meeting Minutes of December 10, 2020
Mr. Gentile made a motion to approve the minutes of December 10, 2020. Ms. Dretler seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Abstain, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Mr. Gentile – Aye, and Mr. Hummel – Aye.

2. Finances
a. Fiscal Year 2022 Community Preservation Act Funding Request – Community Preservation Committee Hearing and Questions
Ms. Howe noted the Housing Trust had applied for a Community Preservation Act funding allocation for Fiscal Year 2022 and the Community Preservation Committee was requesting a breakdown of how the funding would be used.

Ms. Rust outlined the memorandum she had prepared which provided a proposed description of how the Community Preservation Act funding allocation would be used by the Housing Trust. Two different types of uses were discussed in the memorandum: 1) Create one unit of affordable housing through the Home Preservation Program or otherwise create affordable housing unit/s, and 2) Assist 3 to 4 extremely low income rental households with rental assistance.

Ms. Howe asked if there were any concerns about using the Community Preservation Act funding for the creation of new dwelling unit(s). Ms. Rust noted the current amount of money in the Housing Trust would not be sufficient to purchase any property most likely and would not be enough, by itself, to cover the cost of the possibly purchasing the 67-73 Nobscot Road property.

Ms. Howe felt the discussion regarding the usage of the Community Preservation Act funds should focus on how they would be used to provide rental assistance to households in Sudbury. She raised questions as to how much assistance should be provided, what parameters the program would include, would this be a long term or short term project, etc.

Mr. Riordan noted there had not been a substantial amount of applications under the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (less than 10), but he had found there were a number of people in housing currently which already had some type of rental assistance and they had been greatly impacted by the COVID pandemic. Mr. Riordan indicated these people had been struggling to purchase household items and pay their rent due to the challenges of the pandemic.

Ms. Howe stated she had seen some people who had actually seen a net gain in income, at least until September 2020, because of the various subsidies that had been provided during the pandemic.

Ms. Cronin stated she wanted to focus on the request of the Community Preservation Committee to identify how the requested Community Preservation Act money would be spent. She noted the Community Preservation Committee wanted to know who the Housing Trust would be helping and would this be just a band aid for those who needed assistance for the long term. Ms. Cronin discussed the options and pros/cons of helping people in the short term and long term.

Mr. Gentile viewed the rental assistance as a way for people to increase their income for the duration of the rental assistance program.

Ms. Cronin asked if the Housing Trust were to do a rental assistance program, would it be short term to allow people to increase their income or would it be a longer term assistance program. Discussion ensued as to whether the response to the Community Preservation Committee should indicate there would be a short term or long term assistance program.

Ms. Dretler indicated she believed the Community Preservation Committee was saying there was an emergency now, but the funding the Housing Trust was requesting would not be available until July 1, 2021. She felt the Housing Trust should respond directly to this particular item.

Mr. Riordan felt it would still be important to have the Emergency Rental Assistance Program be linked to impacts from COVID, but he wondered if perhaps this definition could be somewhat loosened slightly.

Ms. Howe raised the prospect of possibly doing a mortgage assistance program.

Mr. Gentile noted the community would be dealing with the impacts of COVID long after the pandemic subsided. He pointed out there were people who currently needed rental assistance and would into the future due to the impacts of the pandemic.

Ms. Rust indicated she could revise the memorandum to the Community Preservation Committee to talk about the general needs in the community.

Ms. Dretler made a motion to continue forward with the request to the Community Preservation Committee for $275,000 of Community Preservation Act funds to create one unit of affordable housing and $113,500 of Community Preservation Act funds to provide assistance to low income rental households. Mr. Gentile seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Mr. Gentile – Aye, and Mr. Hummel – Aye.

Ms. Rust indicated she would revise the memorandum based upon the discussion at the meeting, then send the memorandum to Ms. Howe for review, and then submit it to the Community Preservation Committee once it was finalized.

Several Housing Trust members and Ms. Rust agreed to attend the Community Preservation Committee meeting on January 6, 2021 to speak to their funding request.

At 9:29 AM, Mr. Hummel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Dretler seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Mr. Gentile – Aye, and Mr. Hummel – Aye.