



Town of Sudbury

Housing Trust

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MINUTES

JUNE 17, 2021 AT 8:00 AM

VIRTUAL MEETING

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

Housing Trust Members Absent: None

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

Ms. Howe called the meeting to order at 8:03 AM.

Cold Brook Crossing Affordable Update

Ms. Rust indicated there were a few remaining issues related to the Affordable Fair Housing Marketing Plan and the Affordable Housing Restriction, and they were working through those in an attempt to close them out. She indicated an internal staff meeting had been held on June 16, 2021 to discuss the matter in more detail.

1. Discussion on FY22 Programs:

o Development

iii. *Habitat For Humanity Unit*

Ms. Rust indicated she had met with someone from Habitat for Humanity. They were willing to have people monitor the site and work to perform all of the repairs. She indicated the Housing Trust would still need to purchase new materials and items for the dwelling unit. Ms. Rust stated the Housing Trust should look into setting aside some money to ensure they had cash ready to handle ongoing expenses for the project.

Ms. Howe asked if there would be any payment responsibilities for the Housing Trust based upon payment due by the previous owner that were outstanding. Ms. Rust outlined some payments that would need to be made.

At this time Mr. Riordan joined the meeting.

Ms. Cronin raised questions about private mortgage insurance and insurance claims for the dwelling unit. She also inquired if the other unit in the duplex had any damage, and Ms. Rust confirmed there was not and it was in good shape.

Ms. Howe recommended providing a loan to Habitat for Humanity for the work on this project, but to set a cap on what the amount would be. Ms. Rust indicated she would work to obtain a line by line itemized cost for the rehabilitation of the unit in order to work out a services agreement with Habitat for Humanity.

Mr. Gentile indicated he felt there would be ways to alleviate situations such as this in the future. He believed there were conditions at the property which might have allowed the Town or other entities to secure the unit to ensure there would be no damage to the unit, such as what happened to this unit with the extensive amount of water damage. Mr. Gentile noted if this had been a condominium situation, it would have allowed the other unit owner in the duplex to gain access to the vacant unit.

- Rental Assistance
 - i. Emergency or Not*
 - ii. Amount per Month*
 - iii. Number of Months*
 - iv. Eligibility AMI*
 - v. Renewal Policy*
 - vi. Outreach*

Ms. Howe noted the program had been extended for approximately a year by the Housing Trust. Ms. Rust stated people participating in the program had to show their income had been impacted by the COVID pandemic.

Ms. Howe asked how things should proceed with the Town's rental assistance program and its parameters. Mr. Riordan pointed out the state now had a very robust rental assistance program which could handle what the Town's program had been doing for several years. However, he also noted that execution of providing this assistance at the state level could be somewhat challenging or perhaps participants would be subject to application backlogs. Mr. Riordan indicated he felt the program should not accept any new applications, but should allow households who were currently in the program to pursue all of the renewals they were entitled to.

Mr. Gentile noted the recent law that was passed to extend some of the regulations permitted under the pandemic provided continued protection to tenants.

Mr. Riordan inquired as to how much money the Housing Trust had spent on the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. Ms. Rust indicated through the end of March 2021 was \$30,000 approximately and there was approximately another \$10,000 which had been allocated. Mr. Riordan stated he preferred having the rental assistance program in the community, but was a little nervous that if the program were opened up beyond households that were impacted by COVID, they might receive a flood of new applications.

Ms. Howe noted a number of assistance programs were beginning to come to a close. Ms. Scotti noted the enhanced unemployment benefits ended in September of 2021.

Ms. Howe recommended the program be suspended for new applications until the fall of 2021. Mr. Riordan suggested that in the meantime, the Housing Trust look at crafting a new rental assistance program that may not rely upon on any COVID requirements. Ms. Rust noted the Town Social Worker had advocated to have the Emergency Rental Assistance Program continue to remain open, including for new applicants, for the foreseeable future.

Ms. Cronin noted one additional way to provide assistance to low income households would be to provide assistance for security deposits on their rental units.

Mr. Pops felt the rental assistance program had been a huge help in keeping people in their homes during the pandemic.

There was then discussion regarding what level of assistance could be provided to households in any new program.

- Development

- iii. *Maynard Road Units*

Ms. Cronin noted this was a 3-unit affordable dwelling project and the units there needed gutters. She wanted to know how they could obtain funding from the Small Grants Program for this project. Ms. Rust indicated she had been in touch with the unit owners about applying to the program.

There was discussion regarding pictures from one of the dwelling units which displayed cracks around the some of the door frames and windows.

Regarding the gutters, Mr. Gentile recommended the unit owners make a case as to why the gutters would resolve the existing problem. Ms. Howe wondered if a French drain system might be more beneficial to these units.

- ii. *New Home Preservation*

Ms. Rust inquired as to how the Housing Trust wanted to allocate these funds (approximately \$300,000 or so). Ms. Howe stated the Housing Trust could look at buying down a unit in a project at a future point in time. There was consensus to use the money for the 67-73 Nobscot Road project or other development opportunities.

- i. *67-73 Nobscot Road*

Ms. Rust inquired if the Housing Trust wanted to put any specific money into the project budget. Ms. Dretler indicated Select Board Member Dan Carty was interested in having someone come to the Select Board to discuss the project with them when there was a good point to provide an update.

Mr. Duchesneau indicated he would reach out to Beals + Thomas to commence negotiations, but had not had time to do it to this point.

Mr. Riordan wanted everyone to know the subcommittee was aware there needed to be some outreach to the neighbors in the area prior to any site analysis work being performed at the property.

There was discussion regarding neighborhood concerns and objections to new housing projects in various locations in the community.

o Small Grants

i. Review Program Guidelines for Possible Revisions

Ms. Rust indicated the maximum grant available was \$5,000 per grant period and a cap of no more than \$10,000 over 7 years for a household at a given property address. Ms. Howe noted the Housing Trust had raised questions in the past regarding the amount of these grants, their frequency, and scope of the assistance being provided under the program.

Ms. Rust stated Community Preservation Act funds could not be used for this program so the Housing Trust had to keep this in mind when looking to provide funding to the program.

Mr. Pops recommended some of the parameters be reviewed and the expectations of the grant recipients in how they used the money should be considered.

The Housing Trust determined their next meeting would be on Thursday, July 8, 2021 at 8:00 AM.

At 9:55 AM, Ms. Howe made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Riordan seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Mr. Gentile – Aye, Mr. Hummel – Aye, Mr. Pops – Aye, and Ms. Scotti – Aye.