



# Town of Sudbury

## Housing Trust

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### MINUTES

**NOVEMBER 18, 2021 AT 8:00 AM**

### VIRTUAL MEETING

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

**Housing Trust Members Absent:** Robert Hummel and Susan Scotti

**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.

#### **1. Minutes: Approve Meeting Minutes of October 14, 2021, if presented**

Mr. Riordan made a motion to approve the minutes of October 14, 2021. Mr. Gentile seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Absent, Mr. Gentile – Aye, and Mr. Pops – Abstain.

#### **6. Rental Assistance – Discussion**

Town Social Worker Bethany Hadvab was in attendance to discuss the matter with the Housing Trust.

Ms. Howe discussed the proposed modifications and alternatives the Housing Trust was considering for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).

Ms. Hadvab stated it was very difficult to define what “COVID related” impacts were and this was a bit challenging because it was one of the requirements for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. She noted that people have been prioritizing other items, besides rent, during the pandemic. Ms. Hadvab noted that now with eviction moratoriums over, people were prioritizing paying their rent much more. She indicated paying for SNAP or other social programs had become much more challenging for many households. Ms. Hadvab stated any paperwork barriers that could be eliminated would be greatly appreciated by the residents seeking any type of social assistance.

Ms. Howe noted residents who were already in subsidized housing were not eligible for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program when it was active.

Julie Benoit from The Coolidge at Sudbury residential development spoke to the need of the ERAP and other programs by a number of their residents.

Morgan Pichel from The Coolidge at Sudbury residential development noted some residents have applied for other rental assistance resources a number of times and it takes several months for them to hear back from anyone.

Mr. Riordan indicated he was in favor of continuing the rental assistance program and keeping it going to provide assistance to residents. Mr. Cronin indicated she was completely in support of this as well.

Rebecca Whitley from the Town Social Worker's Office provided comments emphasizing the challenges experienced by residents when seeking social assistance.

Ms. Hadvab stated there were numerous mold issues in subsidized housing in Sudbury. She indicated that in many instances, residents were required to leave their unit and then needed to pay for the additional cost of a hotel room out of their own pocket while their unit was addressed or until they could find new permanent housing.

Ms. Rust explained the changes that could be implemented to the ERAP.

Mr. Riordan asked what other communities were doing to provide assistance to their residents.

There was then discussion regarding what changes should be made to the ERAP (qualification criteria, assistance levels, renewal possibilities, etc.).

At this time Ms. Dretler arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Gentile made a motion for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program to continue with the following modifications. The program would:

- Provide assistance to households up to 100% of the Area Median Income.
- Raise the assistance level to Acton, MA sizes OR 50% of the monthly rent; whichever is greater, but not exceeding the amount of the monthly rent.
- Provide monthly assistance up to 6 months, including the number of months of lump sum paid, renewals allowed up to availability of funding.
- Provide lump sum assistance up to 4 months.
- Remove "impacted by COVID" requirement.
- Expand assistance to all housing related costs, including utilities.
- Provide assistance to cost burdened households paying over 30% of their income for housing or, if there is an emergency situation, then the cost burden threshold would only need to be over 20%.

Ms. Cronin seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Abstain, Mr. Gentile – Aye, and Mr. Pops – Aye.

## **2. Financial Update**

- Vote to Ratify the FY21 August and September Transactions

Ms. Rust provided a brief overview of what the transactions entailed.

Ms. Cronin made a motion to ratify the FY21 August and September Transactions. 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. Pops – Aye.

- FY23 Regional Housing Services Office Fee – Vote

Ms. Rust indicated the proposal was to keep the Regional Housing Services Office membership fee the same as FY22 for FY23 at \$45,000.

Mr. Riordan made a motion to approve the FY23 Regional Housing Services Office membership fee at \$45,000. Ms. Cronin seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Aye, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Mr. Gentile – Aye, and Mr. Pops – Aye.

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds Request

Ms. Dretler noted the Select Board had discussed this topic at a general, town-wide level. She indicated the next step was for the Select Board to go through all of the projects to determine which ones were and were not eligible for funding.

## **4. Dutton Road – Update and Next Steps**

Ms. Rust stated this was a Habitat for Humanity unit in a duplex building. She noted there were still a significant number of repairs which needed to be conducted for the unit. Ms. Rust indicated Habitat for Humanity was requesting the Housing Trust front the money for these repairs with reimbursement occurring to the Housing Trust once the unit had been sold to a new buyer. She stated there was no will for the unit when the owner passed away, and this has made for a difficult and slow situation in seeking to rehabilitate the unit.

Ms. Cronin requested a representative from Habitat for Humanity attend the December 9, 2021 Housing Trust meeting to answer questions about the situation of this unit and to provide clarity to the Housing Trust. Other Housing Trust members agreed additional information was needed before any decisions could be made on this item.

## **5. Home Preservation Grants**

- Two Grants for Possible Award

Ms. Rust stated the owner of 58 Robbins Road was seeking financial assistance to address roof repairs in the amount of \$18,000 and that the dwelling was a Home Preservation Program unit.

There was discussion regarding the cost of the work to be completed and the scope of work.

At this time Mr. Cronin left the meeting.

Ms. Howe made a motion to approve \$16,000 for the work at 58 Robbins Road, plus up to \$2,000 in overages with the Housing Trust paying half of the \$16,000 up front, but with the expectation the homeowner would pay \$1,000 up front and \$2,000 in total. Ms. Dretler seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Absent, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Mr. Gentile – Aye, and Mr. Pops – Aye.

Ms. Rust indicated the owner of 8 Eddy Street was looking for funding for an emergency plumbing repair to the unit (toilet and associated piping). She noted the homeowner had not paid an invoice for this work from July 2021 and the contractor was seeking payment for this service.

Ms. Howe felt grant funding should be shut off to this property owner since extremely substantial grant funding had been provided to this unit in the past. Ms. Rust confirmed the last correspondence with the property owner in 2019 confirmed the Housing Trust would grant the owner no further funds after the award of \$45,000 in 2019.

Ms. Howe made a motion to deny the application for 8 Eddy Street, but would be open to future urgent and emergency funding expense requests. Ms. Dretler seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Absent, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Mr. Gentile – Aye, and Mr. Pops – Aye.

## **8. 67-73 Nobscot Road – Site Feasibility Analysis Update**

Mr. Duchesneau indicated he did not have a significant update on the site feasibility analysis. He noted the Subcommittee had met on November 12, 2021 to discuss next steps. Mr. Duchesneau stated Beals + Thomas was currently working on possible development scenarios and should have something for the Subcommittee to review in December of 2021.

## **7. Small Grant Program – Green Building Resources**

Mr. Pops indicated he could look at rewriting the purpose statement for this resource. The Housing Trust members agreed this document should be posted on the Housing Trust website for future reference by Applicants. The Housing Trust members felt the document contained very good information and should be distributed as widely as possible.

## **Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

## **3. Housing Trust Meetings**

- Note Upcoming Meetings, 8:00 AM: December 9, 2021 and January 13, 2022

Ms. Howe noted the above future meeting dates and asked the Housing Trust members to mark their calendars accordingly.

### **Other or New Business**

There was no discussion under this topic.

At 10:19 AM, Mr. Riordan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Gentile seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Ms. Howe – Aye, Mr. Riordan – Aye, Ms. Cronin – Absent, Ms. Dretler – Aye, Mr. Gentile – Aye, and Mr. Pops – Aye.