

**LINCOLN HOUSING COMMISSION**  
**Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 3, 2021 7:00 p.m.**  
**Virtual Meeting Pursuant to Gov. Baker's March 12, 2020**  
**Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law**

**Present:**

(Commission members) Rachel Drew; Keith Gilbert; Evan Gorman (Vice Chair); Allen Vander Meulen (Chair). Victoria Benalfew joined the meeting late due to unavoidable circumstances (Staff) Elaine Carroll (Housing Administrator).

Chair Allen Vander Meulen called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

**COVID Vaccine Seminar**

Keith reported that this seminar was focused mostly on setting up and running a vaccine site within larger scale elderly housing facilities. Although he sat through the whole meeting, he felt it was clear that it was not relevant to the business of the Housing Commission.

**AAA Program Rollout**

Allen reported that the financial aspects of this program is one of three housing-related programs currently active or under consideration for deployment in the near future.

The first is the Rental Assistance (RAP) program, which is already operational in FY2020 and which the CPC has approved for funding in FY2021 (subject to a vote confirming this at this May's Town Meeting.)

The second is the AAA program, which had \$125,000 approved by the Housing Trust in early 2017 to support the "Grant Program" piece of the program; and now that the program is finally ready to begin an active rollout, it seems necessary, after a four year gap in time, to ask the Housing Trust to confirm the funding of this program out of the Housing Trust's funds. Allen is concerned that the Housing Trust, given the other two programs and past outlays, may not feel they can confirm their support for the AAA program funding at this time.

The third is a just proposed loan program for Affordable Condominium owners here in Lincoln. We have no details on this proposal as of yet, but will presumably know more at the Housing Coalition Meeting that James Craig is attempting to get scheduled (via a succession of three Doodle polls).

The current proposed time span is the last week of March. Rachel indicated that she has significant time commitments that week, which may make it impossible for her to attend.

Allen outlined the financial resources available to Housing and how they work together: 10% of the CPA funds available to the town each year must be allocated to Affordable Housing, although the CPC could allocate more. This money is held by the CPC until the Housing Trust requests it. In addition, the Housing Trust has other money from a variety of sources, such as estate bequests and donations from various individuals or organizations, that is dedicated to supporting Affordable Housing in Lincoln in various ways. Each of these other sets of funds have their own unique sets of restrictions, which complicates the task of funding proposed programs and initiatives.

Evan summarized the discussions within the CPC regarding supporting RAP with CPA funds. In summary, the CPC is fully supportive of the RAP, but sees itself as primarily devoted to funding short term and startup endeavors. It is not a suitable vehicle for long term funding commitments, such as the RAP. Therefore, while the CPC is funding the RAP this year, they would like to see significant effort devoted to finding alternative funding sources in the future, such as a line item within the Town's annual budget. And, it is clear the need for this type of support far exceeds the \$68,000 that the CPC is approving for the coming fiscal year.

Evan also said that the CPC wants someone from the Affordable Housing community who is knowledgeable about RAP to be prepared to do a short presentation at Town Meeting about it, and to answer any questions. Abigail Butt would be the logical person to do so, with assistance from Allen or some other Housing Commission member.

*Victoria Benalfew joined the meeting at this point via cellphone.*

### **Status Update – Tenants**

Victoria, Abigail Butt from the COA and Liz Rust from the RHSO plan to visit with the tenant at 26 Sunnyside on March 17<sup>th</sup> to go over the challenges she faces (and we face) in terms of calculating a rental rate that is appropriate given her true financial condition. They will work with her to resolve the issue of keeping her husband (who does not live with her) on the lease; as well as do a general benefits checkup with her to ensure she has access to (and is aware-of) all the benefits and assistance that are available to her.

The tenant is currently more than 3 months behind on her rent, but would be much farther behind if it weren't for the very generous support she has received from various individuals and organizations. We're hopeful that with the recalculated (much lower) lease amount, she will finally be able to afford the unit without requiring outside assistance.

*Due to low phone battery, Victoria had to leave the meeting at this point.*

Rachel reported that Lincoln's Welcoming, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (WIDE) group is inviting 2-3 people from each town group to attend their Community Anti-Racist Advocate Training (CARAT) course. She definitely wants to be one of those from the Housing Commission to take the training, Keith also would like to attend. Rachel believes it is offered at no cost, although the Commission does have a budget for "training and professional memberships" which could be used to defray any training-related costs. Allen has already forwarded the relevant information to all commission members.

Rachel also noted that the town of Lincoln is launching its own anti-racism initiative of its own (IDEA: "Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Anti-racism Initiative"). An open request for volunteers to serve. They have an open invitation looking for 8 volunteers from the community to serve, and will be requesting liaisons from town bodies, including Housing.

Rachel then reported on SLPAC. There is a meeting on Friday morning. The main topic will be with regards to the Wastewater Treatment plant that is owned by Lincoln Woods and serves much of the Lincoln Station commercial area as well. The town is putting out an RFP for an engineering study to explore the state and options to deal with the plant, which is very old / obsolete, and is a critical

limiting factor for any development in that area – with an eye to determine the costs and risks/benefits of putting a new system in place with enough capacity to address one of three different scenarios.

Allen noted that the Housing Commission’s “Tenant Manual” needs to be revisited. The manual itself needs to be updated reflect several new policies and policy changes that have occurred since it was last updated. The other issue is a process issue, to ensure there is a written record on file of a new tenant receiving the manual and acknowledging that they have received, read, and understood it.

Evan suggested that Elaine send a copy of the manual to each commission member via email, which she said she’d do it the next day (Thursday). We can then all review it and suggest revisions / additions at our next meeting.

Allen asked if anyone knew how our Tenant at 75B Tower Rd was doing with her new stove and the attempts to mouse proof the kitchen. Elaine said she is very happy with the new stove, but did not see any plugging up of mouse holes being done. Allen said that Gerry had reported to him that he’d sealed all the holes he could find in the kitchen and elsewhere; and that he and Gerry agreed that the original plan to dismount the kitchen cabinets to check behind them was overkill and expensive, and so should not be done.

Keith said he had nothing to report at this time, although he has talked with James Craig about reconfirming the Housing Trust’s commitment to fund the AAA grant program for \$125,000 that was approved back in 2017; and is suggesting it be an agenda item at the soon to be scheduled Housing Coalition Meeting.

## **Minutes**

Evan moved to approve both sets of minutes from our last meeting, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. Rachel seconded. Roll call vote: Keith – aye; Evan – aye; Rachel – aye; Allen – aye. The motion passed unanimously.

Our next meeting will be Wednesday April 7<sup>th</sup>.

## **Adjournment**

Keith moved to adjourn the meeting. Rachel seconded. Roll call vote: Evan – aye; Rachel – aye; Keith – aye; Allen – aye. The motion passed unanimously.

*Submitted by Allen Vander Meulen*

*Approved: April 14, 2021*