

LINCOLN HOUSING COMMISSION
Minutes
Wednesday, April 6, 2022 7:00 p.m.

Members present via Zoom: Allen Vander Meulen, Chair; Evan Gorman, Vice Chair; Rachel Drew; Rakesh Karmacharya. Also present: Elaine Carroll, Housing Commission Administrative Assistant. Commission Member Victoria Benalfew and COA&HS Liaison Terry Perlmutter joined during the course of the meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Allen Vander Meulen, Chair, at 7:07pm as a virtual meeting pursuant to Gov. Baker's March 12, 2020 order, as extended on June 15, 2021 with the Governor's signing of Senate Bill #2475, suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

1. Status Updates: Maintenance & Tenant Issues

a. 75 Tower

- Allen and Evan will meet tomorrow (Apr 7) with Michelle, Conservation Director, to review the issues at the property.
- 75 Tower – rent reduction due to mice
The tenant's new stove was installed in mid-February, Allen has already approved continuing the break on rent that was authorized "until the stove is replaced" for the month of February's rent, too.
- Elaine reports that Waltham pest Control is still billing us \$75/month for pest control at 75 Tower, this appears to Elaine to be a "per visit" charge, even though (according to the tenant), she has not seen them around, and they are not entering the apartment to check for a continued infestation. The monthly invoice is unclear as to what is being done, if anything. Evan will call them and find out exactly what the charge is for, and what is actually being done. Elaine will send a copy of the latest invoice and phone number for him to use when calling them.

b. 30 Sunnyside

- Evan reports a new sump pump with battery backup was needed, Gerry could not purchase a new one given the cost. So Evan OK'd the purchase as it was within his authorization limit.
- It turns out the Sunnyside repairs are not covered under the insurance policy, so the entire cost of repairs came out of our revolving fund.

2. SLPAC

- a. Allen reports he had a long conversation with Adam Stark, owner of Debra's Gourmet Foods in West Concord and who is a Lincoln resident. Adam has some interest in Housing and affordability issues; and would like to provide input with regards to the Lincoln Station (SLPAC) initiative (he lives in that area). He has Allen's contact information, and Allen will put him in contact with Rachel.

- b. Rachel reports that the next SLPAC meeting is this coming Friday. They have not met for a while due to the work involved in preparation for Town Meeting. Currently looking at ways to simplify zoning and make it more consistent for commercial properties in the area.

3. Diversity

Rachel reports she contacted Tim Higgins with a draft of the Mission Statement and our hopes for adding a Liaison who is a resident of Income restricted housing in town; then converting that and the COA&HS Liaisons to voting appointed positions at some point in the future. Tim has placed a discussion regarding this on the agenda for the April 25th Selectboard meeting. Rachel will be the presenter, with Allen there as well.

4. IDEA

Rakesh reports he met with IDEA for the first time this past month. Current discussions revolve around goal-setting for the coming year, and discussing the hiring of a consultant to help them in terms of how best to approach all these tasks, which will include data collection to help enumerate what goals are needed, including how to involve minority communities in the process. The next meeting will discuss prioritization as well as determining who (the Town, IDEA Members, the consultant) would be best suited for helping accomplish each goal.

5. Abandoned Vehicles

Allen reports there has been much going on with regards to this in the last week. The Town Counsel has reviewed our plan and notification letter and made some revisions to the draft notification letter and some process-related guidance. We hope to have a completed letter ready to send out within the next week or so. We will be sending a certified letter to the offending tenants, warning them the car(s) are about to be towed, and they will be liable for storage and towing costs if that occurs. We are still recommending the COA&HS for help, but neither tenant has reached out to them (or us) for help yet.

6. AAA Status Update

Allen reported that Liz Rust has been working on the marketing plan, and wants to schedule a meeting with Allen, Kathleen, & Paula to review status and determine next steps.

7. COA&HS

At this point, COA&HS Liaison Terry Perlmutter joined the meeting and reported there are currently no updates on no issues of mutual concern to COA&HS and the Housing Commission. Terry remained present for the remainder of the meeting.

8. Finances

Allen reported that largely due to the repairs at 30 Sunnyside (and because insurance will not cover those costs), our Revolving Account balance dropped from \$129,453 at the end of December to \$100,291 at the end of February. While this is still a healthy balance, Allen

remains concerned over whether the fund will remain at a healthy balance in the months to come.

(At this point, Victoria Benalfew joined the meeting and could hear the discussion, but appeared to have technical challenges and was unable to directly participate.)

9. Other Business

- Evan reported that he exchanged emails with the Belinda Gingrich of the Green Energy Committee following her presentation last month. He needs to supply more details to her regarding the type and condition of the Heating & A/C equipment in each unit.

- Elaine reported she will be retiring at the end of the year. Exactly how her Housing-related responsibilities will be supported following her departure is still TBD. One possibility is that they will be transitioned to Paula Vaughn's assistant, Jennifer in the Land Use Department.

- Elaine reported that the tenant at 30A Sunnyside is the only person who has not yet turned in all the paperwork for recertification.

- Victoria was asked by Allen if she had any other items she wished to discuss. She replied via chat that she did not.

- Allen reported that he asked Liz Rust and Abigail Butt if it was permissible to deduct medical expenses when calculating rent amounts as part of the recertification process. He found Liz's answer confusing, but it seems to be "yes" although there may be conditions that limit how and when it can be done. We have two tenants who have been granted a medical expense deduction in the past, but those deductions were not allowed in the most recent recertification cycle on the advice of our consultant at the time who advised us that this is not allowed under DHCD regulations.

10. Approval of Minutes from March 2, 2022

Rachel moved to approve the minutes; Evan seconded. Since she could not be heard, Allen asked Victoria to record her vote via the Zoom Chat. Roll Call Vote: Evan – aye; Rachel – aye; Rakesh – aye; Allen – aye; Victoria – aye (via chat). The motion passed unanimously.

11. Confirm next meeting schedule: May 4 at 7:00 pm

- The commission asked when Liz Rust would next report in person to the commission: Liz has a longstanding commitment at the same time as our meeting.

- Allen asked whether we should change the meeting time, both to facilitate Liz's participation and also given that we have not checked with everyone for a while as to whether this is the best time. Everyone felt the meeting time should not change.

- At our next meeting we will review current rental rates, the rates that will be due as a result of recertification, and how to compassionately handle any rental increases – especially if they are large.

- It is likely we will begin to have in person meetings again starting in August. An effort is being made to allow for hybrid meetings, but no legislation for this has yet passed.

12. Adjourn

Rachel moved to approve the minutes; Evan seconded. Since she could not be heard, Allen asked Victoria to record her vote via the Zoom Chat. Roll Call Vote: Rakesh – aye; Rachel – aye; Evan - aye; Allen – aye; Victoria – aye (via chat). The motion passed unanimously at 7:47pm.

Approved: May 4, 2022