

**Lincoln Housing Commission
Virtual Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 2, 2021 7:00 p.m.**

Members Present on Zoom Teleconference: Allen Vander Meulen, Chair; Evan Gorman, Vice Chair; Victoria Benalfew; Rachel Drew. Absent: Keith Gilbert.

Others present: Elaine Carroll, Housing Commission Administrative Assistant; Paula Vaughan-Mackenzie, Director, Planning Department; Liz Rust, RHSO.

The meeting was called to order at 7:08pm by Allen Vander Meulen.

1. **RHSO Report**

Liz Rust reported that most of the RHSO's present work is still focused on the resale of Affordable Condominium Units. 1 currently active at Minuteman Commons seems to be selling quickly, unlike recent past experience. Another unit at Battle Road Farms is expected to go on the market soon.

The RHSO is also working with the Lincoln Foundation to implement their small grant program for Affordable units at Battle Road Farms. An announcement has been sent out and qualifying homeowners have until July 1st to submit an application with two quotes for the work they wish to get done, which is a major challenge given the current workload most contractors are already experiencing. The Lincoln Foundation has funding for 5 or 6 grants, and plans to take further applications on a rolling basis if the initial round does not utilize all of the available funds.

In response to a question from Allen about when the State's rent freeze would expire, Liz stated this was still an unknown, even though the COVID emergency will be lifted soon. The freeze applies to all LIP and 40b units in the State, the biggest block of affected units in town would be Oriole Landing. They are held to their 2019 rental rates for the duration. There will be a huge impact upon tenants when this is lifted - a two year jump in rents for many tenants unless the DHCD rules change. The DHCD is planning to issue guidance on this, one possibility is allowing the full rate for new tenants, with smaller increases at lease renewals for existing tenants. (nb: The Lincoln Housing Commission previously approved a rent freeze for all of its tenants through 12/31/2021.)

2. **26 Sunnyside Lease Change**

Allen reported that Liz Rust helped us recalculate the lease for our tenant at 26 Sunnyside after removing her husband from the lease. A letter giving the new rate and conditions has been sent to the tenant. She has been told that she will be expected to sign a lease for the new amount once the new lease template is completed and approved.

3. **AAA Program Update**

Allen had promised Liz that he would locate and provide (to Liz Rust and Paula Vaughn) all of the documentation for the AAA program implementation that Pam Gallup had been working on. He has been unable to find that documentation. Although, given that she had not gotten very far on that, this is not a huge loss.

Liz suggested that she, Allen, and Paula walk through the process with the RHSO and the Town Administration so that we can see how the process will work, where the gaps are, and what supporting processes / paperwork / documentation need to be developed.

In Keith's absence, Allen reported that the Housing Trust did vote to reconfirm the AAA grant Program at its most recent meeting. They approved \$75,000 - enough to cover three grants - and will consider funding up to 2 more grants if the Housing Commission has a need and after they see the program is doing. A deadline for using the approved funds was set by the Trust for June 30, 2023. The Housing Trust also voted to name the program "The Pamela Gallup Memorial Grant Program" in Pam's memory and in recognition of her diligent efforts over several years to create and then gain town and State approval of the AAA program.

Allen will work to find someone from the Commission to take point on working with the RHSO and the Town administration in implementing the AAA program. Paula agreed that the town Administration will help on this, but noted that there is still a lot of work to do.

In response to a question from Liz, Allen stated that the RHSO's funding and the COA's Emergency Rent Relief program were both approved at Lincoln's recent Town Meeting. Allen also saw that the town transferred the full 10% of CPA funds (mandated by the CPA law to be dedicated to supporting Affordable Housing) over to the Housing Trust, meaning that it appears the RHSO and Rental Relief program were not counted by the town toward that commitment, which is good news for the Trust.

4. **Tenant Manual & Lease Updates (vote possible) - Allen**

Allen made minor changes to the language in the proposed new "Parking Policy" section per the request of the commission at the last meeting. He also asked Kathleen O'Donnell, our Housing Lawyer to vet it, but she has not responded. He then suggested that we move forward and approve the new lease template anyway. Rachel Drew made that motion and Victoria Benalfew seconded it.

Roll Call vote: Rachel, Aye; Evan, Aye; Victoria, Aye; Allen, Aye (Keith absent). The motion passed unanimously.

Allen will revise the tenant manual to match the lease language too. Since it is not a legal document, a vote seems unnecessary.

5. **Lease Recertifications**

It was agreed that we should do recertifications for all tenants again this year, even though there will be no changes while the State's rent freeze is in place (as already noted, the freeze in Lincoln has already been extended through the end of the calendar year by the Commission).

Since Diana, who has now stepped down from the Commission, was the only commission member to have done recertifications, there is a knowledge gap as to where the requisite forms and materials are (assuming they exist at all - although Diana said when she left that they would be archived with Elaine), and what processes the commission used to do the certifications.

Allen will sit down with Elaine to determine what we have. Liz Rust also said there is an online Excel Spreadsheet that is to be filled out to help facilitate the process for each tenant.

6. **Status Reports:**

a. **SLPAC - Rachel**

Rachel reported that was no defined role or agenda item for SLPAC at Town Meeting. SLPAC has put out a survey to gauge the opinions of the town's residents as to what changes should be made in the Lincoln Station area. The response rate so far has been very good and positive. There is an unresolved question as to whether the postcard that was sent to town residents encouraging residents to participate was also sent to Hanscom residents.

The decision was also made by SLPAC to reduce the geographic purview of SLPAC to remove the residential parcels on the South / East side of the Lincoln Station area (such as the "Flying Nuns"); however, Lewis Street, the B2 business district, the Mall, and the Lincoln Woods area all remain within SLPAC's purview.

Finally, in light of her recent WIDE (Welcome, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity) Training, Rachel proposed to the Planning Board that SLPAC's charge be amended to incorporate an anti-racist element and a commitment to work more affirmatively and diligently in soliciting and including input from under-represented groups. Last week, the Planning Board agreed and voted to make the change.

Paula added that the Planning Board sent out an RFP for an evaluation of the sewage plant owned by Community Builders (owner of Lincoln Woods). (This plant also supports the Mall area, needs repairs, and will likely need upgrades to better support the Lincoln Station area in the future.) Four proposals were received and will be evaluated in Executive Session at the next Planning Board meeting (Friday, June 4th).

b. **Zoning Bylaw Changes - Allen**

Allen reported that the proposed Accessory Apartment Zoning Bylaw changes were by far the most controversial topic at the recent town meeting. There was a huge amount of pushback on proposed wording added to the Bylaw to limit short term (i.e., Air B&B type) rentals to a minimum of 30 days. After much

discussion, an amendment was passed to reduce that time to 7 days. The rest of the Bylaw passed without changes - eliminating the 10 year restriction and changing the minimum square footage requirement so that modest-sized homes could have Accessory Apartments. The revised bylaw also caps the number of Accessory Apartments at 5% of the Town's housing stock; Affordable Accessory Apartments are exempted from that cap.

c. WIDE (Welcome, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity) Training

Rachel felt the program was really well done and helpful. It was enlightening, frustrating, challenging and heartening. As she did with SLPAC, there was a request that those who attended the training bring back what they learned to the boards and committees they are on, and see what can be done to improve the Inclusivity/Equity/Diversity of their groups' missions. Rachel is still thinking what could be done within the context of the Housing Commission and plans to bring this up for discussion at the next Housing Commission meeting.

Rachel also mentioned there is a similar set of trainings being offered at the state level. Elaine mailed out an announcement about this on May 27th. (Rachel later added that the group was the Massachusetts Municipal Association, and forwarded to the Commission members the link Elaine had sent out for information and registration, which is: <https://www.mma.org/real-program-works-directly-with-cities-towns-on-race-equity-issues/>)

d. Tenant Status and Maintenance - Evan & Allen

75 Tower Road Landscaping: Allen forwarded all he had on the history of 75 Tower's landscaping challenges and proposed remedies to Evan. Evan will review this material in the near future and will discuss with Allen and Gerry.

Elaine mentioned that 75A Tower Road reported their steps need repair, Gerry has said he will address the issue.

e. Finances

Allen reported that an updated Financial Report had not yet been received since the last meeting.

7. Other updates and issues of note

Approval of minutes from May 5, 2021

Rachel Drew moved that minutes from the April 14th meeting be approved as written. Victoria Benalfew Seconded. Roll Call vote: Rachel, Aye; Evan, Aye; Victoria, Aye; Allen, Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

Car Policy Announcement Letter

There were no objections to sending out the Parking Policy Announcement letter discussed in the last meeting (as revised to reflect the changes the commission requested to be made to the Parking Policy in the lease template). Allen will make sure this is sent out before the next meeting.

Schedule For Next Meeting

The Commission saw no reason to reconsider the date of the next regularly scheduled Housing Commission meeting, so it remains Wednesday July 7th at 7:00pm.

Victoria moved the meeting be adjourned. Rachel seconded. Roll Call vote: Rachel, Aye; Evan, Aye; Victoria, Aye; Allen, Aye. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

Submitted by Allen Vander Meulen

Approved: July 7, 2021