

# LINCOLN HOUSING COMMISSION

## Minutes

Wednesday, August 3, 2022 7:00 p.m.

**Members present via Zoom: Allen Vander Meulen, Chair; Victoria Benalfew, Rachel Drew, Terry Perlmutter (COA&HS Liaison). Rakesh Karmacharya and Evan Gorman were unable to attend.**

**Also present:** Elaine Carroll, Housing Commission Administrative Assistant.

*The meeting was called to order by Allen Vander Meulen, Chair, at 7:06pm 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. Maintenance & Tenant Issues

Allen reports he is working on preparing to apply for CDC and ARPA funds for various maintenance projects. Dan Pereira has offered to have Brandon Kelly go around and confirm what work needs doing, then come up with a cost estimate we can use as a basis for the funding applications & RFP evaluations. This work will include exterior repairs and possibly a new roof at 75 Tower; Landscaping at 75 Tower (if approved by the Conservation Commission); and replacement of some or all of the existing heating systems at all properties – taking advantage of the Mass Saves program subsidies.

Allen has determined that most Heating & A/C Contractors are well aware of the Mass Saves program and we can ask them as part of the RFP to determine our eligibility and potential subsidy for each system we have replaced.

Gerry O'Doherty's contract has officially expired and cannot be extended further (as we have done two or three times in the past). A new RFP will need to be issued. In the meantime, we can use him on a T&M basis for any maintenance or repairs that must be done. We will need to get this done soon.

### 2. Tenant Recertification

Victoria reported that one or two tenants have turned in all their paperwork, and another one has turned in an incomplete set of documentation. There have also been a number of inquiries from tenants, but their paperwork is not coming in as rapidly as we'd expect. Victoria does not foresee anyone getting their paperwork in on time except for one tenant. She recommends we send out a warning letter to the tenants who are late, informing them their rent will go up to market rate if their paperwork is not turned in by a specific date.

Victoria will oversee the drafting and mailing (certified) this final warning letter.

### 3. Status: Liaison position descriptions & selection process

Rachel reports there has been no activity [yet] on the tasks of drafting descriptions for the two new proposed appointed positions on the Commission. She will work with Abigail Butt for her help in identifying a Liaison from income restricted housing, nor has she yet checked with the town on what it will take to convert the planned Liaisons to appointed (voting) seats on the Housing Commission.

Allen has yet to send a note to Liz Rust (RHSO) and Kathleen O'Donnell asking for their input on these issues, and possibly schedule a discussion with them at a future HC meeting.

#### **4. SLPAC status**

Rachel reported that SLPAC continues to be on hold, with no meetings or other activity at this time. There was a recent meeting to evaluate a proposal and next steps for the wastewater treatment plant. (The town has received a State grant to offset costs for Engineering and Design for a new/expanded/renovated Wastewater Treatment plant.)

#### **5. COA&HS**

Terry reported that the COA's radar is that there are a number of Seniors in Lincoln who are not native English speakers. Abigail Butt (COA&HS Director) is concerned that they may be disadvantaged for affordable housing and Emergency rental assistance, and so is planning to apply for an ARPA grant (through Minuteman Senior Services) for funding to enhance the accessibility of these programs for them.

There has been \$2500 anonymous donation to Rental Assistance Program – without restrictions under main program. This is being held aside as discretionary funding.

#### **6. Affordable Accessory Apartment Program - Status Update**

7. Allen reported that there has been no progress on the AAA Program rollout, in large part because of lack of “bandwidth” on Allen's part, but also the concerns raised by Liz Rust over the viability of the program in the face of the DHCD's Fair Housing Regulations and how candidate tenant lists (and applicants) must be managed. Victoria expressed concern that relaxing the DHCD rules – even if allowed (which is doubtful) would result in illegal favoritism of one sort or another on the part of Landlords.

The Housing Commission is planning to meet with the Housing Trust in a public meeting this fall to discuss these issues, and whether to continue this program is still in the best interests of the town, given that the original purpose for the AAA program (to increase our SHI by a small number of units, to keep us above 10% SHI) is no longer necessary due to the Oriole landing project.

Concern was expressed by Rachel that perhaps there is a greater reservoir of potential AAA-amenable landlords than we expect, and so perhaps the program should continue to be pursued. *(NB: one possibility is institutionally-owned homes, of which there are several in Lincoln that are not occupied, or not fully utilized – the owners of such homes are likely more willing to tolerate DHCD regulations regarding selection of potential tenants).*

#### **8. Finances**

9. Allen will distribute the updated “Revolving Fund Tracker” spreadsheet once he receives the monthly report from accounting (for activity through the end of July).

#### **10. Elaine – Transition of Duties**

Peggy Elder will take over all of the Housing-related tasks currently supported by Elaine –

i.e., acting as the Admin resource for the Housing Commission, Housing Trust, and Housing Coalition. Elaine will start bringing her up to date on all this in November.

Elaine said she does NOT want a big party at the Pierce House, but would be quite happy with a low key event in the Donaldson Room. She does not want a gift of a Rocking Chair!

## **11. Other Business**

Zoom Meetings have been extended to May 31, 2023. No word yet as to whether hybrid meetings will be allowed any time soon, nor guidance on how to conduct them.

Jennifer Glass just informed Allen via email that the Housing Commission will be asked to participate in the presentations to be given in the “State of the Town” meeting. These will be online presentations. The SOTT meeting will be held Nov 14 and 15, and will likely be fully remote or possibly a hybrid meeting.

## **12. Approval of Minutes [as revised] from June 1, 2022**

Rachel moved for approval of minutes as revised. Victoria seconded. Roll Call Vote: Victoria Benalfew – aye; Rachel Drew – aye; Allen Vander Meulen – aye. The motion passed unanimously.

## **13. Fall Meeting Schedule**

The main concern is that Liz Rust of the RHSO cannot meet with us on Wednesday evenings. We will consider changing the normal schedule to better accommodate Liz’s (and others’) schedules. Our future schedule may also be impacted by whether the State continues to allow virtual (or hybrid) meetings.

Rachel finds morning meetings possible but difficult; Victoria cannot meet in the mornings. Terry would also prefer evenings. All are fairly flexible in terms of days of the week and start time in the evening. Although, general agreement that Tuesdays or Thursdays are best – except the first Tuesday of the month (due to the Historic Commission regular meeting at that time).

Fuller discussion and any vote on changes postponed since Evan and Rakesh are absent this evening.

It was agreed to have the next HC meeting on September 14<sup>th</sup> instead of the regular date of September 7<sup>th</sup>.

## **14. Adjournment**

Rachel moved for the meeting to adjourn. Victoria seconded. Roll Call Vote: Victoria Benalfew – aye; Rachel Drew – aye; Allen Vander Meulen – aye. The motion passed unanimously; and the meeting was adjourned at 7:51pm.

**15. Adjourn**

Rachel Drew moved to adjourn, Victoria Benalfew seconded. Roll Call Vote: Victoria Benalfew – aye; Evan Gorman – aye; Rachel Drew – aye; Allen Vander Meulen – aye. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:01pm.

*Approved: September 14, 2022*