

LINCOLN HOUSING COMMISSION
Minutes
Wednesday, August 4, 2021 7:00 p.m.

Members Present on Zoom Teleconference: Allen Vander Meulen, Chair; Evan Gorman, Vice Chair; Rachel Drew; Keith Gilbert. *At about 7:20pm, HC member **Keith Gilbert** left the meeting. HC Member **Victoria Benalfew** joined the meeting shortly after.*

Also present: Elaine Carroll, Housing Commission Administrative Assistant

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:10pm by HC Chair Allen Vander Meulen
2. Resignation of Keith Gilbert

Keith Gilbert announced that he and his wife Stacey Osur have been residents of Lincoln for 26 years, but sold their residence here and moved into their new home in the Berkshires as of last week. Therefore, since he is no longer a Lincoln resident, he cannot legally continue as a member of the Housing Commission.

3. Recertifications and RHSO Status Update

Allen reported that he made the decision, for a number of reasons, to switch to the RHSO for recertifications this year. The town already has a contract with the RHSO, and we did not yet have a contract with this previous consultant. Given time pressure, Allen felt it was both justifiable and wisest to make the decision unilaterally and report it to the Commission this evening, rather than waiting until this evening to vote on the change.

At this point, Keith Gilbert said his time serving on the commission was a privilege, thanked and complemented the remaining Commission members and Elaine for their hard work and talent, and left the meeting. Coincidentally, Victoria Benalfew joined the meeting a few seconds later.

4. Status Reports:

- a. COA – Victoria

Victoria was unable to attend the COA meeting this month. She did speak briefly with COA Director Abigail Butt, but no items of interest regarding housing were discussed.

- b. SLPAC – Rachel

Rachel reported that SLPAC did not meet in July and that SLPAC appears to have been the only Lincoln Town Government body to meet in person during the brief window of time in June before the expired Executive Order that relaxed certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law was extended on June 15th. She said it was good to meet her fellow SLPAC members face to face for the first time.

The SLPAC survey regarding the Lincoln Station and surrounding area was completed June 30th. The PB will review and discuss the findings at their next meeting.

SLPAC also met with the project manager of the company doing the wastewater treatment plant review. Data collection and analysis will be completed by the early fall. The entire project should be completed in early 2022.

SLPAC is planning on putting together a new zoning proposal for the Lincoln Station area taking all these factors (and the State's new Housing Bylaws) into account for presentation, most likely at the "State of the Town" meeting in the Fall of 2022. This will include an extensive public education (and feedback) effort.

c. Diversity – Rachel

Rachel's proposal to get anti-racism language into SLPAC's charter has been approved by the Planning Board. She is still considering what – if anything – can be done to improve the Housing Commission's ability and drive to promote diversity and equality as part of this mission. Rachel says this will require the active participation of the entire commission to determine the issues and how best to respond to them. More on this to come in future meetings.

d. Housing Trust & Open Assignments

Since Keith has now resigned, a new representative from the Housing Commission to the Housing Trust is needed. There are at least assignments within the Commission's scope that need "volunteers." These include: (1) Housing Trust Representative; (2) Overseeing the recertification process; and (3) Coordinating the launch of the AAA program. Of these three tasks only the AAA program will require a significant amount of effort.

Evan volunteered to become the Housing Commission's representative to the Housing Trust. Victoria will take on the Recertification process.

Allen will inform Tim Higgins and James Craig (HT Chair) that Evan has volunteered to be the Housing Commission's new representative to the Trust – subject to confirmation. He will also help Victoria get in touch with former Housing Commission member Diana Chirita (who coordinated the last two recertifications) to get a "feel" for what needs to be done with regards to recertification.

e. Maintenance – Evan & Allen

One of the tenants at 75 Tower recently submitted a long list of maintenance issues. Some of these issues are landscaping-related issues, which will require coordination with (and approval by) the Conservation Commission: Evan was already working on that effort, and will review the tenant's list to see if there are any new requests in his list that should be added into the existing project's scope.

Evan will review the remaining maintenance requests when he gets back next week, including two trees that are of concern, and will continue working on reviewing the landscaping needs with the Conservation Commission. He will approve those maintenance items that are reasonable and under his \$1000 approval limit. Any other tasks will have to be considered by the commission in a future meeting.

f. Other Items

Allen recently reviewed the Housing Commission's page on the town's website and saw that a great deal of the contact information on that page is the personal contact information of past Commission members (especially Pam Gallup and Diana Chirita). Also, with the upcoming AAA effort, a generic means of contacting the Commission that will survive Commission membership changes is needed. Allen asked that a new "Housing@ LincolnTown.org" email address be created, which has been done by the town's IT Manager, Michael Dolan. All email sent to this address currently auto-forwards to the Housing Administrator (Elaine Carroll) and Chair (Allen Vander Meulen). Allen and Elaine will go through the site to find and correct the contact information.

5. AAA Program – Allen

Allen met with Paula Vaughn (Director of the Planning Department) and Liz of the RHSO about a month ago to get the process going. A moderately detailed outline of what needs to be done was developed with input from all three individuals. This will be reviewed and further refined in the next meeting – this coming Monday. The next meeting will include Kathleen O'Donnell, our Housing Attorney, and who helped with the legal and regulatory coordination with DHCD that Pam had to do when developing the program's original proposal. Kathleen will be of particular help with regards to some questions we have about some of the ways Pam said the "Ready Renters List" would be developed and used.

6. Other updates and issues of note

In person meetings are still not permissible, and unlikely to become the norm any time soon. The town is looking into "hybrid" meetings: as part of that work, Tim Higgins is soliciting feedback from the Town's Boards, Committees and Commissions. Allen summarized to the other Commission members the feedback he'd already given at a previous Historic Commission meeting.

Rachel pointed out that for her – and others – who travel for work, being able to join into a meeting (via Zoom) while travelling would be advantageous. Victoria agreed, and also pointed out that a hybrid capability would also be helpful during inclement weather. Allen suggested that such a capability might make it easier to find volunteers to participate in Town Government, since issues regarding finding childcare, commuting time, etc., are greatly reduced if you can just Zoom in.

Elaine will collate the feedback she's received the Housing Commission members, and from the other commissions and committees she supports, and will forward it all on to Tim Higgins.

7. Filling Keith Gilbert's Open Position

Allen reviewed the process for appointing a new member to fill an open position: the Board of Selects will seek out volunteers and appoint the one they feel is best qualified to fill the position. The Housing Commission can suggest or comment on those who are under consideration. If the position is an "elected" seat (which Keith's was), then the appointee

will need to run in the very next regular election, and then return to the normal three year re-election cycle for that position. In this case, since Keith's position was up for re-election in 2022 anyway, the appointee will have to run this Spring, and then again three years from now (in 2025).

Allen will inform Tim Higgins of the vacancy, and ask that Peggy Elder post a "Volunteers Wanted" ad on LincolnTalk for the opening.

Potential volunteers who've expressed interest in the past were discussed and will be contacted -= in addition to those who might express interest in response to the Town's advertisements.

8. Approval of minutes from June 2, 2021

Rachel moved to approve the June 2, 2021 minutes as written. Victoria seconded. A roll call vote was taken (per standard Zoom Meeting procedure) Victoria – Aye; Evan – Aye; Rachel – Aye; Allen - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Schedule next meeting

The Commission agreed that the next meeting should be held as regularly scheduled: September 1 at 7:00pm.

10. Adjournment

Rachel moved to adjourn. Victoria seconded. Roll call vote: Victoria – Aye; Evan Aye; Rachel – Aye; Allen - Aye. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

Submitted by Allen Vander Meulen

Approved: September 1, 2021