

## MINUTES - ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION

Pursuant to notice given a Regular Meeting of the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) was held on November 12, 2009, at 7 PM in room 126 of the Acton Town Hall. Present and constituting a quorum for the purpose of conducting business were Bernice Baran, Corrina Roman-Kreuze, Nancy Tavernier, Bob Van Meter, and Associate Members Dan Buckley and Jennifer Patenaude (designated voting members).

Guest: Laura Ducharme, Town of Acton Community Resources Coordinator

Nancy Tavernier, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7PM. Jennifer Patenaude was the Clerk for this meeting.

I. The Minutes for the meeting of October 22nd were reviewed with approval pending minor edits.

### **II. Financial Report**

Ms. Tavernier indicated \$40,000 would be received from the Pulte Housing Gift Fund for Lalli Terrace, with ACHC providing the balance of \$100,000. The property is to close no earlier than the end of November.

### **III. Updates**

Lillian Road. The BOS would like to discuss the Lillian Road project with ACHC on November 16 at 9:15 pm. On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, Roland Bartl emailed indicating he had finally reached Greg Watson at MassHousing who stated MassHousing had not received the application. The project's engineer claims they have filed. MassHousing confirmed they asked for a larger development. BOS will have ACHC's minutes from October 8<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Tavernier will explain the difference between LIP and MassHousing projects and highlight ACHC's concerns about the Lillian Road project.

Lalli Terrace. There has been a lot of progress on the front house. The landscaping needs to be completed before occupancy. The buyer for the front house has been approved for a mortgage.

Central Street. The project is scheduled to be reviewed by the ZBA on November 17<sup>th</sup>. A number of revisions have been made to the project.

Towne Building. The committee does not think DHCD has announced the tax credit recipients yet. Steve Joncas did get notification that the Affordable Housing Trust Fund is committing \$600,000 to the project.

### **Appointment with Laura Ducharme, Town of Acton Community Resources Coordinator**

Ms. Ducharme agreed to attend this evening's meeting to discuss local housing needs with ACHC. She noted that some families in Acton are having trouble paying their rent which is anywhere from \$925/mo for a one-bedroom to upwards of \$1500/mo for a two-bedroom. Ms. Ducharme hasn't seen any units for less than \$900/mo..

The demographic of the families Ms. Ducharme serves is mixed. Some have young children,

some are disabled and living alone. There are two to three families/people that are really struggling right now. There's no transitional housing in Acton, and if they move out of Acton they lose their spot on the Housing Authority list.

Ms Ducharme reported that some apartment complexes lure people in with offers requiring no deposit, one month rent free, or no money up front. Avalon lures people in with two months free, and they're very expensive. They require rental insurance and tenants need to pay the water bill. To move out they charge fees such as painters fees or moving out fees. Sixty of Avalon's units are affordable. It is a 40B, so there is some town oversight. Avalon has rented to people they know can't afford it. The affordable units rent for \$704/mo. Ms. Tavernier has had two calls from tenants who said their rent is going up \$150/mo. Everything is based on the HUD fair market rate, which is much higher. Before Avalon set their rents they used the Lexington property's utility allowance and factored that in. Avalon allows pets but won't allow service dogs in the common areas. There are a variety of problems that attract the attention of the police almost daily. Mr. Van Meter offered to make some calls to DHCD and others to find out if anyone has specific knowledge of Avalon rental policies in other communities. Ms. Tavernier asked Ms. Ducharme to quantify what's going on at Avalon and email ACHC.

Help from local organizations such as Friend in Need or the Council on Aging is just a band-aid. Friend in Need provides a one-time payment of \$400 or \$500. There's an anonymous donor in town who may be willing to give a deal on rent of an apartment he owns. There are some trust funds in town. A financial application needs to be filled out for the trust funds. Town employees give monthly contributions toward gas and grocery cards. Salvation Army can't help with rent, but they can help with other expenses. And tenants can still get fuel assistance even if heat is included in the rent.

ACHC suggested some resources. Senator Eldridge's office may be helpful on tenants' rights. Local colleges sometimes have legal clinics that may be able to help. Metro West Legal Services won't help unless you're in subsidized housing. Acton is between agencies – CTI in Lowell and SMOC. SMOC pushed Laura off on DTA.

Laura is aware of some families/people being behind on mortgage payments, but they are not yet to the point of foreclosure.

#### **IV. Old Busines**

ACHC has filed a CPA request for 2010.

Ms. Tavernier sent a mailing to all affordable owners which included information about community resources at their disposal and contact information for town officials and DHCD if they intend to refinance their mortgage or resell their property. Ms. Tavernier also went through all the files of the affordable owners and calculated the average income to be about \$45,000.

The electrical issues at Faulkner Mill have hopefully been resolved. The town's electrical inspector called the original person who did the wiring and made him redo the wiring in the electrical box.

ACHC will get a quote from Xerox to handle the file scanning project. Xerox sends all the documents to a company in New York City that scans the files and ships them back in a weeks time.

**V. New Business**

**VI. Next Meeting** is December 10, 2009 at 7 PM. Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Submitted by Jennifer Patenaude