

Princeton Housing Board Minutes
Monthly Meeting
May 13, 2014
Monument Hall – East Meeting Room
One Monument Drive, Princeton, NJ 08542

Present:

Board Members:

Carol Golden
Lance Liverman
Alvin McGowen
Omar Nishtar
Mary Agnes Procaccino
Ruth Thurmond Scott

Staff:

Christy Peacock
Ed Schmierer, Esq.

Guests:

Ed Truscelli, PCH

Absent:

Marilyn Rovera
David Schroyer
Kate Warren

I. Open Public Meeting Statement & Welcome

Alvin McGowen, Board Chairman, called the meeting of the Princeton Housing Board to order by reading: "Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided as required by the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice was provided of the date, time, and location of this regular meeting by posting a copy of the adopted schedule of the regular meetings with the Clerk's office and by mailing copies to the Trenton Times and Princeton Packet." He then welcomed all in attendance.

II. Public Comment Period

A public comment period was announced. There was no response from those present.

III. Princeton Community Housing (PCH) Report

A copy of the PCH report was distributed to those in attendance. 6 new applications have been received, creating a total of 218 applicants on the waitlist. PCH is working with all applicants towards completion.

59 applications have been received for Copperwood, with leases likely to be signed in June, for July occupancy. On May 8th there was an on-site tour. Another Copperwood tour will be offered at the end of the month.

144 applications were received for Merwick Stanworth. American Campus Communities (ACC) will make all decisions regarding those accepted. It is expected that over half of the applicants will clear. Criteria for applicant clearance include a criminal background check and check for creditworthiness. It was noted that Landlords, such as ACC and Copperwood determine acceptance of residents based on those disclosed criteria. PCH is not involved in these decisions.

IV. Advertising Report

The Advertising Committee presented their concept of a one-page creation to market AH. These housing "fact sheets" will describe property features and income requirements, based on unit size and family size. Distribution is planned to local churches, renters, health facilities, area schools, realtors, NJ housing websites, community groups, and municipal agencies, in both electronic and print format. Boosting curb appeal and enticing renters to buy are other suggested marketing strategies.

Currently, 3 units need advertising support. Specifics for those listings will be discussed in a sub-committee meeting, with Christy Peacock and Advertising Committee members.

Increased Owner participation in the marketing process is needed. Education on the advantages of advertising, such as the fact that owners can sell and move faster, might be shared to increase Owner support. An increase of the appreciation level given, the use of realtors, Facebook, Craigslist, and other ideas were also discussed, to boost Owner interest and Buyer response. COAH affirmative marketing includes some, but not all, of the options discussed. The AH office number is the contact provided for all inquiries, which shields Owners from the responsibility of screening potential buyers.

V. Minutes

The minutes from the April 2014 Board meeting were reviewed. A motion was made and then seconded, to accept minutes, with all in favor.

VI. Legal Status Report

Mr. Schmierer reported that 233 BH is in foreclosure. Title searches confirm that proper liens are in place, to protect Princeton's interests. Princeton will be included in all legal proceedings. It is hoped that mortgage adjustments and other legal considerations will be applied, for successful retention of this property.

New Jersey's Council On Affordable Housing (COAH) is proposing new statewide AH regulations, for 2014 to 2024. COAH asserts that Princeton has 151 "rehabilitation units", i.e. units to be refurbished over the next ten years. Currently funded housing upgrades, for 50 units, will likely reduce this level. COAH's defined "unanswered prior round needs" and "prospective needs" for Princeton were also discussed. Board members agreed that vacant land opportunities must be presented to COAH, to ensure proper assessment in all need categories. Board Executives will schedule a meeting with COAH for this presentation, requesting a full discussion of needed adjustments to the requirements.

Under the new COAH rules, ordinance changes may occur. The "no market to affordable program" rules may be abolished. Further, an ordinance set aside cannot be more than COAH's set aside. After a public comment period, it is expected that the regulations will be adopted in November 2014. Board members are encouraged to review the proposed regulations at:

<http://www.nj.gov/dca/services/lps/hss/ruleproposal.html>

VII. Housing Status Report

Announcements were shared regarding former Board Members. Tom Poole is moving to Arizona and extends good wishes to everyone on the Board. Marion Epstein passed away.

The Kinsey Report was shared and currently indicates 914 units total. 16 additional units are middle income. 124 units are due to come online: 56 at Merwick, 12 at Copperwood, and 56 at Avalon Bay.

There are currently 10 affordable housing units for sale. 46 BE is now under contract, for a closing in August.

A strong recommendation was made to purchase 44 BE, before a price increase (caused by the new COAH guidelines for middle income) goes into effect. A motion was made to purchase the property, and seconded, with all in favor.

The Homebuyers Workshop was successful, with three very qualified buyers coming forward.

The tenant at Griggs Farm will pay down the loan by June, and sends thanks to the Board for their consideration.

The League of Women Voters meeting went exceptionally well. The League has publicly stated its position as: "supportive of affordable housing". The League further supports "an increase of affordable housing in Princeton".

The Board is encouraged to consider all populations to be housed, as this relates to human needs and our community's future. Examples of the needs discussed include, but were not limited to: transitional housing needs, emergency housing needs, and needs caused by overcrowding and transportation challenges.

Legislative changes in the AH are creating new challenges. Someday, for example, deed restrictions may not survive foreclosure. Further, consolidation in Princeton has decreased funding for AH. A new "aggregate AH contribution", which includes a land surcharge with the developer fee, was one idea shared to better fund AH. To manage AH needs, now and in the future, board members are asked to consider influencing factors and propose new strategies for governance.

VIII. Ordinance Presentation – Special Meetings

Due to time constraints, the Ordinance Committee agreed to schedule two special meetings:

On May 21st, from 10AM till noon, the committee will convene to review the new COAH rules. The expressed purpose of the meeting is to determine if any of those rules will invalidate the new AH ordinances being proposed for Princeton.

On May 28th, from 5:30PM till 7:30PM, the full Board will reconvene to thoroughly review the proposed AH ordinances, now in draft form.

IX. Closing Announcements:

Christy Peacock and Ed Truscelli will make presentations at the PCDO on May 18th, in the Susanne Patterson Center. They will also attend the Witherspoon Jackson neighborhood meeting, on May 31st.

Princeton Magazine will be interviewing AH, for an upcoming feature on housing in Princeton. Board members are asked to consider what AH information should be shared in press releases and in interviews with journalists, for publication.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:57PM

Respectfully submitted, V Bea Snowdon