



**PRINCETON MUNICIPAL
AFFORDABLE HOUSING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
January 10, 2023– VIRTUAL MEETING**

The Reorganizational meeting of the Princeton Affordable Housing Board was called to order by Ed Schmierer at 5:30 pm. He recited the announcement in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: “*In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, 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 with the Clerk’s Office and by emailing copies to the Princeton Packet and the Town Topics.*”

Adequate notice as well as electronic notice of this meeting was provided in accordance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act and State regulations governing remote public meetings. The notice included the time, date and location of the meeting and clear and concise instructions for accessing the meeting via computer, smart device, or telephone. The agenda and all related documents and other materials were posted electronically on Princeton's meeting portal and made available for download at least forty-eight hours prior to the Meeting.

Sworn In:

Mr. Schmierer sworn in re-appointed members: Dossier Hammond, Maria Juega, Mary Agnes Procaccino

Roll Call

Present: Dossier Hammond, Maria Juega, Lance Liverman, Mary Agnes Procaccino, Colin Vonvorys, Councilman Leighton Newlin, Carol Golden (1), Lex Kochmann(2), Matt Mleczko(3)

Excused: Kate Warren

Quorum: 9

Also present: Lewis Hurd (PAH), Ed Schmierer, Esq., Ed Truscelli, (PCH) and Claribel Santiago (PCH)

REORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

2023 Election

Election of Chair

Mr. Schmierer opened the floor for nominations for 2023 Chair

Ms. Procaccino nominated **Kate Warren** as 2023 Chair, seconded by Mr. Liverman. There were no other nominations for Chair.

Roll Call in Favor: Hammond, Juega, Liverman, Procaccino, Vonvorys, Newlin, Golden, Kochmann, Mleczko

Absent: Warren

Election of Vice–Chair

Mr. Schmierer opened the floor for nominations for 2023 Vice–Chair

Ms. Procaccino nominated **Dossier Hammond** as 2023 Vice–Chair seconded by Ms. Juega. There were no other nominations for Vice–Chair.

Roll Call in Favor: Hammond, Juega, Liverman, Procaccino, Vonvorys, Newlin, Golden, Kochmann, Mleczko

Absent: Warren

Mr. Schmierer turned the meeting over to Vice–Chair Hammond who then continued to chair the meeting.

Welcome

Vice–Chair Hammond welcomed new Affordable Housing Manager, Lewis Hurd. Mr. Hurd gave a summary of his housing and professional experience.

Public Comments

Public Present: Mayor Mark Freda, Michael Floyd, Wilma Solomon, Valerie Haines, Earlene Baumunk

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes dated *October 19, 2022* as presented was made first by Ms. Procaccino, seconded by Mr. Liverman, all in favor by voice vote.

Abstained: Liverman, Newlin

Absent: Warren

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes dated *November 15, 2022* as presented was made first by Ms. Procaccino, seconded by Mr. Liverman, all in favor by voice vote.

Abstained: Newlin, Kochmann

Absent: Warren

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes dated *December 13, 2022* as presented was made first by Ms. Procaccino, seconded by Mr. Liverman, all in favor by voice vote.

Abstained: Vonvorvys, Kochmann

Absent: Warren

A motion to approve the closed meeting minutes dated *December 13, 2022* as presented was made first by Ms. Procaccino, seconded by Mr. Liverman, all in favor by voice vote.

Abstained: Vonvorvys, Kochmann

Absent: Warren

Status Reports from CGP, PCH and PAH

PCH Development Corporation – Ed Truscelli and Claribel Santiago

Mr. Truscelli shared his screen; Ms. Santiago provided the monthly rentals updates.

Community Grants & Planning (CGP) – Avalon Bay

Vice–Chair Hammond reported on the Avalon Bay update; 1 vacancy, 2 bedroom low; 2 vacancies, 2 bedroom moderate; CGP has begun the application process. Ms. Juega asked about the number of applications for three vacancies. Chair Warren or Vice–Chair Hammond will reach out and confirm the number of applications processed for the three units. PCH is not the Administrative Agent for CGP. Ms. Procaccino works with St. Vincent De Paul; they are getting a number of rental assistance requests from Avalon Bay residents who are behind in their rent. Avalon Bay has begun processing evictions due to non–payment of rent. Ms. Procaccino is not aware of the number of evictions being processed; HIP is not aware of the evictions. The information is being sent to the Coalition; there was some discussion as to what kind of help is available through the Coalition. Ms. Golden explained the Coalition and its role in residential rental assistance. Ms. Baumunk is an Avalon Bay resident; she reported that management is currently not seeing any residents without appointments; walk ins are no longer accepted. Vice–Chair Hammond stated that they will reach out to Avalon Bay for status, however, a response may be unsuccessful.

Chair/Vice–Chair Status Reports

Vice–Chair Hammond reported that the overlay for the Witherspoon Jackson corridor has been introduced by Council and maybe voted on, on January 23rd. He explained the limitations of the overlay. Vice–Chair Hammond shared Chair Warren’s question about whether or not the affordable housing rental administrative agents currently notify or should notify applicants on waitlists about affordable housing opportunities in neighboring districts. Further discussion can be held at a later date. He opined that our clients should be made aware of other opportunities available to them given the town’s extremely long waiting lists.

Meeting Dates and Times

Councilman Newlin sent a previous email asking to consider changing the meeting time. Members prefer the current day and time already in place; second Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm. Ms. Moy suggested that Councilman Newlin consider calling in until he can get to a computer to log in. We can re–visit meeting date and time later in the year.

Legal

Mr. Schmierer stated that he did not have anything to report.

Princeton Affordable Housing Sales

Mr. Schmierer reported that housing sales are currently slow; interest rates are higher making it more difficult for people to secure a mortgage. There had not been much turnover of affordable units in the 2022 4th Quarter.

Mr. Liverman referred homeowners to Rho Jones for the rehabilitation program; they are from the John Witherspoon area. Future referrals should be directed to Mr. Hurd. Mr. Schmierer has been in touch with the staff and the homeowners’ applications are being processed. We need contractors to work with Princeton on projects. Ms. Kochmann stated that she can provide Mr. Hurd with Habitat for Humanity’s Neighborhood Revitalization Program contact.

Legislative Update

Vice–Chair Hammond did not have anything to report; things are quiet at this time.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

Mr. Mleczko reported that there will be a virtual webinar hosted by *Next City* on ADUs on Wednesday, January 11, 2023; everyone is welcome to participate. Topic: *Promoting Affordable Housing Through ADUs*. Mr. Mleczko will resend the virtual meeting link.

Financial Literacy Program

Ms. Juega summarized the subcommittee’s activities. They would like to make a presentation to the Board along with recommendations. They would like to ask ISLES to provide feedback on what recommendations they might have based upon what they learned while conducting the pilot program and what suggestions they may have going forward. The subcommittee will need to create a budget. The funds may come from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. There are not many providers that provide financial services in our geographic area. Vice–Chair Hammond stated that they realize the challenge in getting people to participate. It would require marketing the program and getting people to understand the need to address their financial situation to prepare them for being better applicants in the approval process. PCH has asked us for a scope of work so they can make an informed decision on what they are capable of providing. Mr. Mleczko encouraged Board members to review at least the last four items of

the draft report. Mr. Liverman commented that he read the draft and thanked the subcommittee for their work. He provided his concerns for the project. Ms. Kochmann supported Mr. Liverman's concerns. She stated that participants in the Habitat program are required to provide sweat equity and participate in financial counseling. Based on experience, Ms. Kochmann commented that unless applicants are required to participate, they will not. She is willing to talk with the subcommittee on marketing and try to make it part of the application process. Vice-Chair Hammond stated that they will seek discussions with other groups that offer financial programs to find out what their success rates. Ms. Kochmann stated that Kim Dorman from the Public Library is interested in doing a financial literacy program; this would be a good start. Ms. Procaccino commented that she has worked with four groups who offered financial counselling with plenty of incentives and have been unsuccessful. Councilman Newlin stated he agreed with partnering with Library; however, the Board may want to consider targeting families and individuals as they get closer to the application process to participate in a financial counseling program. Mr. Truscelli also agreed that partnering with Library would be a good idea. He also stated that a good credit score is needed not only for housing, but it affects everyday life. There are other resources besides ISLES who may be able to assist. Ms. Golden commented on what we consider "success." Mr. Hurd shared that he has a substantial amount of experience from his last position and shared that it is a challenge. He provided several suggestions in moving forward with goals and activities. Mr. Liverman commented that people feel there is stigma attached to being in need of financial help; individual counseling would be a better option. The subcommittee will send a draft proposal for the next meeting. They will meet with ISLES and PCH individually to further discuss.

Master Plan Subcommittees

Housing & Green Stainability: Golden, Kochmann, Warren

Vice-Chair Hammond reported that Chair Warren and her subcommittee have not had an opportunity to meet again.

Land Use & Community Facilities: Juega, Liverman, Vonvorvys

Mr. Liverman summarized the committee's last meeting. Areas of concern include the Butler Tract and the use of the property. The Master Plan (page 39) under Land Use Element discusses the use of the Butler Tract that may not allow the University or developer to place affordable housing on the property. The subcommittee would like Mr. Schmierer's legal advice on this issue. The subcommittee also discussed the Community Land Trust issue and asked - should the subcommittee also review the Community Land Trust for the Butler Tract? The subcommittee would like to include support for the Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and agree with the overlay zoning that is currently going in place. They also discussed potential locations for a community center.

Land Use & Mobility: Hammond, Procaccino, Mleczko

Mr. Mleczko summed their subcommittee discussion; underutilized parcels, (mobility) transportation improvements to the Dinky as well as expansion; improving infrastructure of existing transportation and improved communications with residents. The subcommittee has a draft report and will send to members when it is completed.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 pm was first moved by Mr. Vonvorvys, seconded by Ms. Kochmann, all in favor by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted by:

Julie M. Moy

Recording Secretary