



**PRINCETON MUNICIPAL
AFFORDABLE HOUSING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
February 8, 2022 – VIRTUAL MEETING**

The regular meeting of the Princeton Affordable Housing Board was called to order by Chair Kate Warren at 5:30 pm. She 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.

ROLL CALL

Present: Dosier Hammond, Maria Juega, Lance Liverman, Mary Agnes Procaccino, Colin Vonvorys, Kate Warren, Councilman Leighton Newlin, Carol Golden (1), Matt Mleczko (3)

Excused: Lex Kochmann (2)

Also present: Maureen Fullaway (PAH), Ed Schmierer, Esq., Ed Truscelli, (PCH), Claribel Santiago (PCH)

Guests: Elizabeth Bates, Resident, Mr. Floyd, Resident

Public Comments – None

Approval of Minutes – January 12, 2021

A motion to approve the minutes dated January 12, 2021 as amended was made first by Mr. Liverman, seconded by Ms. Procaccino, all in favor by voice vote.

At the last meeting Ms. Juega brought up the possibility of approaching local organizations about residents utilizing their parking lot during off peak hours; Mr. Schmierer said it was possible to ask, but has to be done by the Municipality. Chair Warren asked Ms. Juega to reach out Councilman Newlin to discuss details so he can bring to Council on the Board’s behalf; she agreed.

Status Reports from CGP, PCH, PAH and ISLES:

PCH Development Corporation, Ed Truscelli and Claribel Santiago

Mr. Truscelli shared his screen. Ms. Santiago provided her monthly report on properties managed by PCH. The Palmer Square studio remains vacant. The two bedroom Palmer Square unit has been rented. Griggs Farm has two vacancies. Elm Court has five vacancies. Harriet Bryan House has two vacancies. Merwick Stanworth has no vacancies. The average wait on the PCH and Princeton Rental waiting lists is 14–16 months. The applicant who filed an appeal for the denial from Merwick Stanworth is now being considered for a unit. The applicant cleared up the issue that prevented her from initially moving forward in the application process. Mr. Hammond would like to see additional details in their reports. Ms. Santiago stated that applicants are on wait list for Merwick Stanworth 1.5–2 years; length of time depends on unit availability. Griggs Farm will depend on the applicant’s number on the wait list before s/he can be certified. Griggs Farm applicants must wait about one year before a unit becomes available. Ms. Juega asked what the difference in the process between Griggs Farm and other PCH rentals; Griggs

Farm must follow HUD guidelines. Councilman Newlin explained the Housing Authority's (PHA) wait list time. He reported on PHA's new staff and their roles. Councilman Newlin has invited this Board to attend the next PHA meeting Wednesday, February 16, 2022.

Mr. Truscelli reminded the Board that new units at Princeton Community Village are under construction; 25 new units will be added to the existing 239 units. Marketing will begin 120 days prior to completion, around the fourth quarter.

Community Grant & Planning (CGP)

Ms. Fullaway did not receive a report from Community Grants and Planning.

ISLES Report

Ms. Fullaway emailed the Board the ISLES' report. She reported that she had received a second quarterly invoice; the first invoice was paid. Based on the report received, there does not seem to be a lot of activity or success; reports have been same since the start of the program. The Board discussed the progress of their work. Mr. Schmierer opined that we can terminate the contract if we decide to do so. Discussion was open for the Board to decide if they would like to continue with the program. Ms. Juega stated that she spoke to some of the members and the opinion was to try one more time. Ms. Juega and Ms. Fullaway will speak with ISLES staff to re-think approach to secure participation. The report lacks details. Although ISLES contract indicates that counseling will be one-on-one, this is not happening. It seems that interactive webinars is the counseling model that ISLES is following. There are not many organizations that perform this work; the one other group that provided a price quote was much more expensive.

Mr. Liverman commented that the lack of participation is not a new issue; we can only offer the program and cannot make anyone participate. He said Princeton should not waste the funds and Ms. Procaccino agreed. She has worked with other organizations who tried to provide the same program with incentives. Even with incentives, it was difficult to get people to participate; it was not successful. Ms. Golden stated that is it difficult for people to find energy and time for this time of activity. There is a general lack of enthusiasm for financial counseling. It is difficult to get people to attend and cancellations common or people just do not show up for their appointment. Ms. Golden said that HIP participants are required to attend, but HIP does not really enforce this rule.

Mr. Hammond suggested we try one more time, try to get someone capable of marketing the program to the residents. Chair Warren asked Mr. Schmierer to review the contact so we may make the decision to terminate the contract with ISLES. We will table the decision at this time allowing Ms. Juega and Ms. Fullaway to speak with ISLES to brainstorm ideas. Councilman Newlin asked what the end game would be for the resident; Mr. Hammond pointed out that the purpose of the financial counseling program is to assist those with credit problems, to help them become qualified for Affordable Housing. Ms. Fullaway will email the flyer for all to review. Mr. Newlin suggested that the marketing person be a resident in an Affordable Housing unit. Ms. Golden will reach out to HIP's ISLES' representative to ask for a brainstorming session. Mr. Mleczko opined that it is a good idea that we explore options prior to canceling the program. Mr. Liverman made suggestions how we promote the program. Mr. Truscelli suggested that Sharon Marker from the Housing and Community Network of NJ would be a good resource to find out how other organizations reach out to low/mod income residents. Chair Warren closed the discussion and tabled to the next meeting.

Chair and Vice–Chair Status Reports

Chair Warren reviewed the handbook; she asked all members to send Ms. Fullaway his/her contact information to be submitted the Municipality; phone numbers will not be shared.

Vice–Chair Hammond did not have anything to report.

Legal – Review of Board, Commission, Committee (BCC) and Task Force Members’ Handbook
Mr. Schmierer provided an outline of the handbook; members should read the first 21 pages. He stated that the Council updates the BCC handbook annually to remind people of their responsibilities to the Board. The Code of Conduct helps if there may be a conflict of interest with board members if there are topics up for discussion. He explained the OPRA requirements pertaining to emails. Mr. Schmierer asked everyone to read and acknowledge by signing and returning to the Clerk’s Office.

Leigh Avenue

Ms. Fullaway reported that the Municipality owns the 5 rental units at Leigh Avenue unit and PCH is the Property Manager. Bids have been received for four water heaters. Costs for water heaters have gone up substantially since the pandemic began. Chair Warren asked about the permit fees; she thought they were waived for Affordable units. Per Mr. Schmierer, there was a waiver for the fees for local inspections; third party inspection fees are not waived. This was not a blanket waiver with an unlimited timeline. We can request the internal permit fees to be waived and request permission to use Affordability Assistance Funds to pay for third party inspection fees. The residents do not pay the fee; we do. Ms. Fullaway will check with John Pettinatti, Construction Official; we may not need a resolution to have fees waived.

Ms. Fullaway needs approval to go with the lowest bid, which is from Herr’s Plumbing for four water 50-gallon heaters with expansion tank costing approximately \$13,000. One was already replaced due to an emergency situation. The water heaters will be replaced like for like. Mr. Truscilli explained that they will have a power vent, which costs more.

The motion to approve the bid to go to Herr’s Plumbing for the installation of four water heaters, was first moved by Ms. Procaccino, seconded by Mr. Liverman, all in favor by voice vote.

Accessory Dwelling Units Update

Chair Warren thanked Mr. Mleczko for his research for the ADUs.

Chair Warren asked Ms. Fullaway to include the ADU and Legislative updates on the monthly agenda.

35 Billie Ellis

Chair Warren reported that she was contacted by one of the co–executors of the estate. Ms. Fullaway stated that it was on last month’s agenda; there was a potential purchaser who has since decided not to purchase the unit. Afterwards, the co–executor contacted Ms. Fullaway expressing their financial concerns to maintain the unit because the estate funds are limited. The executors spent money to renovate the unit and they are concerned there is not enough funding left for HOA fees, utilities and insurance in the coming months. Ms. Fullaway reported that she has another interested purchaser. She is interested in the unit; she is separated; she does not have a divorce decree at this time. She and husband still own another condo that is currently for sale. Ms. Fullaway sees two options: either a potential buyer purchases the unit or Princeton purchases the unit and then resells it. Chair Warren stated that this is a hardship case; the estate is almost out of funds to pay the HOA and taxes. Ms. Fullaway suggested we

purchase then sell. The unit is valued at approximately \$106,000; 75% to the estate, 25% to the Municipality.

The motion for the Municipality to purchase 35 Billie Ellis for no more than \$107,000 was first moved by Ms. Procaccino, seconded by Mr. Liverman

Roll call in favor: Hammond, Juega, Liverman, Newlin, Procaccino, Vonvorys, Warren

Legislative – Dosier Hammond

Build Back Better Bill – Mr. Hammond reported that there remains a chance that housing will be included; not confirmed. This could include \$150 billion in affordable housing funding.

Mortgage Relief – Mr. Hammond reported that a new mortgage and property tax relief program from the State was just announced. This information is on Princeton’s website.

Housing and Community Development Network of NJ

Emergency Recuse: Mr. Hammond reported they have a new program to promote affordable housing.

Credit Worthiness Standard: Mr. Hammond stated that it is still a possibility that credit worthiness can be determined in ways other than a credit score. The State is trying to streamline the application process.

Moratorium for Evictions

Mr. Hammond reported that the eviction moratorium is over now. Tenants may still be able to receive rental assistance but must apply for the program and confirm eligibility. Mr. Hammond is looking to see if the tenants can get legal help if they want to challenge their eviction. Ms. Golden stated that she will be meeting with Volunteer Lawyers for Justice of NJ to discuss issue.

Accessory Dwelling Units Update

Mr. Mleczko provided an update on his research. He explained what he is doing and who he has reached out to. Chair Warren thanked Mr. Schmierer for sending the AARP template for review. The White House webinar was also sent out for the members to review. Mr. Hammond participated in the webinar and provided a summary.

Mr. Truscelli reported that he is also looking into ADUs and will share information. Mr. Mleczko will be overseeing this project and will work with Mr. Truscelli.

Public Comment

Mr. Floyd asked if Mr. Hammond whether there were any updates from the Subcommittee researching overcoming obstacles to qualifying for Affordable Housing. Mr. Hammond explained that this subcommittee is currently concentrating on issue of Credit Worthiness Standards. Mr. Hammond did say that the Fair Chance in Housing Act, which eliminates criminal background checks on preliminary applications, is now law.

Mr. Floyd asked about the multiple dwelling reports. Chair Warren responded that it is yearly report from the management agents. He will send a request to Mr. Truscelli for his report.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 pm was first moved by Mr. Vonvorys, seconded by Ms. Procaccino, all in favor by voice vote.



Respectfully submitted by:

Julie M. Moy
Recording Secretary