



**PRINCETON MUNICIPAL  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
May 12, 2021 – VIRTUAL MEETING**

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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: Carol Golden, Dosier Hammond, Maria Juega, Lex Kochmann, Lance Liverman, Mary Agnes Procaccino, Colin Vonvorys (LE 6:15 PM), Kate Warren, Dwaine Williamson

Excused: None

Quorum: 7

Also present: Mayor Mark Freda, Maureen Fullaway (PAH), Ed Schmierer, Esq., Ed Truscelli, (PCH) and Claribel Santiago (PCH), Mathew Mleczo (public)

**Public Comments – None**

**Approval of Minutes**

There was discussion on posting of the meeting minutes.

March 9, 2021 and April 14, 2021 Minutes were tabled

The motion to table the March 9, 2021 and April 14, 2021 meeting minutes to the June 9, 2021 meeting was first moved by Ms. Procaccino seconded by Councilman Williamson, all in favor by voice vote.

Vice-Chair Hammond questioned the voting process for regular and alternate members; Mr. Schmierer explained the process.

**Status Reports from CGP, PCH and PAH**

*PCH Development Corporation*, Ed Truscelli and Claribel Santiago

Ms. Santiago provided the PCH update of the number of applications received and applicants on wait list. They are currently updating their waiting lists. Ms. Juega asked for status of Palmer Square units’ progress, no change. Ms. Santiago stated that Hopewell has a waiver that after a year on the market they waive the occupancy requirements. For example, with the waiver a two-bedroom unit could be rented to a one-person household. The owner would request the waiver from the Board; the waiver is temporary and does not affect the unit permanently.

Chairperson Warren responded that we have done this in the past however, the landlord has to be amendable to the change. This Board can vote on the waiver if the landlord is agreeable; Vice-Chair Hammond suggested we wait and discuss with Palmer Square first. Mr. Truscelli spoke to Lori Rabon, from Palmer Square and explained the issue in renting out the unit. She is willing to discuss with owners

to either reduce rent or parking fee; there is no update from Ms. Rabon. Per Chairperson Warren, the Palmer Square units' deed restrictions expire in 2038 and 2040. Per Mayor Freda, acting Administrator Bob Bruschi spoke to Ms. Rabon; the Palmer Square entity is obligated to work with the Municipality to find a solution. Mayor Freda will follow up with Ms. Rabon. Ms. Juega would like to see Palmer Square relax their credit score; current requirement is 650.

The motion to present to Palmer Square the waiver language to allow 1 person occupancy in 2-bedroom unit. Mr. Schmierer will draft resolution for Board to review prior to vote; he will include the information that led to the waiver. There was continued discussion regarding the parking fee and credit score requirement.

#### *Community Grant & Planning (CGP)*

Ms. Fullaway provided Avalon Bay's report; there was one vacancy which has a certified applicant. There are 6,592 households on wait list of which 1,532 live or work in Region 4.

#### *Princeton Affordable Housing – Maureen Fullaway*

Ms. Fullaway reported on the sales:

- Open house scheduled for 213 and 225 Brickhouse on Saturday
- 38 Billie Ellis, owned by the Municipality, renovation work is underway
- 274 Griggs Farm Drive, owner is still in Haiti and wants to sell
- 37 Billie Ellis' owner passed away; family is cleaning and will try to sell on own; needs work

#### **Chair/Vice–Chair Status Reports**

Chairperson Warren reported that at the last meeting, there was discussion on drafting a letter to discuss with the Mayor and Council data gathering from the private developers/owners to get an idea of why rental applicants are denied. This Board would like to get on the Council's agenda's work session to explain what we trying to accomplish. The hope is to get the Council's support for future developers to agree to provide data.

Chairperson Warren reported that the financial literacy pilot program was launched.

Chairperson Warren reported that Matt Mleczo was appointed to this Board.

Chairperson Warren reported on the deed restrictions at Palmer Square. Eight (8) units will expire in 2028, 2030 and 2033; when they expire, these units will no longer be in our affordable housing inventory. Another two (2) units expire in 2038 and 2040. It is important that Palmer Square works with the Municipality to fill the units. Vice–Chair Hammond asked if Palmer Square's agreement can be extended after the 30-year period expires; Mr. Schmierer explained the process. There was further discussion on Avalon Bay's agreement.

Vice–Chair Hammond stated that negotiations with developers should include Best Practices (regarding the criminal background and credit check) while still protecting developer's financial interests.

Vice–Chair Hammond discussed a draft resolution to support the Fair Chance in Housing Act (A1919/S250), commonly known as “ban the box.” This bill would prevent landlords from discriminating against prospective tenants with a criminal history because the box on the application asks if you have ever been convicted of a crime. The Legislative Committee has been discussing the bill. In coordination with the Civil Rights and Human Services Commissions, they are working together as

part of their *overcoming obstacles project*; the resolution will go before all the commissions for review. Together they want to recommend that Council support this bill. Mr. Liverman supports the resolution. He expressed his concern for developments that are HUD funded; it will not help these developments. There were further discussions on the bill and how it will affect landlords and applicants. There are potential revisions to the bill being considered. Ms. Juega is in support of the resolution. A number of PCH's developments receive HUD funding.

**Legal** – Ed Schmierer, Esq.

Mr. Schmierer had nothing to report

### **Other Business**

*Financial Literacy Pilot Program* – Maria Juega

Ms. Juega reported that the financial literacy pilot program launched by ILES. She created a draft procedural manual for future reference. Princeton Community Housing sent approximately 900 emails and regular mail to households on its Waiting Lists explaining how to apply to the program. ISLES has 20 slots and received over 20 applications; all slots were filled on the first day. Wait list will be created. Ms. Juega will check with United Way's Financial Literacy Program; if similar, she will ask if they are willing to take referrals from our overflow. If successful, we would like to ask the Council to increase funding by 20–40 participants. Chairperson Warren asked Ms. Juega to monitor the program to see how many applicants actually follow through and progress through the program.

*CDBG* – Carol Golden

Princeton received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for rental assistance; HIP is managing the funds. Ms. Golden provided an update on the funding: 93 adults and 69 children were assisted with rental assistance. They had approximately \$250,000 to distribute. A large number of residents came from the Housing Authority (HA). There was a discussion of the fact that PHA is experiencing financial and management issues.

*Rehabilitation Loan* – Maureen Fullaway

Ms. Fullaway received an application for a rehabilitation loan. The home was built in 1700's; she provided a list of needed repairs. Repairs come to approximately \$26,480; the resident has been income qualified. Maximum loan amount is \$20,000; residents will pay difference.

The motion to approve the rehabilitation loan of \$20,000 was first moved by Mr. Liverman seconded by Ms. Procaccino

Roll call in favor: Juega, Hammond, Procaccino, Liverman, Williamson, Kochmann and Warren.

*Habitat For Humanity* – Lex Kochmann

Ms. Kochmann explained that Habitat For Humanity (HH) has a home improvement program where the owners pay only for the cost of materials. All labor is donated by volunteers. Habitat for Humanity places a 10 years lien on the home with deed restrictions. Princeton residents can reach out to Habitat For Humanity for repair work.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 pm was first moved by Ms. Kochmann, seconded by Vice–Chair Hammond, all in favor by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted by:



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*Julie M. Moy*  
Recording Secretary