



**PRINCETON MUNICIPAL
AFFORDABLE HOUSING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
July 11, 2023 – 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, Lance Liverman, Mary Agnes Procaccino, Colin Vonvorys, Kate Warren, Councilman Leighton Newlin, Carol Golden (1), Lex Kochmann (2)

Excused: Maria Juega

Quorum: 8

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

Public Comments – None

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes dated **May 9, 2023** was made first by Mr. Hammond, seconded by Ms.Procaccino, all in favor by voice vote.

Abstain: Hammond, Newlin, Kochmann

A motion to approve the minutes dated **June 13, 2023** as amended was made first by Ms.Procaccino, seconded by Chair Warren, all in favor by voice vote.

Abstain: Newlin, Kochmann, Vonvorys

Status Reports from CGP and PCH

PCH Development Corporation – Ed Truscelli

Mr. Truscelli shared his screen with the report and provided an update of the June activities.

Mr. Truscelli continued with the PCHDC report. Mr. Schimerer asked when the ribbon cutting for the new PCH building will take place. Currently they are working on acquiring the Certificate of Occupancy by the end of July. Mr. Truscelli anticipates the event will occur in the Fall. They have started the process of qualifying applicants. Mr. Liverman asked Mr. Truccelli if he is aware of who the Administrative Agent (AA) for the development at Harrison and Terhune will be; PCH has not been contacted to be the AA.

Chair Warren stated that she and Mr. Hurd spoke with Megan York from CGP&H, who is the AA for Avalon Bay’s two developments, Thanet Circle and Albert Way, to clarify the monthly report numbers.

Mr. Hurd provided the monthly report for Avalon Bay. 3,370 applications have been received for Region 4. The overall number of applications is 14,100. There are two vacancies. Mr. Hurd reported that

they have not processed any applications for 200 Thanet Circle yet. They received sixteen applications for 100 Albert Watson; he provided the status of the applications. Mr. Hurd explained how Ms. York and Avalon Bay reviews credit rating for their applicants. Chair Warren explained how Avalon Bay processes their wait list; they have one list and Region 4 gets preference.

Other Business

Appeal to Purchase Request by Anton Khabbaz

Mr. Schmierer summarized Mr. Khabbaz's appeal, his application, the process and reason for denial to purchase an Affordable Housing unit. His application was reviewed and processed by Mr. Hurd and was declared ineligible based on the Council of Affordable Housing (COAH) limitation to purchase in the program. Mr. Khabbaz's redacted application was sent for the Board's review, which was the same documents reviewed for compliance with the program. Mr. Schmierer and Mr. Hurd discussed Mr. Khabbaz's application prior to rendering a decision. Mr. Hurd received a letter dated May 3, 2023 requesting the ineligibility determination be reconsidered. Mr. Schmierer explained that when COAH was in place, this type of appeal would have gone before the NJ Mortgage & Finance Agency to confirm that the COAH guidelines were adhered to. COAH is no longer in effect therefore this appeal was scheduled to be heard before this Board.

Mr. Khabbaz was introduced, presented his request by providing an explanation of financial background and reasons for remaining in the Princeton area as a homeowner. Following his presentation, Chair Warren opened the floor for questions from the Board. Mr. Hammond asked Mr. Schmierer if retirement funds are considered full asset when they are calculated in the COAH limitation. Mr. Schmierer responded that accessible retirement accounts are considered an asset and considered as part of the asset limit. Mr. Schmierer and Mr. Hurd reviewed all the applicant's document and explained the income and retirement limitations. Gross Regional asset level limitation for Region 4 is approximately \$250,000. Per Chair Warren, it is her understanding that this Board has no jurisdiction to alter the Regional Asset Limit. Per Mr. Schmierer, the limit is recalculated annually; last recalculation was May 26, 2023. Applicant's income has to be considered along with the gross assets. The limitations to purchase or rent under the Affordable Housing Program is the same. Mr. Schmierer explained how the Board should decide the appeal. The Board can vote to uphold the decision of the Affordable Housing Manager making the applicant ineligible to purchase or in reverse this decision and making him eligible to purchase under the program. For clarification, Chair Warren stated that if the Board deems Mr. Khabbaz eligible, they would be going against the established regional asset limit, which this Board has no jurisdiction to do. Per Mr. Schmierer, if the decision was reversed and this individual was qualified for the purchase program, we would be doing so contrary to the Housing Act Regulations, which he does not recommend.

To motion to uphold the decision of the Affordable Housing Manager and to deny the applicant the opportunity to purchase under the Affordable Housing Program was first moved by Ms. Procaccino, seconded by Mr. Liverman

Roll Call in favor: Hammond, Procaccino, Liverman, Vonvorys, Newlin, Golden, Kochmann, Warren

Absent: Juega

Motion passed

Mr. Schmierer and Mr. Truscelli left the meeting.

Princeton Affordable Housing Report

Community Grant & Planning (CGP) – Lewis Hurd

Mr. Hurd reported on some highlights:

1. *Vision and Eye Care Plan* received funding from CDBG funds and was recently approved by Council
2. *CDBG Application Process* completion is almost complete; there will be a formalized application, evaluation and selection process. Application Instructions will be available for residents interested in applying for funding. Languages will be selected then uploaded onto the website.
3. *The Home Improvement Program* has begun. The new Project Manager has been meeting with applicants to inspect the work that is needed at their homes.

Mr. Hurd reported on *for sale units*:

Homes sold, closing should take place within the next two months:

1. *92 Clay Street*, under contract
2. *68 David Brearly Court*, under contract

Mr. Hurd reported that 14 Vandeventer Avenue will be added to the municipal sales inventory shortly.

Mr. Hurd reported that he continues to work on updating the contractor list.

Affordable Housing Partner Group met at the end of June. Attendees included Mr. Hurd, Avalon Bay, Princeton Housing Authority (PHA) and PIRHL Senior Housing. Discussions included credit scoring issues and an update on the PIRHL Senior Housing (PSH) Project. PSH hired Conifer Real Estate as the Administrative Agent (AA). PSH's completion date has been moved to September and applications will be accepted at that time; anticipated occupancy in October. Mr. Hurd has not received an update on RPM's project.

Councilman Newlin did not have any new information on Maple/Franklin or the RPM Project; he will look into it.

Chair/Vice–Chair Status Reports

Chair Warren reported that Nelson Glass has accepted the 650 credit rating.

Ms. Procaccino asked who sets the HOA fees and asked if there are any controls in place to limit HOA fees. Chair Warren recalled that HOA fees are not discounted for affordable units at Washington Oaks; Mr. Hurd agreed. Ms. Procaccino reported that Housing Stability Services (HSS) is encountering a number of residents needing assistance to pay high HOA fees. HOA fees are regulated by the HOA Board. The fees are based on square footage of the unit. Chair Warren recalls asking Washington Oaks to lower their HOA fees and they were not amendable to the suggestion. Mr. Hurd has a meeting with them on Thursday and will include it in his discussion.

Vice–Chair Hammond did not have anything to report at this time.

Chair Warren reported that she received a copy of Matt Mleczeko's resignation letter in which he expressed his appreciation for working with the Board.

Legal – Nothing to report

Subcommittees

Legislative – Mr. Hammond

Mr. Hammond reported that the new State budget passed which included funding for affordable housing:

- Approximately \$200 million to the Housing Trust Fund
- \$80 million has been allocated to Rehabilitation and Renovation Program
- \$50 million for new Transit Oriented Workforce Development Fund
- \$30 million for first generation homebuyers
- \$115 million for a production fund to help fulfill obligations to help build houses

A bill was passed to try to give comprehensive eviction defense and diversion program to help those facing eviction to have legal representation from the DCA. Their goal is to assist 15,000 people annually.

Ms. Kochmann reported that \$25 million was granted to several NJ Habitat for Humanity offices.

Chair Warren explained the meeting minutes process: she receives the draft minutes from Ms. Moy, reviews and edits, sends to the Board for review and approval. She makes any revisions the Board has, then forwards to Sindy Sandoval to post on the website.

Board Discussion

There will not be a scheduled meeting for August. Next meeting will be *September 12, 2023*.

Mr. Liverman addressed the workshops; it seems people are in need of a rental housing navigator, someone who can assist with the rental process. Chair Warren reported that the funding Ms. Juega was seeking was not funded.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 pm was first moved by Mr. Vonvorys, seconded by Ms. Kochmann, all in favor by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted by:

Julie M. Moy
Recording Secretary