

## **Princeton Housing Board Minutes**

Monthly Meeting

**August 12, 2014**

Monument Hall – East Meeting Room  
One Monument Drive, Princeton, NJ 08542

### **Present:**

#### **Board Members:**

Carol Golden  
Lance Liverman  
Alvin McGowen  
David Schroyer  
Ruth Thurmond Scott  
Mary Agnes Procaccino  
Kate Warren

#### **Staff:**

Christy Peacock  
V Bea Snowdon

#### **Guests:**

Ed Truscelli, PCH  
Arnaz Yousafzai, PCH

### **Absent:**

Omar Nishtar  
Merilyn Rovira

## **I. Open Public Meeting Statement**

At 5:30PM, Alvin McGowen called the meeting of the Princeton Housing Board to order by reading: "This is a regular meeting of the Princeton Housing Board. 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."

## **II. Public Comment**

A public comment period was announced. With no members of the public present, the Chairman stated that the floor would be opened for any late arrivals wishing to comment.

## **III. Minutes**

The draft minutes of the July 2014 Board meeting were reviewed. One heading was added. Ruth Thurmond Scott requested page numbers in all future minutes. Carol Golden's motion, to approve the revised minutes, was seconded by Kate Warren. David Schrayner abstained from the vote. The remaining members present voted in favor of acceptance.

#### **IV. Princeton Community Housing (PCH) Report**

Arnaz Yousafzai distributed and presented the PCH Affordable Rental report. 4 new rental applications have been received. 2 of those applications were certified and 2 are incomplete. There are now a total of 239 applicants on the rental waitlist. 4 PCH units are presently available: 2 at 25 Spring Street, 1 at 135 Bayard Lane, and 1 at 190 Witherspoon Street.

One studio apartment remains vacant at COPPERWOOD. A qualified tenant may soon sign the lease for that studio. Until that happens, other applications will be accepted for COPPERWOOD. One applicant has dropped out, due to additional fees in this development.

A one-bedroom unit remains available, in the completed phase one units at MERWICK STANWORTH. PCH is now accepting applications for the Phase II units to be constructed.

Kate Warren questioned the affordability of COPPERWOOD rents based on the county average of \$1,200. Higher rents in Princeton were cited to be a factor, in COPPERWOOD's COAH set rent figure.

#### **IV. BUSINESS**

##### **Legal**

In the absence of Ed Schmierer, Chairman McGowen provided the legal report.

Counsel's research indicates that there are no legal obstacles to the creation of middle-income units.

All Board and municipal comments were sent to COAH on a timely basis. No response of any kind has been received from COAH to date. Mayor Lempert also wrote a letter in favor of the provision of more affordable housing in Princeton. Lance Liverman reports that her letter received support from the general assembly.

##### **Board Chair Report**

The Chairman thanked all Board Members for their work on COAH regulation matters. The Chairman expressed appreciation for Kate Warren, and her impressive work on the challenges presented to the Board from COAH.

Co-Chairman Kate Warren wishes to set the timetable to achieve the next Board projects. Consolidation of the Board's rules, regulations, and mission statement is needed. The operation, rehab, rental, and sales manuals for the Affordable Housing program must also be revised. Work must be done for the website.

Board Officers agreed to meet to conduct an initial review of the rules and regulations. An appointed subcommittee will then convene, with their feedback in hand, by mid-September. The Chairman and Co-Chair hope to have the rules and regulations consolidated by the end of October. Volunteers for this subcommittee were requested.

The remaining projects will be scheduled in turn.

Noting cultural shifts in meaning, Anna Christy Peacock recommends attention to the use of current word choices in all revisions made.

### **Affordable Housing Status Report**

One unit for sale has fallen out of contract. There is closing of a three-bedroom unit, with money to be returned to the municipality from the sale. The finances and advantage of sales will be explained in a memo to Town Council, before they have to vote on housing finance matters.

Attending to leaks and other maintenance problems in housing has been time-consuming this summer. ACCESS PRINCETON has been helpful in fielding the initial trouble reports, with Christy Peacock personally overseeing remedies and repairs. A handyman is needed to respond to maintenance calls, assess needs, and coordinate any necessary repairs. Lance Liverman will inquire about municipal employees responding to maintenance calls and ensuring repairs. All present agree that the municipality needs to take care of the properties Princeton owns. There is hope that the maintenance staff now in place, for municipal building needs, will be responsive.

For a long period of time, the owner of 40BE has left the unit illegally vacant. The absence of a resident has increased maintenance needs in the apartment. Ed Schmierer will be asked to write

another letter, to a follow up on this matter. The Owner was initially notified of municipal concerns in November.

There was discussion that a letter to all homeowners about insurance and other responsibilities may be helpful. Kate Warren suggested the creation and distribution of a tenant handbook. Dianne Bleacher may be contacted for her input on this matter.

Princeton currently has two group homes for special needs individuals, one on Harrison Road and one on Hewlett Road. A couple would like to have another group home funded by the municipality, to meet the special needs of their son. Neal Snyder has identified a 1.5 million dollar property in Princeton, suitable for four residents, for this need presented to Princeton. Half of the funding, for the group home purchase, would come from HMFA. The remaining funds needed for this purchase are requested from the municipality of Princeton. It was decided that the Board will review any formal proposal presented for the establishment of a new group home. The Board will then make a recommendation to Town Council.

A homeowner is having difficulty paying her association fees, mortgage, and property taxes. She requests a \$5000 loan from the municipality. Ms. Procaccino suggests that the homeowner first reach out to the Crisis Ministry and Catholic Charities for a grant. Anna Christy Peacock will email further financial details of this case to Board Members for review.

All are asked to respond to the September 3<sup>rd</sup> invitation for the Mayor's gathering for all municipal Board Members, to be held at the Community Park pool.

Board Members should have received and should respond to the diversity survey.

SEND HUNGER PACKING PRINCETON is requesting book bag donations, for their annual back-to-school book bag drive.

### **Ordinance Review**

A detailed PowerPoint presentation, on the middle-income category, was created and distributed by Kate Warren. Currently, the municipality has 14 middle-income units. A discussion of the complexities and viability of maintaining affordable middle-income units in the future ensued.

Mary Agnes Proccacino motioned in favor of the retention of middle-income units in Princeton. David Schraye seconded her motion. Kate Warren, Carol Golden, and Lance Liverman also voted in favor of retaining a middle-income unit category, in Princeton's affordable housing program. Alvin McGowen voted against this proposal. Ruth Thurmond Scott abstained from the vote.

Questions regarding buy backs of middle-income units arose. Discussions of this matter will be continued in the next Board meeting.

### **Adjournment**

As there was no new business, Carol Golden motioned to adjourn. Alvin McGowen seconded her motion, with all present voting in favor of adjournment at 7:24PM.

Respectfully submitted, V Bea Snowdon