

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SOMERVILLE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

Mary Cassesso, Managing Trustee

Trustees
Ben Ewen-Campen
Michael Feloney
Kathryn Gallant
Donna Haynes
Daniel LeBlanc
Andrea Shapiro

Minutes
March 14, 2019 Meeting – 6:15pm
Somerville City Hall 3rd Floor Conference Room
93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143

Trustees present: Mary Cassesso, Ben Ewen-Campen, Mike Feloney, Kathryn Gallant, Donna Haynes, Danny LeBlanc, Andrea Shapiro

Staff attending: Heidi Burbidge, OSPCD Housing Division

Meeting started at 6:15pm with Mary Cassesso serving as chair.

1. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Trustees reviewed draft minutes of the February 14, 2019 Trust meeting that Heidi Burbidge had drafted. Ben Ewen-Campen introduced a **motion** to approve the February 14, 2019 meeting minutes which was seconded by Donna Haynes and PASSED, 6-0.

2. Communications

Update on status of Trustee reappointments and vacancies

- Heidi provided an update that the City Council's Committee on Appointments and Personnel Matters had voted to recommend the appointment of Jessica Turner to fill the open Trustee position that is reserved for a low-income Somerville tenant. Jessica is an officer in Clarendon Residents United, and has been involved in advocating for its revitalization. The Committee's recommendation was to be voted on by the full City Council at that evening's City Council meeting.

Heidi also reported that three people had submitted applications for the open Trustee position that is reserved for a representative of a Somerville non-profit organization. David Gibbs of the Community Action Agency of Somerville and Brielle Short of the Somerville Homeless Coalition submitted applications. A representative from one other Somerville non-profit organization had submitted but then later elected to withdraw due to time conflicts. The two remaining applicants were to be interviewed by the City's Appointments Advisory Committee, which would then make a recommendation to the City Council.

It was suggested that when future open Trust positions are to be filled, that staff look into whether there is a pool of potential applicants who have expressed interest in serving on the Community Preservation Committee, the Planning Board or the Zoning Board of Appeals as the range of interests and expertise of suitable candidates would overlap for each of these boards.

Andrea Shapiro reported that her appearance before the Committee on Appointments and Personnel Matters (as part of the process for reappointment to the Trust) involved a detailed round of questions. Heidi noted both Andrea and Danny LeBlanc had been interviewed by the Committee and that subsequently the Committee had recommended to the City Council that each of them be reappointed. Both recommendations had then been approved by the City Council at a full Council meeting on February 28, 2019.

Danny LeBlanc joined the meeting at 6:30pm.

Clarendon Hill – project status update

- Danny provided an update that the development team for the Clarendon Hill project had met with DHCD Secretary Mike Kenneally and Undersecretary Janelle Chan, and representatives of Jan Snel Flexible Construction (a company from the Netherlands that was described as part of the update on Clarendon Hill at the February Trust meeting). DHCD views the potential economic development impact of Jan Snel doing business in Massachusetts as a positive factor. The development team anticipates that discussions between state economic development and housing officials and Jan Snel would be known within several weeks.

Danny noted that some work on the project needs to begin in the meantime. Required work to be done soon includes the reconfiguration of the Alewife Brook Parkway intersection at Powderhouse. Danny expects that project team members will be meeting with OSPCD Transportation and Infrastructure staff soon on that subject.

3. Ongoing/Unfinished Business

Status of Trust contracts

- Heidi provided an update on contracts that have not yet been executed. One agency had yet to submit a certificate of signature authority that is needed for routing to begin to start. Mary Cassesso was going to sign three contracts that evening which would then begin routing. Trustees noted that in the future they would consider approving two or three year contract terms when feasible.

Status of need for Trust ordinance revisions

- Mike Feloney reported that OSPCD was requesting that an attorney from the City Law Department be assigned to draft Home Rule Petition (HRP) language for an ordinance allowing Somerville's Affordable Housing Trust to operate independently of the Commonwealth's enabling legislation.

Mike shared one question, noting that the City has some other (limited) funding available for housing support programs in the form of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Public Service Grant (PSG) funds. He asked whether other Trustees recollected some discussion of whether the Trust should resume funding for housing programs even though the agencies that operate them could also apply for PSG funds, and whether in doing so agencies would in effect need to "shop around". Other Trustees replied that Trustees were only considering PSG funding as a possible stopgap measure to keep projects in operation where possible. It was further noted by Trustees that a new Trust ordinance would address matters such as increasing the number of Trustees.

Mike affirmed that the HRP would be sought along with other HRP priorities. Ben noted that City Councilors were prepared to work with the local legislative delegation as soon as possible on HRP matters; Ben did not expect the HRP to be controversial among the City Councilors and that he anticipated their support in the matter.

Possible foreclosure at 59 Temple Street status update

- Mike noted that the affordable unit homeowner had continued to fall behind making required mortgage payments. Housing staff had reached out to Boston Private Bank which holds the mortgage and was waiting to hear back about the bank's current position and their thoughts on the possibility of impending foreclosure. Staff was recently told that the household had begun working with MAHA but that there is no surety that will help enough to secure the mortgage and preserve the affordable restriction on the unit. Mike noted that staff would continue to keep Trustees up to date in case action by the Trust is requested. Danny noted that SCC has worked with Boston Private Bank in similar circumstances to preserve an affordable unit.

At 6:50pm Ben Ewen-Campen left the meeting.

4. New Business

Overview of FY19 CPA RFP proposals received

Overview of Tenancy Stabilization Program proposals received

- Heidi reviewed information on the matrix that had been distributed showing all of the proposals received for the FY19 CPA RFPs and the Tenancy Stabilization Program RFP. For each proposal she noted the name of the applicant the amount requested, the description of the project and proposed use of the funds, the number of affordable units and AMI served. See the matrix attached to these minutes for details. Heidi noted that Trustees would be asked to deliberate and vote on proposals in April.

Danny announced that the Somerville Community Corporation's Annual Meeting would be held on Wednesday, March 27th at the Armory and it would also be a beginning event to mark the 50 year anniversary since SCC was established.

At 7:25pm a motion was made to adjourn which was seconded and passed, 6-0.

Next meeting date – The next meeting date will be Thursday, April 11, 2019 at 6:15pm in the Somerville City Hall 3rd floor conference room.

Documents distributed:

- Draft March Trust meeting minutes
- Summary of proposals received in response to the CPA and TSP RFPs
- Hard copies of proposals received in response to the CPA and TSP RFPs