

CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
MEETING MINUTES
May 25, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Conducted virtually via Zoom

Trustees Present via Zoom: Yi-An Huang, Chair; Peter Daly, Florrie Darwin, Elaine Thorne, Jim Stockard, Bill Tibbs, Susan Schlesinger, Elaine DeRosa

Trustees Absent: Gwen Noyes

Staff Present via Zoom: Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for Community Development; Cassie Arnaud, Senior Manager for Housing Development; Janet Haines, Housing Planner; Christine Yu, Associate Housing Development Planner

Others Present via Zoom: Aazam, Adrienne Klein, Benadette Manning, Carl Wilson, Wendy, McLaughlin, Lee Farris, Cynthia Brown, Lisa Oliver

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. Mr. Cotter explained that this meeting of the Affordable Housing Trust would be held virtually pursuant to applicable requirements, that all votes would be taken by roll call, and that there would be no public comment. He then confirmed via roll call that each participant was audible to each of the other Trust members.

MEETING MINUTES

Upon a motion moved and seconded, by roll call of eight in favor and one absent (Ms. Noyes) to approve the minutes for the meeting of Thursday, April 27, 2023.

PROJECT UPDATE

HomeBridge: 7 buyers have been approved this month and 15 resale units are in process.

52 New Street: JAS is preparing for construction closing; expected to close in the summer.

JP Federal: CHA is preparing for construction closing; expected to close in the late summer/fall.

1627 Mass Ave: HRI had their second AHO community meeting in April and are preparing to present their plans to the Planning Board for advisory design review.

Park View Cooperative: Work is underway and proceeding well.

Rindge Commons Phase 1: Construction is underway and proceeding well.

116 Norfolk Street: Construction is underway and proceeding well.

Walden Square: Winn Development is preparing for a community meeting soon to share their plans for their proposed Walden Sq II AHO development.

Inclusionary: Staff is finishing the review of 121 Broadway, which will have over 100 affordable housing rental units.

OTHER UPDATES

Homeownership Program: Staff will be reaching out to homeowners for policy feedback and will be talking to the Law Department on legal implications.

City Budget: The proposed FY24 budget is out now. The total estimated funding for the Affordable Housing Trust is \$39.5 million.

Chair Huang provided an overview of this year's city budget process and how the City needs to balance all the opportunities and tradeoffs. Councilors have expressed a deep need to financially support more affordable housing projects. Trustee DeRosa asked how the City Manager will facilitate deeper budget conversations with the Council. Chair Huang answered that there needs to be more framing contexts to the conversations to ensure that the City's money is being used in the most effective way.

Trustee Tibbs acknowledged how the Trust might do a better job with getting more involved and creating housing strategies with the City Council. Trustee Stockard commented that processes need to be more educational for Cambridge residents. Trustee Daly mentioned how the slowness from the federal government impacts the City's work. Trustee Schlesinger brought up the City's housing goals and how the City has lost a portion of middle-class residents in the last few years.

Community Preservation Act funding update

Mr. Cotter mentioned that the Community Preservation Act funding allocation process is getting underway soon. The CPA Committee has a meeting scheduled on May 31, 2023 to hear ideas from the community regarding how to recommend allocating this year's available CPA funding among affordable housing, open space and historic preservation. To date, the maximum 80% of CPA funds have been allocated to the Trust for affordable housing.

Cherry Street: Housing Staff are working with the Purchasing Department to finalize the Cherry Street Request For Proposal which has been updated to reflect comments and input from the Trust on the draft RFP presented at an earlier Trust meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Neville Place

Mr. Cotter introduced a request from Neville Community Inc (NCI) for up to \$2,445,000 to address capital needs at Neville Place assisted living. Mr. Cotter provided background on Neville Place and the City of Cambridge, including the City's previous funding and involvement, the City and Trust's representation on the Neville Board of Directors, and current financial challenges. Staff have looked at Neville Place's short-term and long-term financials, its mission and goals, and its challenges and had a range of questions for NCI, such as who they are serving, what the waiting list looks like, and how Neville Place will financially support itself in the future.

Mr. Cotter proposed continuing conversations with Neville Place to ensure its stability and creating a task force specifically for this project. Staff is recommending that the Trust approve of Neville Place's funding request subject to meeting conditions set out in the memo including setting up a task force to look at need and resident selection and how best to use of available project based vouchers.

Trustee Darwin asked why some of the vouchers were not used. Mr. Cotter answered that there were eligibility issues that some applicants were not able to meet. Getting help for applicants to meet the eligibility requirements is an area staff have discussed with Neville Place. Trustee Stockard reminded everyone that the cost of housing and services are quite high, and that vouchers can only be used for housing. He proposed that there needs to be a streamlined process that makes it clear and easy for applicants to get financial support. Trustee Darwin asked if today's funding request will go towards services. Mr. Cotter answered no. Many Trustees expressed support to fund Neville Place and thanked the staff for their work.

Upon a motion moved and seconded, by a roll call of eight in favor (Mr. Huang, Ms. Thorne, Mr. Daly, Ms. Darwin, Ms. DeRosa, Ms. Schlesinger, Mr. Stockard, Mr. Tibbs) and one absent (Ms. Noyes), it was:

VOTED: To approve the request of \$2,445,000 in Trust financing to address immediate capital repairs and expected capital needs at Neville Place over the next five years, as outlined and subject to the terms and conditions set out in the Trust meeting materials.

Mr. Cotter mentioned that the next Trust meeting may be in-person, but staff will reach out to the Trust later to confirm.

Upon a motion moved, seconded, and approved by a roll call of eight in favor with one absent (Ms. Noyes) to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 22, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting Materials:

- Agenda
- Meeting Minutes from the Trust's April 27, 2023 meeting
- Project Update
- Neville Place Memo