



## Affordable Housing Advisory Commission Meeting

April 15, 2020

7:00 PM

Remote Meeting Minutes



Present: Chair Quinton Harper, Cain Twyman, Amy Singleton, Pamela Atwood, Terri Buckner.  
Also Present: Council Liaison Damon Seils, Council Member Barbara Foushee, Staff Liaison Rebecca Buzzard  
Absent: Gabe Vinas, Betty Curry

### **I. Welcome**

Chair, Quinton Harper, welcomed everyone, including new member, Pamela Atwood.

### **II. Consider Approval of February Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Cain Twyman and seconded by Amy Singleton. All voted in favor, absent two.

### **III. COVID-19 Staff Update**

Rebecca Buzzard provided an update on the Town's COVID-19 response efforts and provided an opportunity for the Commission members to ask questions. She noted a food collection site had been set up at Town Hall and that a Carrboro food distribution site was being planned. She also provided information on additional food distribution sites in our region. Rebecca advised the Commission that hand washing stations have been set up in Town and talked about efforts to help the homeless population. She also stated that information about evictions during COVID-19 is being distributed to low income housing neighborhoods. Quinton asked the AHAC members to refer community members in need of assistance to the Town.

### **IV. Rental and Utility Deposit Assistance Update**

Rebecca provided an overview of the updated proposal to raise the maximum grant award and to streamline the process, as well as the background related to the proposed changes. Per Amy Singleton's request, the issue was discussed after the budget and fund applications were reviewed in order to better understand the amount of money available. The AHAC discussed their previous recommendations of raising the maximum award to \$1,500 and providing a fee to the nonprofit administering the applications. Rebecca explained that these recommendations did not go to Council for consideration because the nonprofit decided to no longer administer the program, except for their members. In light of this, the County and Towns began working together to streamline and align the region's rental assistance programs and to centralize the process with the County. Rebecca said these new changes would be effective upon approval from the Council. After discussion, Cain Twyman made a motion to recommend streamlining the process and increasing the maximum award for rental assistance to \$2000. The motion was seconded by Terri Buckner. All voted in favor, absent two.

### **V. Review and Recommendations of AHSRF applications**

Rebecca gave a brief introduction and invited Dan Sargent, Executive Director, to provide an overview of Rebuilding Together of the Triangle's application. They requested \$49,745 to conduct

critical repairs on eight homes owned by low-income homeowners in Carrboro. The homes were selected through their work with the Orange County Home Preservation Coalition. He noted that they have matching funds provided from Central Piedmont Community Action for weatherization, and other non-profit groups and funders as well. Quinton asked how partial funding would impact their work. Dan said they'd have to put part of the project on hold, and while a couple of homes could be put off for a few months, others cannot, or have already been waiting for a long time. Quinton noted that without these funds, the homeowners would have no other option to get their homes repaired.

Grace Johnston, Grants Manager, presented for Habitat for Humanity of Orange County. Their request was for \$19,746 to conduct critical home repairs on four homes owned by low-income homeowners in Carrboro. These homes were also selected through the Orange County Home Preservation Coalition. One home has received funds from the Town for a previous critical repair. Grace explained that Habitat had previously conducted a repair on one portion of the roof. Since then, other portions of the roof were damaged. Quinton asked how people hear about Habitat's critical repair program. Grace said that Habitat has performed repair work since 2010 and that much of the information is spread through word of mouth.

Dan Levine, Director of Business Development & Project Management, for the Community Center for Self-Help, presented their application for their work in the Northside Initiative, a collaborative with the Marian Cheek Jackson Center and other nonprofits and organizations. The AHAC asked questions about the different activities included in the application. Terri asked for more detail about Self-Help's proposal to evaluate uses for Town-owned land in the Lloyd-Broad community.

Dan indicated that the work is of mutual interest to Carrboro and the non-profits in terms of affordable housing. He said that the work would require an architect, civil engineer and staff contractor. Given the current limits of the AHSRF budget, Quinton asked which activities are urgent and if they could come back next fiscal year to request additional funding. Dan responded that he hoped to have the Town as key partner in the overall program, including critical repairs and the creation and preservation of affordable housing. Pam Atwood asked about the money requested for tax workshops. Dan said the workshops include working with people who are thinking about the next use for their property – wills clinics, property tax relief, etc. Terri inquired about energy efficiency and Dan noted that any repair includes this consideration. He noted that Self Help works more as a coordinator in these projects. Terri encouraged him to also apply to the Climate Action Fund.

EmPOWERment and Community Home Trust did not have representatives present their applications.

As the AHAC turned to considering the applications, Quinton stated that a guiding question should be how much the AHAC wants to set aside for rental assistance. Cain stated a preference for increasing the amount set aside for rental assistance, mentioning anecdotal data from people who are not able to work because of the COVID-19 crisis. Amy stated a preference for keeping some money in reserve for unanticipated needs. She noted that this is the last funding cycle and was worried about not having as much money next year. Council Member Damon Seils clarified that the money AHAC has been working with is the full amount and that the amount of money available to the fund should not be changed next year.

Terri Buckner recommended not funding the Community Home Trust (CHT) proposal, and putting the balance in rental assistance and reserves. Her justification for this suggestion was a preference for serving lower income households, and that CHT did not have a specific project in mind. Cain stated that she felt funding EmPOWERment was important. Amy agreed with Terri because CHT did not have a specific property in mind and all other applicants served lower income brackets. Pam stated that additional funds for rental assistance would be needed in the future.

The AHAC discussed funding levels for the proposals. They decided to fully fund EmPOWERment, Rebuilding Together of the Triangle, and Habitat for Humanity of Orange County. They decided to partially fund Self-Help and asked them to prioritize their activities; they declined to fund CHT. These decisions allowed for modest reserves and the allocation for rental assistance funds for the remainder of the fiscal year (June 30). Amy made a motion to recommend the applications, as discussed and indicated on the grant award spreadsheet. The motion was seconded by Terri. Voted all in favor, absent two.

#### **VI. Review of FY21 proposed budget**

The AHAC reviewed the draft budget for the Affordable Housing Special Revenue Fund FY20-21. Discussion revolved around interlocal funding, in particular Community Home Trust. Council Member Seils affirmed that The Landings was not included in Carrboro's portion of CHT funding and that the Council has not resolved the question of increasing funds to accurately reflect the number of CHT units located in Carrboro. Several members indicated they felt the CHT funding level was excessive compared to other nonprofits with Carrboro units. Council Member Seils reiterated that the model of support for CHT is a local partnership between the Towns of Carrboro, Chapel Hill and Orange County, but that he would express the AHAC's concern to the Town Council.

Rebecca answered questions about funding levels for the advisory board, deferred loan, and acquisition line items. Terri indicated her concern that the allocation for critical repairs was not high enough. General support was given for the budget as presented.

#### **VII. Election of Vice-Chair**

The election of a Vice-Chair was revisited. Previous election attempts ended in a tie, with members absent for the vote. Nominees are Cain Twyman and Amy Singleton. The nominees shared their desire to serve and qualifications.

Because the current Vice-Chair will continue to serve until a new Vice-Chair is elected, and because two members are absent, Quinton made a motion to table the vote until the next meeting when more members are present. Cain seconded the motion. Voted all in favor, absent two.

#### **VIII. Additional comments/questions**

Rebecca listed the affordable housing related Town Council Items that would be on the April 21<sup>st</sup> agenda.

Terri Buckner made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Amy Singleton. All voted in favor, absent two.