

Princeton Housing Board
Monthly Meeting
March 10, 2015
Monument Hall – East Meeting Room
One Monument Drive, Princeton, NJ 08542

Present:

Board Members:

Carol Golden
Alvin, McGowen, Chairman
Omar Nishstar
David Schrayner, Vice Chairman
Ruth Thurmond Scott
Mary Agnes Procaccino
Kate Warren

Staff:

Christy Peacock, Coordinator
Ed Schmeirer, Esq.
V Bea Snowdon
Ed Truscelli, PCH

Guest:

Wilma Solomon, NIOT

Absent:

Lance Liverman
Colin Vonvorys

I. CALL TO ORDER - Open Public Meeting Statement

At 5:40PM, Chairman McGowen called the meeting of the Princeton Housing Board to order by reading: “This is the regular meeting of the Princeton Housing Board for March 10th. 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 Princeton Packet and Town Topics.”.

Wilma Solomon, a Princeton resident and NIOT member for 15 years, joined the table as a guest. Chairman McGowen and all the Board members present welcomed her.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman McGowen called for public comment. With no response heard from the public, the meeting continued.

III. MINUTES – February 10, 2015

Ms. Procaccino accepted Ms. Warren’s motion to accept the February minutes, revised with minor corrections provided by Ms. Peacock and Mr. Truscelli. Ms. Golden abstained from the vote on this motion, due to her absence in February. All others present voted in favor of acceptance.

IV. PRINCETON COMMUNITY HOUSING (PCH) REPORT

The March 9, 2015 Princeton Affordable Rentals Status Report was distributed, by Mr. Truscelli:

Princeton Administrative Agent Rentals: 301 applicants are currently on the rental waiting list. The number of total applicants dropped because some applicants contacted are no longer interested in housing. 15 new applications were received in the past month. 13 of those applicants have been accepted, 2 were determined to be incomplete.

Princeton Community Housing Rentals: 4 applications were received for Elm Court, 3 for Harriet Bryan House, and 19 applications were received for Griggs Farm.

The PCH files and waitlist will be turned over to COPPERWOOD. If requested and approved by Princeton, another agent may manage the affordable units in COPPERWOOD.

195 applicants are on the MERWICK STANWORTH waitlist, for the 40 affordable PHASE II units.

V. Business

A. Applicant Reporting

Ms. Peacock reports that graphs showing all Housing Department activity are being created on REVELSTONE software. The process used on REVELSTONE still reports some families in duplicate or triplicate.

Members of the Board request a precise count of the total of how many households have applied and are on the waiting list each month. Since knowing the true number of households is essential for proper planning, Ms. Warren volunteered a professional coder to work on this report shortfall and information need. It is hoped that soon the Board will know the correct count.

B. Legal

NJ Housing Legislation - COAH

The NJ Supreme Court has issued its opinion about what to do with COAH's process. Since, in the Court's opinion, COAH did not fulfill its obligation, the Court decided to roll back the legislation to rely on pre-1985 processes. This, in effect, bypasses COAH and the Fair Housing Act of 1985. This new decision returns everything to the court, as it relies on court decisions and court approved plans for housing. A stay of 90 days has been granted, to give everyone time to consider these changes and appoint new regional Judges for housing matters.

Fair share advocates believe the statewide obligation is more than 200,000 units. Rutgers experts provide lower estimates. State level planners will have to determine what is needed and then allocate these numbers regionally. This process will take time.

Group Home

Mr. Schmeirer reports that the YCS group home proposal is moving forward. The paperwork, to review this purchase for a final motion, will soon be presented to Council. Princeton's payment plan is to either bond the project or write a check by May 1. The *Return Home New Jersey Program* ruling that inspired this purchase has now been reversed, so that many of the 500 residents at risk of displacement may now return to Pennsylvania.

Board members requested full disclosure from legal counsel of the funding mechanism to be used, prior to this purchase.

Peck Place

We are awaiting a counter-proposal for the purchase of this multi-unit dwelling. Mr. Truscelli will meet with Town representatives next week, about a possible partnership for Peck's Place funding and management.

218BH and 233 BH

The plan to purchase the mortgage of 218BH is moving forward, to stop foreclosure. The bank is not cooperating with numerous requests from Princeton to buy the mortgage. Legal work on the 233 BH mortgage purchase is also ongoing.

105HA

The lawsuit is filed for 105HA. All family members will be served with notices now in the Sheriffs' hands. Princeton hopes to establish an administrator for the estate with this process. If no one steps up, a professional representative will be appointed by the court and will be paid from the proceeds.

C. BOARD CHAIR/ VICE CHAIR REPORT

Chairman McGowen reported that the "Financial Literacy and Education Workshop for Tenants and Applicants" was "excellent". Held on Saturday March 7th, 31 applicants, staff members, and Board members attended. Survey results from the applicants in attendance were overwhelmingly positive.

Ms. Warren reports the ordinance will soon be ready for review by Council. Organizational items that remain in need of attention, such as the website, flyer, mission statement, and policy for middle income, were noted.

D. AFFORDABLE HOUSING STATUS REPORT

Activity

The Affordable Housing Status Report was distributed. It reported 4 affordable units for sale and 3 now under contract.

Neighborhood Meeting

Chairman McGowen will present the Affordable Housing Status Report at a neighborhood meeting this week

137GF

\$16,911.00 is needed for the purchase of 137GF, to recapture the full amount for the unit. Ms. Warren motioned to approve \$16,911.00 for this acquisition. Ruth Thurmond Scott seconded this motion, with all eligible members voting in favor of the action.

Returns to Trust Fund

It is reported that the sale of 41BE will return \$29,447.00 to the Housing Trust Fund.

Griggs Farm Deck Repairs

A discussion of desk repairs focused on the need of the owner at 44BE. He cannot consider his deck in relation to the other decks, because he cannot wait for a full repair. Six decks now have \$7,000 in escrow, which is the number based on the prevailing wage rate for repairs based on the report to the Homeowners Association.

The Board requests that the Owner of 44BE provide a sealed, written report from a licensed PE estimating the cost of the deck repair. If the amount in the sealed report is less than the \$7,000 escrowed, the Board agrees to return any balance below the escrow.

Mr. Truscelli and Mr. Schraye have agreed to review all information available to determine appropriate options to repair any existing deck needs.

Oral History

Ms. Golden reported that the oral history project will be scheduled by University students.

Griggs farm Transportation issue

Mr. Nistar shared a letter from a resident and concerns that, after 5PM, no bus goes to Griggs Farm. A resident requests that the *FreeB* come to Griggs Farm. The Board determined that the matter needs review by the Transit and Transportation committee. Kate Warren volunteered to send a letter from the Board to that committee.

Ms. Proccacino suggested that local senior citizens use the *Crosstown62* service. A ride is \$3 each way and free to a doctor's offices and the hospital. Users have to call in 1 or 2 days beforehand to schedule this service. With that advance planning, this system is designed to work like a taxi.

COPPERWOOD Hardships

To address the hardships caused by fees to some residents, Chairman McGowen will send the letter from the Board to COPPERWOOD next week.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Warren's motion to adjourn was seconded by Ms. Proccacino. With all voting in favor of adjournment, the meeting ended at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted, V Bea Snowdon