



**PRINCETON MUNICIPAL  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
February 14, 2023– VIRTUAL MEETING**

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The regular meeting of the Princeton Affordable Housing Board was called to order by Chair Kate Warren at 5:30 pm. She recited the announcement in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: “*In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, 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 with the Clerk’s Office and by emailing copies to the Princeton Packet and the Town Topics.*”

Adequate notice as well as electronic notice of this meeting was provided in accordance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act and State regulations governing remote public meetings. The notice included the time, date and location of the meeting and clear and concise instructions for accessing the meeting via computer, smart device, or telephone. The agenda and all related documents and other materials were posted electronically on Princeton's meeting portal and made available for download at least forty-eight hours prior to the Meeting.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Dosier Hammond, Maria Juega, Lance Liverman, Mary Agnes Procaccino, Colin Vonvorvys, Kate Warren, Councilman Leighton Newlin, Carol Golden (1), Lex Kochmann(2), Matt Mleczek(3)

Excused:

Quorum: 10

Also present: Lewis Hurd (PAH), Ed Schmierer, Esq., Ed Truscelli, (PCH) and Claribel Santiago (PCH)

***Public Participants:***

Larry Spruill (Human Services Board), Michael Floyd, Wilma Solomon, Earlene Baumunk, Fay Lochmann, Fern Spruill, Natalia Zorrilla

**Public Comments**

*Earlene Baumunk*, Avalon Resident. Ms. Baumunk reported that Avalon posted an eviction notice on the front door and on the door of Unit 1208. She followed up and asked about the eviction. Chair Warren stated that the eviction issue will be discussed later in the meeting.

*Fay Lochmann* asked how income is calculated for applicants to the Pearl Senior Affordable Housing units at Thanet Circle. Chair Warren responded that income calculations are based on the UHAC regulations that can be found on Princeton’s website.

**Status Reports from CGPH, PCH and PAH**

***Princeton Affordable Housing*** (PAH), Lewis Hurd  
*Washington Oaks Resident*

Mr. Hurd reported that he is working with Washington Oaks residents’ to get their fire sprinklers certified.

Mr. Hurd met with Carnegie Bank. The Bank has some special Affordable Housing programs available. They are interested in developing a relationship with Princeton.

### ***Sales***

Mr. Hurd reported that currently there are three properties for sale and that there will be a fourth unit in April:

- 121 Hamilton Ave
- 425 Brick House
- 92 Clay Street

Mr. Hurd sent flyers to housing/counseling agencies that may have clients interested in purchasing an affordable home. He also sent information to those on the waiting list.

Mr. Hurd reported that they have been promoting the Anchor Relief program.

Mr. Hurd reported that he met with Habitat for Humanity (HH) regarding their neighborhood revitalization program, which falls in line with our rehabilitation program. He is building up a relationship with HH and will work with the Princeton residents HH cannot service but may be eligible for our program.

Ms. Juega announced that she is volunteering with the United Way Tax Preparation program. The program offers free tax preparation and assistance with filing for the Anchor Program.

### ***PCH Development Corporation***

Ed Truscelli and Claribel Santiago

Chair Warren stated that PCH has a proposal to increase the rents to units on Leigh Avenue that they manage on behalf of Princeton. There had not been a rent increase during COVID. Ms. Santiago sent a letter to the Board regarding a rent increase to review prior to the Board meeting.

Mr. Truscelli shared his screen showing the PCH status report; Ms. Santiago summarized the PCH rental updates.

There was discussion on how Avalon Bay reports their vacancies; Ms. Juega would like to see additional details reported from Avalon Bay like we receive from PCH. Mr. Schmierer will reach out to Megan York of Community Grants, Planning & Housing – the Avalon Bay administrative agent - to request more detailed information.

Ms. Santiago shared her screen with the letter she sent to Mr. Hurd regarding the rent increase for Leigh Avenue. The Leigh Avenue rentals are owned by Princeton. Mr. Truscelli explained that although PCH does not require approval from this Board to increase the rents, as a courtesy they are requesting input from the Board. The last increase was around 2017. The proposed increase will be used to augment the reserve account for the condo association. Funds are necessary for maintenance and repairs, which has been affected by the increase of materials and supplies. Ms. Santiago stated that they are seeking a 3% rent increase.

Chair Warren opened up the topic for discussion.

The motion to make a recommendation to the Mayor and Council in support of the 3% rent increase as presented was first moved by Mr. Liverman, seconded by Ms. Procaccino

*Roll Call in Favor:* Juega, Hammond, Liverman, Procaccino, Vonvorys, Newlin, Warren

### ***Evictions***

Chair Warren opened the discussion regarding evictions. Given that information on Affordable tenants' potential eviction falls within confidentiality mandates, such notice to the Board would require permission from the tenant. Chair Warren asked Mr. Schmierer if it might be possible at the time of lease signing that the lease holder might also sign a document authorizing information be provided to Affordable Housing regarding eviction notices. This may allow us to offer rental assistance. Mr. Schmierer opined that there are likely ways that the Board may be able to assist tenants before they get to the point of being evicted. Mr. Truscelli added that PCH already provides a service to assist tenants. Mr. Hurd added that we have a component in Human Services to assist those in financial need.

There was discussion on what we might do: we can reach out to tenants needing assistance; we can encourage them to come to us for help. Ms. Golden explained how the Housing Stability Program under Human Services works. Mr. Truscelli commented that the landlords need to know about the Coalition and can contact the Coalition on behalf of tenants who are behind in rents. Ms. Procaccino stated that the residents cannot come in last minute for assistance; they have to be aware of the time line to receive assistance.

Ms. Juega opined that there is not one organization taking responsibility to make the connection with residents. As a Princeton resident, at a recent Council meeting Ms. Juega suggested to the Council that the Municipality create a low income assistance entity that would take the responsibility and make the outreach into the community. She opined that when this entity is created, this Board through the Affordable Housing Department should partner with this entity.

### ***Maple/Franklin Development***

Councilman Newlin confirmed that the sale of Maple/Franklin to the Municipality from the Housing Authority was introduced to Council the previous evening. The public hearing regarding this transaction will be at the next Council meeting.

### ***Master Plan Subcommittees***

Chair Warren is still waiting for Justin Lekso to share the date of the next public meeting. Chair Warren asked the Board to review the subcommittees' findings and share any concerns with her by week's end and then forward the Board's recommendations to Mr. Lesko.

### ***ISLES– Financial Literacy Update***

Chair Warren reminded the Board that the Municipality is required to provide financial literacy counseling mandated by COAH, which requires administrative agents to provide this counseling to Affordable residents. PCH has previously shared they are considering becoming a certified financial counseling agent to provide this service; however they have requested that the Board let them know what we are looking for in terms of that counseling. If PCH cannot offer the service, they may be able to hire someone to oversee a financial literacy program to affordable households.

Ms. Juega, Mr. Hammond, Mr. Hurd and Ms. Golden spoke with ISLES regarding the pilot program and received feedback. Ms. Juega provided an update on the project and explained what is needed to get the project out into the community. There will be various stages: outreach, case management, and financial counseling. There was discussion regarding who would be providing some of these services and who would be overseeing the process. Ms. Kochmann suggested we research some of the HUD approved financial counseling agencies. She also suggested we reach out to those wait-listed applicants who are closest to be chosen next. Mr. Liverman stated that the scope of work outlined by Ms. Juega is beyond the scope of this Boards' responsibilities. Marketing the program into the community is important to get



participants to sign up for the program. Next steps for the subcommittee is to speak with Mr. Truscelli and then Rho Jones, Human Services Director.

Ms. Procaccino announced that Arm In Arm will be hosting a counseling program open to everyone beginning April 5, 2023 for six weeks. There is a \$100 incentive to anyone who attends four of the six sessions. Topics will include budget, finance, and increasing your credit score. Workshops will be presented by Cynthia Menendez, first Human Services Director for Princeton.

### ***UHAC Tutorial***

Chair Warren, as a refresher, asked Mr. Schmierer to provide a summary of the UHAC regulations. Chair Warren had provided the link to the current UHAC to Board members prior to the meeting. Due to time, the tutorial was tabled and will be on the agenda for the March Board meeting. The Board was encouraged to review the UHAC in preparation for the March meeting.

Chair Warren asked that members review the shared reports from the three Master Plan committees and provide feedback to her by the end of the week. She will send our recommendations to Justin Lesko.

Congratulations were shared with Attorney Schmierer who is being honored as the 2023 recipient of the David McAlpin Humanitarian Award of the Habitat for Humanity of South Central New Jersey.

**Approval of Minutes**–January 10, 2023 – Tabled

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 pm was first moved by Mr. Vonvorys, seconded by Ms. Kochmann, all in favor by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted by:

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*Julie M. Moy*  
Recording Secretary