Minutes of Affordable Housing Committee and HOH Affordable HDFC of October 14, 2021

7:30 PM via Zoom

Attendance:

Afreen Alam Absent

Mark Cassella Absent

Tom Donohoe \* Absent

Nick Frascone \* Absent

Christina Griffin Absent

James Keaney Present

Bob Licht\* Absent

Ira Lichtiger\* Present

Arthur Riolo\* Absent

Andrew Smith \* Present

Elise Smith\* Absent

Patty Speranza \* Present

Bettina Speyer Present

Patrick Sullivan Present

Ernesto Vigoreaux Present

\* Member of Hastings-on-Hudson Affordable Housing Development Fund Co., Inc.

Tom Speyer, Planning Board Absent

Rose Noonan, Housing Action Council Present

Minutes were taken by Patricia Speranza.

Ira called the meeting to order at 7:42 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

Bettina moved that the minutes of the September 9, 2021 meeting be accepted. The motion was seconded by Jim. The motion was unanimously approved.

1. ADU Information Document

The document to be distributed to the public to encourage the establishment of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU’s) has been finalized. It was suggested that an email with the document be sent out to those on the Village’s email distribution list. Patty will check with Raf to find out how to make that happen. Patrick created a summary of the Village’s ADU law which will accompany the piece. Bettina agreed to reach out to the Building Department to obtain user-friendly information about the process to create an ADU.

1. 422 Warburton Avenue

Issues were raised about the process which the Richman Management Company is using to fill vacancies in the 422 building. Correspondence was received that the emails outling the process were confusing and not at all helpful in identifying the income eligibility requirements for each of the vacant units. There was little description provided beyond the number of bedrooms, rent a few photos and a video. Rose reported that she received no response when she expressed interest in obtaining a unit. One individual complained that she should never have been asked to pay the $45 credit check fee, since her express application showed that her income was too high to qualify.

It was suggested that a template be developed which Richman could use to outline the steps in the process to obtain a unit. A flyer could be developed which would include the number of bedrooms, rent, and income limitations. Ira/Rose will set up a meeting to discuss these issues with Richman. It would be good know if individuals on the Village’s interest list are currently being considered for the vacant units.

1. Elise Smith

It was announced that Elise Smith has resigned from the Affordable Housing Committee. Patty will send a note of appreciation to Elise from the Committee/Fund. Elise was one of the original members of the Affordable Housing Committee and has served as secretary for many, many years.

It was noted that Arthur will be making the Mayor aware that we have a vacancy on the Committee.

(Subsequent to the meeting, Tom Donohoe also resigned from the Affordable Housing Committee. His resignation was also noted to Mayor as a second vacancy on the Committee.

Patty is also sending a thank you note to Tom for his service.)

1. Community Presentation on Affordable Housing

Given the current situation surrounding the transmission of COVID-19, it was decided to postpone the Affordable Housing Forum tentatively scheduled for November 14th until Spring 2022. All involved felt that an in-person presentation of the Affordable Housing issues in Hastings would be more effective than a virtual presentation. The postponement of the event provides the group with additional time to re-consider the event. Rather than showing a film on affordable housing, perhaps the content should be more focused on Accessory Dwelling Units.

Patty and Bettina will cancel the speakers and venue which had been reserved for the November program.

1. ADU’s Tax and Finance Issues at the State Level

Rose was asked to report on any items circulating through NYS pertaining to the establishment of ADU’s and tax and financial implications. Rose knew of nothing beyond the state law which was being considered. Andrew mentioned that he is following this item.

1. Miscellaneous
2. Bettina called everyone’s attention to the article she forwarded about the establishment of a “Teachers’ Village” in Hartford, CT. That development contains 60 units, 70% with market rate rents and 30% affordable rents. The article can be found here: <https://www.courant.com/business/hc-biz-clb-hartford-teachers-village-leasing-20191030-asielt2nnrgbbedhowd64opj2e-story.html>
3. There was some discussion about how to more effectively handle the Zoom portion of our meetings. Patty will check with the Village to determine if we can use the Village Zoom account to conduct our meetings.

Respectfully submitted.

Patricia Speranza

**New business**:

Beth Haddock, first time on the committee and interested in knowing if there are any representatives from organizations.

Vanessa Merton would like to report back to the Hastings Democratic committee on what this HAHC is doing, where we are, what proposals are coming etc..

Vanessa Merton asked what the current laws in HoH were in terms of stock of affordable housing which led to a conversation which ultimately raised the question, whether we should propose to the Mayor and Trustee an increase from 15% to 25% of affordable housing for new constructions.

According to Jim, the Trustees are looking at reviewing the comprehensive plan and suggested that the HAHC put together their wish list to be changed/ included.

**Old business**:

1. Update on 422 Warburton: Ira has been in touch with Richmond (the management company of the building) apparently the issues are related to Geothermal which has not been cooling the building properly. They will be abandoning Geothermal and looking into other cooling options. Ira being absent, will update at the next meeting.
2. Bettina updated the committee on the work which was done by the sub committee regarding our “awareness” event which will hopefully take place on Sunday November 14 at the Library in Hastings with a showing of a short film followed by a panel of prestigious speakers. Stay tuned.
3. Accessible Dwelling Unit (ADU) legislation. While the committee had sent a letter in July outlining possible changes to the current Local Law 12,, concerning Chapter 295, the Village attorney replied saying that the law had been changed. The committee feels that clarification should be made as the law is still not clear and only addresses one of the items it had raised. Patrick Sullivan will draft a new letter to the Village trying to gain a change of semantics to make it clearer to applicants. Lengthy discussions ensued on the particular issue of renewing permits every 3-years. Tom reminded us that the renewal period has been simplified so it’s only reviewed by the building inspector. Consensus that this question is complicated. From the perspective of Landlords it might be an issue, but for the safety of all including tenants, it might be a good idea to leave it “as is” in the current law.
4. Bettina, Patrick and Ernesto agreed that someone from the Committee should write a user-friendly leaflet explaining the procedures, in view of the fact that law is not clear.
5. Patty updated the committee saying that a lot of the people who did not join lately were not joining because of zoom and reiterated that we should meet in person. Arthur will find out from the Village whether we can have an “in person” and/or hybrid meeting and will report back to us.
6. Vanessa Merton wanted to know whether the HAHC had a policy when it came to ZBA or PB or BT decisions with land use and properties that might have implications on affordable housing. Tom Speyer, is the liaison with the PB and reports both ways, if/when an issue were to come up.
7. Proposed changes to multi-family office district to legalize smaller units – on Warburton from Washington to Nodine. Jim Metzger and Vanessa Merton both concerned that the Village did not consult with the HAHC on this topic. The Board of trustees did not vote on ths change of zoning but the HAHC did not take a position on this, assuming that the motivation of the Board of trustees would be to create more affordable housing. Patty offered some historic perspective to the Village attorney and the trustees on that neighborhood and also explained that this committee focuses on specific criterias pertaining to affordable housing.

Meeting was stopped abruptly at 8.50 as it was hijacked by zoom bombers!