

Fiscal Year 2020
Burlington Housing Trust Fund (HTF) Administrative Committee (HTFAC)
Meeting Minutes

Approved

Meeting Date/Time: January 30, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Location: Burlington City Hall, 149 Church Street, Third Floor, Champlain Room, Burlington, Vermont

Present: City Councilor Brian Pine
Mayor's Office Communications and Projects Coordinator Olivia LaVecchia
Community & Economic Development Office (CEDO) Director Luke McGowan
CEDO Acting Assistant Director for Administration and Finance Todd Rawlings

Absent: None

Also Present: Mary Mougey (Ethan Allen Residence (EAR))
Cameron Segal (EAR)
Tamira Martel (Committee On Temporary Shelter (COTS))

Meeting called to order: by Director McGowan at 10:06 a.m.

Agenda: Motion made by Coordinator LaVecchia to accept the Agenda as drafted, seconded by Councilor Pine. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

- a. **Minutes:** Motion made by Councilor Pine to accept draft minutes for the meeting dated December 19, 2019, seconded by Coordinator LaVecchia. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Forum: No members of the public wished to speak

New Business:

- a. **Review/Discuss FY20 Grant Proposals**

Discussion:

Project Grant Applications

- **Ethan Allen Residence/Accessible Bathroom:**
 - Coordinator LaVecchia asked whether the HTF hadn't already funded a bathroom at this facility.

- Cameron Segal said that it had, but was on another floor and the bathroom in the application does not meet ADA standards. Funds for capital improvements are limited because EAR is reimbursed at a lower rate compared to a private facility because they house residents on Medicaid.
- Mary Mougey said that EAR's mission includes serving many low income residents and it does not wish to change its mission. They have cut staff in an effort to remain sustainable. EAR has seen a significant demographic change in those they serve: residents are staying in their homes longer and so when they come to EAR they are older and need more care. EAR does not have staff to chase grants.
- Coordinator LaVecchia asked how many residents were at this facility.
- Mary Mougey said that there were 40 residents in their 60's up to 100 years old. If the application is approved, EAR will have two fully functional showers. Each resident's room has a ½ bath.
- Councilor Pine asked whether EAR had made organizational changes recently.
- Mary Mougey said that there are now three properties with a central office. This change was necessary to cut costs. EAR has increased nursing staffing. EAR has very little cash reserves and is looking to increase the fundraising on the board.
- Councilor Pine asked whether the State was aware of their challenges.
- Mary Mougey said that they were and that fundraising for facilities like theirs can be difficult since foundations often do not want to fund facilities that serve elders.
- **Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS)/The Wilson:**
 - Councilor Pine said that the work that COTS does is valuable and that the project is worthy of support, but the HTF is primarily focused on creating new affordable units and services or preserving affordability through substantial rehabilitation. Moving forward the HTF should be focused on new units or the preservation of at risk affordable housing. Councilor Pine said he is concerned that the HTF will be used for maintenance.
 - Tamira Martel said that it has been 30 years since the City invested in the Wilson. The building serves a very vulnerable high risk population and preservation of the building is critical. This is a capital improvement and COTS has set aside \$100,000 for that rehabilitation. The population at the Wilson is skewing older, more with physical disabilities, more female residents, and more transgender residents. COTS heavily subsidizes its rental properties: some residents only pay \$150 per month for rent and COTS will pay rent when tenants go to rehab.
 - Coordinator LaVecchia asked what other sources might be available for improvements.

- Tamira Martel said that most of the funding is from private individuals, but COTS applies to the State for emergencies. The Wilson is 200 years old.
- Councilor Pine asked when the project would start.
- Tamira Martel said it will start in June. COTS is applying for funding from TD Bank. Federal sources only make up 1% of COTS' budget.
- Coordinator LaVecchia suggested that COTS apply for Community Development Block Grant funds.
- Councilor Pine asked whether the Wilson serves primarily Burlington residents.
- Tamira Martel said that community origin is hard to pin down for this population.
- Councilor Pine asked for a description of the proposed project.
- Tamira Martel said that it is now comprised of 200 square foot single room occupancy units with a shared bathroom. This shared bathroom is not comfortable or functional for this the new demographic currently served by the Wilson. The design will be trauma informed. Project will include energy efficiency and life safety improvements.
- Councilor Pine said that Burlington Electric could help with incentives, which given who the Wilson serves, could be substantial.
- Tamira Martel said that COTS hopes to do total rehab in ten years and add an elevator.

Discussion: [see above]

Motion made by Coordinator LaVecchia to fund the **Ethan Allen Residence/Accessible Bathroom** project for \$26,000.00 and the **Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS)/The Wilson** project for \$30,000.00. Seconded by Councilor Pine. Motion passed unanimously.

b. Discuss Housing Trust Fund Allocation Process

- Director McGowan said he would like to discuss the allocation process and whether we can agree on some guiding principles. For example, should creation of new units be preferred over preservation? Should the rubric be simplified?
- Coordinator LaVecchia asked whether the HTF should be a sole funding source. How can it be a game changing award?
- Councilor Pine said he had understood that some projects had a leverage ratio of 1:30. Recent years have seen a number of large projects with many new units, but this high level of production cannot be sustained. Sometimes the HTF needs to be the sole source.

- Coordinator LaVecchia said that projects which do not have access to other housing dollars should have preference for the Housing Trust Funds.

Upcoming meetings:

Discussion: None.

Adjournment: Motion made by Councilor Pine to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Coordinator LaVecchia. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:
Todd Rawlings
Housing Trust Fund Staff