

Burlington Housing Trust Fund (HTF) Administrative Committee (HTFAC)

Fiscal Year 2024 Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date/Time: January 12, 2024 at 2:00 pm

Meeting Location: City Hall, 149 Church Street, Bushor Conference Room and virtually via Zoom

Present: City Councilor Zoraya Hightower Community Economic and Development Office (CEDO) Director Brian Pine; Mayor's Office Chief of Staff Jordan Redell (Zoom);

Absent: None

Also Present: Rebeka Lawrence-Gomez (CEDO); Bethany Whitlock (CEDO); Kim Parsons (Dismas House); Julie Curtin (Champlain Housing Trust (CHT); Miranda Lescaze (CHT); Chris Donnelly (CHT); John Michael Longworth (COTS); Connor Timmons (HomeShare Vermont); Hayley Shriner (Lighthouse Commons); Lauren Marino (Cathedral Square); Alison Johnson (Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity)

Called to order: by Director Pine at 2:13pm

1. Agenda

A. Old Business

Director Pine opened the meeting with introductions and gave a short introduction to the Burlington Housing Trust fund and how it is funded. He clarified that CEDO staff (Rebeka Lawrence-Gomez and Bethany Whitlock) did the scoring this year, but that Rebeka did not review the Pathways application because of being on their board.

Motion made by Director Pine to approve the minutes from the 12/22/22 meeting. *Seconded by Chief of Staff Jordan Redell, who noted that she had not been presented at that meeting. **Motion passed unanimously.***

B. Public Forum

Director Pine explained that although historically the "public forum" portion of the meeting has been used to give folks space to talk about their projects, discussion would be held when reviewing project allocations.

C. New Business

i. Discussion of projects and allocations

Representatives present at the meeting were given time to introduce their projects and answer questions about them.

Cathedral Square Thayer and CSSL lighting: Lauren Marino from Cathedral Square noted that they could reduce the request to \$41,000 if necessary which would cover lighting at CSSL/Three Cathedral Square. Director Pine asked whether the safety issues at CSSL were particularly pronounced because of its

location downtown, and Lauren responded affirmatively. They also indicated that the safety issues are heightened because many residents are elderly and/or disabled, and are less able to manage safety issues e.g., wheelchair-users find it more challenging to stop nonresidents from following them into the building.

CHT 47 Archibald St.: Julie Curtin from CHT shared that they had received a \$75,000 subsidy from VHFA and are asking for \$50,000 from the HTF to bridge the gap between rehab costs and the funds they have received from VHFA and VHCB. Director Pine asked a question about how the project intersects with Burlington's housing replacement ordinance; Julie responded that it wasn't impacted by the ordinance because it's an affordable project. There were no further questions about the project.

CHT Post Apartments: Miranda Lescaze from CHT noted that this application is for a five-story building, that includes commercial and residential space and includes brownfield remediation. They have been working on it for a while, and received HTF funding last cycle, but costs have substantially risen because they have to address issues with the historic sewer/ravine running under the lot. They are requesting more funding from the HTF to help cover these costs. There were no questions about this project. Director Pine noted that eight units at this building will be designated for Coordinated Entry/households exiting homelessness, and five of these will be reserved for veterans experiencing homelessness.

Habitat for Humanity duplex: Alison Johnson shared that Habitat are applying for funding for one duplex project, located in a well-established neighborhood in the New North End. They are experiencing some challenges with this parcel, because it's rocky and they're having to work with engineers and a boring and excavation company to make the land buildable. Director Pine asked where buyers get financing; Alison responded that Habitat does hold about 40 mortgages but now buyers are financed through local banks. Director Pine asked a further question about minimum service requirements; Alison responded that yes, families do have to complete a certain number of sweat equity hours which can be at the property they're purchasing, at a different project, or at one of the Restores. Chief of Staff Redell asked a question about how Habitat finds buyers/prospective families, and whether they work with Coordinated Entry. Alison shared that Habitat partner with CHT to publicize the availability of these properties and that the website gives information on the process, which involves an application and meetings with the selection committee. Prospective families have support through the entire process. Director Pine clarified that Coordinated Entry is aimed at providing a way for folks experiencing homelessness to access fair, affordable, permanent housing and does not always translate well to homeownership because of client income and other challenges.

Lighthouse Commons: Hayley Shriner, the Lighthouse Commons HOA representative, spoke about how their HOA represents 12 units, 11 of which are CHT shared equity units that are in need of repairs to the siding and roofs. They have funded a lot of work through HOA special assessments and funds from CHT, but have a shortfall for upcoming needed repairs. They are now working with a professional property management company (Full Circle) to help manage repairs.

North Ave Co-op: No representative present. Director Pine noted that they have reduced their request to \$95,000 (from \$225,000) and that these funds are for critical infrastructure projects at the park.

Director Pine then moved on to capacity applications, noting that although capacity funding is an important part of the HTF, it is a smaller part, and we don't necessarily need to discuss all the proposals. Director Pine invited representatives present to share a little about their proposal, if they wished.

COTS Daystation: John Michael Longworth described how the Daystation serves 65-80 guests a day, approximately 65% of whom have slept outside. They're seeing increased issues with substance use and mental health issues and feel they're providing an important service. There were no questions.

Dismas House: Kim Parsons said about how they are seeing many of the same issues as COTS and that the level of case management they need to provide has substantially increased. They are also experiencing staffing challenges.

HomeShare Vermont: Connor Timmons echoed what others present are reporting about increased challenges in Burlington. They are seeing increasing numbers of older folks who are struggling to cover the costs of their housing. Director Pine noted that HomeShare did receive funding from the HTF last year, for a pilot project to provide incentives to homeowners to participate in HomeShare, but that it didn't really work out.

No representatives were present from Spectrum, Ishtar, Pathways, or Living Well Ethan Allen Residence.

ii. Approve allocations

Director Pine stated that as it stands, there is not quite a balanced budget but that there are some updates to requests. Both Cathedral Square and North Ave Co-Op have reduced their asks, and the City has found another way to fund the CHT Post Apartments Project, which would bring their request down to \$128,000. With those amendments, there was funding remaining unallocated, which is unusual.

Councilor Hightower asked for clarification about funds dedicated to development versus capacity projects and whether there's a way to dedicate a portion of funds to projects serving people experiencing homelessness. Director Pine noted there's a city resolution specifying what funds have to be directed towards and that some development projects, like Post Apartments, do have units reserved for households exiting homelessness. Councilor Hightower asked a further question about whether there was rollover funding from last year and what the future funding situation looks like. Rebecka Lawrence-Gomez (CEDO staff member) answered that there was some carryover from funds that were allocated but not used and recaptured. Going forward, we will likely have up to \$900,000 in funding for the rest of the fiscal year, which will be allocated in a second round of funding applications. No deadline has currently been set for these applications.

Director Pine reiterated that with the reduced funding requests we are able to fund all of the projects with some surplus. Miranda Lescaze asked that the surplus be reallocated to Post Apartments because of the increased costs this project is experiencing.

Councilor Hightower moved to redirect the surplus to CHT Post Apartments and to fund the remainder of the projects at amended levels; Chief of Staff Redell seconded; motion passed unanimously.

D. Adjournment

Director Pine adjourned the meeting at 3:27pm.