



MASSACHUSETTS

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Gary Christenson, Mayor

## Malden Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2022 – 5:00 PM

### Trustees

Mayor Gary Christenson

Steve Finn

Angie Liou

Catherine Price

Roxanne Reddington-Wilde

Brian Slater

Ward 6 Councillor Stephen Winslow

### New Business:

#### 1. Call to Order

Councillor Winslow called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

Evan Spetrini read the following remote meeting notice into the record:

*On June 16, 2021, Governor Baker signed into law An Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency. This Act includes an extension, until April 1, 2022, of the remote meeting provisions of his March 12, 2020, Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. This meeting will be conducted via remote participation. This meeting will not include in person attendance by members of the public but all effort will be made to permit public attendance, in the manner specified below, via remote access by internet, telephone, and if available via public broadcast of the meeting by Urban Media Arts on public access television channels. Public access will also be provided by posting draft minutes, and/or a transcript, recording, or record of the meeting on the City of Malden website at cityofmalden.org as soon as practicable after the meeting.*

*Additional information/guidelines for the public can be found here:*

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/updated-guidance-on-holding-meetings-pursuant-to-the-act-extending-certain-covid-19-measures>

Evan Spetrini called the roll

- Trustees Present: Steve Finn, Catherine Price, Roxanne Reddington-Wilde, and Councillor Winslow
  - Angie Liou and Brian Slater joined at 5:05 PM
- Others Present: Evan Spetrini, Senior Planner, OSPCD; Alex Pratt, Community Development Director, OSPCD; Dan Grover, Treasurer

**2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 16, 2022**

On a motion by Ms. Reddington-Wilde and seconded by Mr. Finn, the minutes from the February 16, 2022 meeting were approved unanimously.

**3. Finance Report**

Mr. Grover gave an update on the Trust's finances. The current balance is \$961,511.11, inclusive of \$73.84 in interest earned in the month of February. The only expenses this fiscal year have been for salaries at \$616.67 per month. Councillor Winslow asked if there will be any future payments into the trust from the Rowe's Quarry and downtown developments. Mr. Grover said that those payments are complete.

**4. Mayor's Affordable Housing Program Updates**

**a. Eviction Prevention Program**

Alex Pratt, Community Development Director at OSPCD, gave an update on the Eviction Prevention Program. The program is moving into its next iteration: the Office of Housing Stability, which will be funded with ARPA funds and operated by a third-party nonprofit. Mr. Pratt said the RFP to select the operator has closed. There was one applicant and the review committee is now evaluating the proposal.

Ms. Reddington-Wilde asked if the eviction moratorium had ended. Mr. Pratt confirmed that the moratorium was no longer in effect as of March 1, 2022. However, legal support and rental assistance provided through the eviction prevention program is still ongoing. Mr. Pratt stated that they did not see a significant increase of evictions carried out or filed immediately after the moratorium expired.

Mr. Pratt stated that the nature of housing stability is becoming more complicated, underscoring the need for the new office to get up and running. He further elaborated to say that fewer cases are simply about rent arrears and more are larger conflicts with landlords, lease violations, and code violations.

**b. Inclusionary Zoning**

Mr. Spetrini stated that there are still no inclusionary proposals, but he is beginning to establish guidance materials for developers and setting up monitoring processes to ensure the inclusionary units are created to the standards required by the ordinance and that they stay affordable moving forward. He is consulting with other communities to develop those processes. Mr. Spetrini stated that the new Housing Program Coordinator will help put together these documents and manage the program once they are hired.

**c. Neighborhood Hub**

Mr. Spetrini gave an update on the Neighborhood Hub program. The team has identified the target vacant properties and are now considering different funding sources to carry out the acquisition and rehab of each. They are going before the ARPA Housing Subcommittee to request ARPA funds to kickstart the program.

MassHousing recently published its guidelines for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), which were specifically tailored to assist Neighborhood Hub communities and their projects. Mr. Spetrini stated that they are looking through those guidelines now – the program offers \$250,000/unit and will fund homeownership projects of 1-4 units, which is exactly in

line with Malden's program. He said they still have a few questions about NSP's affordability requirements. The program guidelines indicate that homeownership units must be set aside for households making 70-80% AMI. Mr. Spetrini explained that they're looking at setting the income limit at 50% AMI, taking the unique opportunity afforded by ARPA funding to provide affordable homeownership opportunities for very low-income households. They need to check with MassHousing to see if that would be allowable under the NSP guidelines.

Ms. Liou explained that affordable homeownership programs typically do not go below 60% AMI because it's much more difficult for those making less than that to secure a mortgage. However, that could be offset with additional subsidy through down payment assistance. Mr. Spetrini agreed and stated that he is hoping to work with MassHousing to couple down payment assistance or other mortgage assistance with these projects to make them feasible to households making 50% AMI. Given the fact that 40% of Malden households make less than 50% AMI, they feel it's worth it to try to create homeownership opportunities for those populations.

Mr. Spetrini explained that they can apply for up to \$2M from NSP, but MassHousing has indicated that they are more comfortable in the \$1.5M range. Assuming the maximum subsidy per unit of \$250K, that would allow the City to do six units. They are now trying to identify the most appropriate properties for that program.

#### **5. Staffing Update**

Mr. Spetrini stated that the new Housing Program Coordinator position has been posted on the City's webpage and that applications are due on Monday, March 28. The position is funded by the Trust, ARPA, CDBG, and HOME dollars. They have not finalized the review panel but it will include one or two of the trustees. Mr. Spetrini stated that the new hire would take over much of his housing responsibilities, including the Trust and inclusionary zoning. If the hiring process goes well, the new employee could start in May or June.

#### **6. Meeting Schedule**

Mr. Spetrini explained that the remote meeting provisions of the Governor's order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law are expiring in April, which means the next Trust meeting must be in person. He asked the trustees if 5 PM still worked for everyone. Ms. Reddington-Wilde stated that she would not be able to make an in-person meeting at 5 PM because she works in Boston. Councillor Winslow suggested there may be an allowance for remote participation as long as there is a quorum in person. Mr. Spetrini said he would look into that to verify. Councillor Winslow then suggested that the Trust could skip the April meeting and move to a bimonthly meeting schedule since the Trust is still in a transition period. Mr. Spetrini stated he would check with Mayor Christenson and follow up with the trustees by email.

#### **7. Adjournment**

Ms. Reddington-Wilde made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Ms. Liou. All Trustees voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 5:36 PM.