



MASSACHUSETTS

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Gary Christenson, Mayor

Malden Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Meeting Minutes

October 20, 2021 – 5:00 PM

Trustees

Mayor Gary Christenson

Steve Finn

Angie Liou

Catherine Price

Roxanne Reddington-Wilde

Brian Slater

Councillor-at-large Stephen Winslow

New Business:

1. Call to Order

Mayor Christenson called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Mayor Christenson 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: Mayor Christenson, Steve Finn, Angie Liou, Catherine Price, Roxanne Reddington-Wilde, Brian Slater, and Councillor Winslow
- Others Present: Evan Spetrini, Senior Planner, OSPCD; Alex Pratt, Community Development Director, OSPCD; Dan Grover, Treasurer, City of Malden

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 15, 2021

On a motion by Councillor Winslow and seconded by Mr. Slater, the minutes from the September 15, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously.

3. Finance Report

Mr. Grover gave an update on the Trust's finances. The current balance is \$964,195.04, inclusive of \$79.39 in interest earned in the month of September. The only expenses this fiscal year have been for salaries at \$616.67 per month.

4. Mayor's Affordable Housing Program Updates

a. Eviction Prevention Program

Alex Pratt, Community Development Director at OSPCD, joined the meeting to give an update on the Eviction Prevention Program. Mr. Pratt stated the biggest issue is getting tenants to show up in court. Housing Families and Just-A-Start are having trouble contacting tenants but when they do, they are very successful at preventing eviction. He stated that they have sent informational pamphlets to every household and to tenants facing eviction. Mr. Pratt explained that each provider received \$250,000 for the program and they both have about \$100,000 left. Recently they've been processing funds more quickly because the private funds they received have run out.

Ms. Liou asked if the funding is for rent owed in addition to legal costs. Mr. Pratt confirmed that the funding is for rental assistance, case workers, and legal representation. Some cases have been resolved without using local funds for rental assistance because they've been able to tap into the State's RAFT program. Mayor Christenson asked about when they expect to run out of funds. Mr. Pratt estimates that funding will run out early next year. Mayor Christenson asked if they are looking into ARPA for additional funding. Mr. Pratt explained that this is a program that the Household Support ARPA Subcommittee could fund but those conversations are just in the early stages. Mayor Christenson asked if there is still a need for the program considering the economy is improving and COVID positivity rates are low. Mr. Pratt said the program should exist in some form for the foreseeable future. Malden will always have eviction problems even if they are not related to COVID-19. The program will probably scale down at some point but it depends on the needs of the community.

b. Inclusionary Zoning

Mr. Spetrini stated that inclusionary zoning was ordained by the City Council on September 21. 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. Some developers have inquired about the ordinance but not concrete proposals have come in yet. Councillor Winslow asked if the 1 Salem St. project would include affordable housing. Mayor Christenson confirmed that the project will be subject to inclusionary zoning but final plans have not been submitted.

c. Neighborhood Hub

Mr. Spetrini gave an update on the Neighborhood Hub program. Mr. Spetrini has been having weekly check-in meetings with the City's Building Commissioner, Nelson Miller, and the part-time housing inspector hired to lead the investigation of the vacant and foreclosed properties, Ken Minasian. Mr. Minasian has visited all of the properties and continues to gather more information on each of them.

Mr. Minasian is continuing to narrow the list of target properties and make contact with the owners to verify information on each property. Through the investigation, many of the properties have been removed from the vacant/foreclosed list. Because of this, OSPCD is considering a shift in strategy. Previously, the plan was to acquire vacant properties and dispose of them in one RFP to a qualified CDC in order to convert them to permanent affordable housing. Since the list of target properties is becoming smaller, bundling the properties together is less feasible, so OSPCD is considering purchasing the properties and managing the rehabilitation of each in house. Mr. Spetrini stated they are considering using ARPA funds to purchase the properties but those conversations are still at an early stage. Moving beyond the current list of vacant/foreclosed properties, the intention is to create a process by which the City can acquire and convert newly added vacant properties to affordable housing. Mr. Spetrini said there is more information to verify on each property and acquisition funds need to be identified.

5. AHTF Staffing

Mr. Spetrini explained that OSPCD is considering hiring a Housing Program Coordinator to help manage the City's growing affordable housing initiatives including the Trust, inclusionary zoning, the vacant/foreclosed program, and now the ARPA funds. The budget created for the Trust's action plan called for this role starting in fiscal year 2023, but the addition of ARPA funds encouraged OSPCD to move up that timeline in order to take on the additional work of managing those funds. Mr. Spetrini said there isn't a formal proposal yet but they expect to request \$25,000/year from the Trust for three years, while the remainder will come from ARPA funds. This would be a temporary position to coincide with the ARPA timeline. Mr. Spetrini said he expects to have a formal proposal at the next meeting.

6. Adjournment

Ms. Liou made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Ms. Reddington-Wilde. All Trustees voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 5:39 PM.