

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board
MINUTES
Wednesday, September 30, 2020
ZOOM Conference Call
2:00 pm

Board Members: Neil Mickenberg, David Marvin, Emily Wadhams, Maura Collins (Executive Director of VHFA), Billy Coster (designee of Julie Moore; Secretary of ANR), Tom Yahn, Diane Bothfeld (designee of Anson Tebbetts, Secretary of VAAF), Alison Harte (designee of Mike Smith; Secretary of Human Services), Kate McCarthy. (All Board Members called/zoomed in)

VHCB Staff: Gus Seelig, Jen Hollar, Martin Hahn, Jenny Hyslop, Elizabeth Egan, Anne Duffy, Ian Jakus, Marcy Christian, Leah Sare, Craig Peltier, Erin Riley; Larry Mires

Others Present: Michael Monte, Margaret Bozik (Champlain Housing Trust); Jim Lovinsky (Lamoille Housing Partnership); Sarah Phillips (Department for Children & Families – Office of Economic Opportunity)

Chair Neil Mickenberg called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Martin Hahn introduced Ian Jakus and Erin Riley as new housing staff. He explained that Ian came from the City of Burlington's Office of Community & Economic Development. He is taking the lead on the CRF shelter projects. VHCB is welcoming back Erin, who previously worked with our AmeriCorps Program, and is now on the housing staff.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Project Presentations

**Ho Hum CRF, Burlington – Champlain Housing Trust
2021-082-001**

Champlain Housing Trust is requesting up to \$2,016,565 in CRF funds. Michael Monte from Champlain Housing Trust presented the project. He explained that in response to the pandemic, Champlain Housing Trust has proposed acquiring the Ho Hum Motel to serve as a statewide COVID-19 Isolation, Quarantine & Recovery Accommodation. The site will house and provide services and meals for homeless individuals who are either experiencing COVID symptoms or who have tested positive. The motel is located at 1660 Williston Road, a site with two buildings and a total of 36 rooms (23 doubles and 13 singles).

Michael explained that the State of Vermont Agency of Human Services (AHS) is using CHT's Harbor Place hotel in Shelburne to meet isolation needs currently. Prior to the pandemic, Harbor Place was used to provide emergency accommodations for the homeless population, but CHT

responded to the state's urgent need for a COVID isolation site and repurposed the property temporarily. There are more than 60 rooms at Harbor Place, and only a portion are being occupied at currently as it has been determined not safe to house COVID patients and the general homeless population on the same site, even in separate buildings. The Ho Hum proposal responds to two pressing needs: an appropriately sized and located site for isolation of COVID patients at the Ho Hum, and the return of Harbor Place to its former use to meet the growing and pressing need for emergency placement for the general homeless population. Sarah Phillips from the Department of Children & Families reported that there are more than 500 individuals experiencing homelessness awaiting placement through the coordinated entry system in Chittenden County, so the ability to bring Harbor Place back online is a critical part of the response.

VHCB's proposed funding primarily supports acquisition, with a modest scope of rehab that includes the creation of four 1-bedroom units by combining side-by-side corner units and adding a kitchenette. After this initial development phase, there will be a total of 32 units. When there is no longer a need for the isolation facility, it can be converted to over 21 single bedroom-housing units to continue to serve low-income populations.

David Marvin asked about Harbor Place and previous zoning issues with the Town of Shelburne. Michael explained that they continue to operate it as a motel, which works with zoning laws. Emily Wadhams wondered about the Williston Road location and Michael said that they had support from the surrounding community for the project. Billy Coster asked about the building improvements and Michael explained that there would primarily be interior work to the building. There was a brief discussion about the Holiday Inn closing later this year and the need to find space for these people. Sarah explained that having Harbor Place and the new CRF projects on line would help the situation. There is still a need for a seasonal low barrier warming shelter. There is a potential project that could address this need in the pipeline. This project may come before the board in the several weeks. Neil asked if are rental subsidies attached to this project and Michael explained that the state is paying for the total operation of the motel during the COVID emergency. After COVID, they will evaluate need in the community and will proceed from there. The location works well for multifamily housing. Staff from Harbor Place will be relocated to the Ho Hum to provide social services. Alison commented on AHS' priority on permanent affordable housing as a long-term goal. Gus added that the original appropriation for CRF funds did not include isolation housing but it has been signed off by the Administration and Legislature at this point. Michael also reported that the other CRF projects are proceeding on schedule.

Evergreen ZEM CRF, Hardwick – Lamoille Housing Partnership 2021-080-001

Lamoille Housing Partnership is requesting up to \$400,098 in CRF funds. Jim Lovinsky from Lamoille Housing Partnership presented the project. He explained that they are working with Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC), to purchase two (2) 2BR zero energy modular (ZEM) homes, including all construction, logistics and site work to place them in open lots at Evergreen Manor Mobile Home Park, owned by LHP in Hardwick, VT. The homes would be available to the Lamoille Valley Housing and Homeless Coalition (local Continuum of Care) for housing homeless households with services and financial supports.

Jim explained that in 2015 LHP purchased two VerMod (ZEM) energy efficient homes and installed them in the park as rental units. These proved successful, and in 2016, LHP purchased 13 additional VerMods as rental units. The Park is now operated as two entities, the rental VerMods and the remaining 19 lots; the two new proposed ZEMs will be in this latter entity and made by a different manufacturer. LHP is ready to move forward having obtained the proper local and state permits. Jim explained that the addition of these two units would help the financial situation of the park.

Tom asked about the new manufacturer and their potential to become a new partner with these homes. Jim explained that KBS is a larger company and can move more quickly in this timeframe. Martin pointed out they have now funded several projects with this company with the CRF funds. There was a brief discussion about whether these units would be used for temporary or long-term housing. Jim explained that they would like them to be long term, which would help the overall stability of the park. Kate had a question about transportation access to the downtown. Most of the current tenants do have cars. Jim pointed out that there were sidewalks down to the park but it is a walk to services. Alison wanted to confirm that LHP would be coordinating with Northeast Kingdom Continuum of Care lists for potential tenants. Kate asked about the finances of the MHP and if there is any risk for these units. Jim explained that currently there are 5 vacant lots and as he discussed earlier, adding these units would help the overall health of the park.

Consent Agenda

Maura made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda. David seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion.

The Consent Agenda consisted of:

- 1) Flynn Avenue Loan Modification, Burlington (Flynn Ave Hsg Coop) (1991-058)

Roll Call

Alison – yes
Maura – yes
Billy – yes
David – yes
Emily – yes
Tom – yes
Neil – yes
Diane - yes
Kate - yes

Staff Report/Legislative Update

Gus gave a brief update to his staff report. He thanked the staff for all of their hard work in preparing for this meeting. He also thanked Jen for her work during the abbreviated legislative session. He let the board know that the ribbon cutting for the Bellows Falls Garage project will be held on October 8th. Yesterday, he and Maura attended the Lake Paran groundbreaking. Jen Hollar and Karen Freeman celebrated the Rock Point project in Burlington also yesterday.

As mentioned earlier he informed the board that there may be another CRF project coming from ANEW and there may be a need for another special meeting to discuss the project. Finally, he welcomed Ian and Erin to the VHCB housing staff.

Jen added that the Legislature ended at the end of last week. The budget will result in more state funding for VHCB than we received last year. There is also an additional \$2.25 million in additional CRF funds.

Neil asked about the ANEW project and Gus explained that the new proposal will be coming shortly. Cathedral Square has agreed to be involved with the project. Martin confirmed that there may be more CRF funds available.

Minutes

Emily moved approval of the minutes of the September 16, 2020 Board Meeting. Maura seconded the motion. There was no discussion.

Roll Call:

Neil Mickenberg - Yes

Emily Wadhams - Yes

Maura Collins - Yes

Billy Coster - Yes

Alison Harte - Yes

David Marvin - Yes

Tom Yahn – Yes

Kate McCarthy – Yes

Diane Bothfeld - Yes

Deliberations:

Housing Projects

Projects

Ho Hum

2021-082-001

Evergreen ZEM CRF

2021-080-001

Emily made a motion to approve the resolutions as a block. Kate seconded the motion. Alison asked to change some language regarding people experiencing homelessness on the Evergreen ZEM resolution, as well as, using stronger language on Special Condition #5. Emily amended her motion to include the Evergreen ZEM CRF Project Special Condition #5 and resolution language changes proposed by Alison. Kate seconded the amended motion. There was a question about Ho Hum being an historic building and Jenny explained that there had been an historic review and no issues were raised at that time. There was a brief discussion about development fees and Jenny explained that they are usually a percentage of the total development cost of the project.

**Evergreen ZEM CRF
Special Condition #5:**

5. During the course of the pandemic and the subsequent period of economic recovery, the units funded with this award are to be designated for individuals and families experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness due to a disruption to their previous housing situation as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency; and/or referred through the local system of coordinated entry to housing. After that period, the Grantee will make every reasonable effort to increase the income mix of the resident households. If changes to the affordability restrictions are required, the Grantee may request revisions to the Covenant for VHCB's consideration.

Roll Call

Alison – yes
Maura – yes
Billy – yes
David – yes
Emily – yes
Tom – yes
Neil – yes
Diane - yes
Kate - yes

Other Business

Elizabeth reminded board members to complete the Annual Conflict of Interest form if they hadn't do so already.

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Marcy Christian