

SALISBURY AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

JANUARY 16, 2025 – 5:30PM (VIA ZOOM)

1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 5:32pm. Present: Jennifer Kronholm Clark, Jon Higgins, Abeth Slotnick, Lee Sullivan, Mary Close Oppenheimer, Jim Dresser, and Hannah Pouler (Communications Consultant). Vivian Garfein arrived later. Absent: Pat Hackett.
2. Approval of Agenda / Vote to Approve Executive Session. A **Motion to Add Approval of the Minutes of December 18, 2024 and January 9, 2025, and Approve the Agenda, as amended**, was made by L. Sullivan, seconded by J. Higgins, **With All in Favor**. A **Motion to Approve an Executive Session to Discuss Candidates for the Vacant Seat**, was made by J. Dresser, seconded by A. Slotnick, **With All in Favor**.
3. **Approval of the Minutes of November 21, 2024. So Moved** by A. Slotnick, seconded by J. Dresser and unanimously **Approved**.  
**Approval of the Minutes of December 18, 2024 (Subcommittee). So Moved** by L. Sullivan, seconded by J. Higgins and **Approved**.  
**Approval of the Minutes of January 9, 2025 (Subcommittee). So Moved** by M. Close Oppenheimer, seconded by L. Sullivan and **Approved**.
4. Coordinator's Report. One inquiry about AH was referred to CREM. Update on the FOIA request – the SAHC had not been involved in any discussion of the Wake Robin Inn re-development so there was nothing to submit.
5. Brief Discussion: 2024 Goals and Subcommittees / Updates
  - Housing Committee Properties (SHC) – Waiting on funding news
  - Pope Property – No update
  - Housing Trust Properties (SHT) – J. Kronholm Clark mentioned a groundbreaking celebration scheduled on February 7<sup>th</sup> in Cornwall. The SHT has received State funding for all 10 houses; Perry Street in Lakeville will be first, then perhaps Undermountain Road and Cornwall next.
  - Advocacy for AH – Nothing new this month.
  - Fundraising / Alternative Funding Sources – J. Dresser had nothing to report at this time; the subcommittee will have an organizational meeting. It will be scheduled and posted.
  - Explore Additional Properties: Nothing now
  - Sustainability Committee – A. Slotnick had no report right now.

- Housing Affordability Committee – L. Sullivan reported that the Town is looking into the real estate tax discount rate. V. Garfein asked if it can be like a homestead exemption; L. Sullivan responded that the wording is purposefully vague; V. Garfein will follow up.

#### Fundraising – Additional Comments

J. Higgins mentioned that a request for Town funding will need to go to the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and a Town Meeting vote. J. Dresser commented that he doesn't want to specify a set limit; J. Higgins will be the point person.

#### 6. Communications Consultant – H. Pouler

The social media campaign she helped create for the Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity (LCCHO) for the collaboration last year will be a basic weekly Facebook campaign. A. Slotnick mentioned that she had sent out an email regarding the plan; the first one is an announcement with the report that was generated and the second will be a link to the short film that was created as part of the project. Fifteen weeks of posts are scheduled so that all of the Towns can provide content. A. Slotnick will try to get the Salisbury Association involved. A. Slotnick mentioned another email from Jocelyn Ayer to have a monthly communication-sharing meeting and asked for a member of the SAHC to attend once a month; L. Sullivan can do that and follow up with H. Pouler. H. Pouler talked about newsletter updates; the SHT event will be included.

#### 7. Introductions / Conversations with new Candidates for SAHC Board

L. Sullivan talked about the Nominating Subcommittee process. Several people were approached and was narrowed to 4 people; 2 people dropped out. A list of questions was sent to the candidates along with a request for brief bios; the interviews will be tonight; discussion will take place in Executive Session; the members will then return to the meeting in progress to vote. J. Kronholm Clark welcomed Kevin Cantele and Richard Tennyson and thanked them for their interest in serving on the SAHC.

Kevin Cantele – Introduced himself and talked about his bio and family. He grew up here; now he and his wife are looking forward to raising their family and continuing to work in this area.

J. Kronholm Clark asked why he would be interested in serving on this Commission. Mr. Cantele expressed his great sense of pride in living in Salisbury; things have come full circle for him. Working specifically in the mortgage industry, he has come to understand the challenges that people face that are trying to live here and the costs involved in this area. He understands the challenges that young families face to buy a house and work here. He mentioned that people ask him about affordable rentals and where they could live; he knows about the need for affordable housing.

J. Kronholm Clark asked what skills, talents and unique perspectives he brings. Mr. Cantele answered that being in the mortgage industry, he can pinpoint the challenges for affordable housing and people not being able to qualify for loans. He has

established a lot of connections with local realtors, appraisers, home inspectors and title companies; he has built a lot of local relationships in town that help highlight the challenges in the home-buying process.

J. Kronholm Clark asked how much time he would have on a monthly basis for this Commission. Mr. Cantele indicated he has flexibility and can dedicate a fair amount of time to working with the SAHC.

J. Kronholm Clark asked which subcommittees interest him. Mr. Cantele is interested in exploring additional properties; AH affordability, as he knows about government-backed programs; and advocacy for AH.

J. Kronholm Clark asked about other volunteer work. Mr. Cantele mentioned that he had worked with Habitat for Humanity, traveling to other cities. He helps coach and referee youth sports. Throughout the year, he volunteers for other events through the bank he works for and enjoys working with the community. He had no specific questions for the Commission, at this time.

J. Dresser asked Mr. Cantele if he was involved in aspects other than mortgages, such as hearing about other properties which have potential for AH. Mr. Cantele answered that he does hear about properties that may be coming on the market and is in constant contact with realtors because they are his referral source at work.

Richard Tennyson – Talked about details from his bio; he is a retired commercial banker and was focused on the telecommunications industry. Motorbikes are his passion.

J. Kronholm Clark asked why he is interested in the SAHC. Mr. Tennyson mentioned that he had lived in affordable housing early in his life and it was important to him. He commented that people need affordable housing here or they have to move away. He wants to put his energy and skills into this community he's chosen to live in.

J. Kronholm Clark asked what skills, talents and unique perspectives he would bring. Mr. Tennyson responded that he had dealt with fact-based business cases and enjoys finding out why one really wants to do something; that must be balance with the emotional needs of the community. He can argue in a reasoned fashion; pays attention to detail; and it would be another challenge.

J. Kronholm Clark asked how much time he would have for this Commission. Mr. Tennyson answered he has quite a lot of time to give to this work. He mentioned that he does spend a lot of time in the U.K., but can Zoom into meetings.

J. Kronholm Clark asked which subcommittees are of interest. Mr. Tennyson answered fundraising; the Pope property; and advocacy for AH.

J. Kronholm Clark asked about other volunteer work. Mr. Tennyson mentioned that had been on school boards and charities in the U.K., among other things, and volunteers locally, as well.

Mr. Tennyson asked what one big thing, other than funding, that would really make a difference for AH here in town. J. Kronholm Clark responded that it is land and finding appropriate places to put AH. J. Dresser commented that the cost of infrastructure and

rehab is expensive. M. Close Oppenheimer thanked both candidates for their participation. J. Kronholm Clark mentioned other opportunities are available.

8. Executive Session to Discuss Selection of Candidate

The Commission went into Executive Session at 6:36pm and returned to the meeting at 7:01pm.

9. **Recommendation of Candidate to the Board of Selectmen**

**A Motion to Nominate Kevin Cantele to the Open Seat on the SAHC**, was made by J. Higgins, seconded by L. Sullivan, and **Approved, With All in Favor**. J. Kronholm Clark explained that this **Recommendation would go to the Board of Selectmen for Appointment** at the next BOS meeting. Mr. Cantele accepted the Nomination.

10. Public Comments – None

11. Chairman's Comments – J. Kronholm Clark thanked both candidates and expressed that this was a difficult decision, but they have found a lot of ways for Mr. Tennyson to help, if willing. J. Kronholm Clark, who is also the Vice-President of the Housing Trust, invited Mr. Tennyson to talk to her about that, if interested. Subcommittee work is also possible. Many thanks for your interest and to the Nominating Subcommittee for all their work.

12. **Adjournment. So Moved** by M. Close Oppenheimer, seconded by J. Dresser and unanimously **Approved**.