# Community Housing Expansion of Austin

Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

March 27, 2017

Genieva Croley calls the meeting to order at 7:43 p.m.

In attendance, constituting a quorum:

Genieva Croley - Chair

Joshua Sabik - Treasurer

Patrick Connelly - At-large

Madeline Hillsmith - Secretary

Also in attendance:

Natalie San Luis -- Operations Administrator

Hannah Frankel - ACBA

Lana Porter - Community Rep Candidate

Evron Barber

#### Review of Minutes from February 27, 2017

The Board considers the minutes from February 27, 2017

**Motion to approve the minutes from February 27, 2017 (Patrick/Madeline)**

Accepting: 4

Rejecting: 0

Abstaining: 0

The motion passes by consensus.

#### ACBA Dues

Hannah: I’m here to strongly encourage the Board to vote to renew our ACBA membership. ACBA is a very useful organization right now, several La Reunion members are involved. I’m on the City of Austin Commission for Economic Prosperity and we’re recommending cooperative support policies to city council, and it’s a lot easier to do that with an organization at the helm. We’re all here because co-ops have done a lot for us and it’s on us to pay that forward.

Lana: Can I ask what is ACBA?

Hannah: We’re basically the co-op lobbying organization and a public face of cooperatives for people who aren’t familiar with them.

Josh: Where does the money go?

Hannah: We pay legal consultants and accountants, we have to cater events when we have them. The Board is all volunteers, it’s mostly people working for free.

Genieva: We didn’t see a lot from the ACBA in 2016, will we see more from them in 2017?

Hannah: We had kind of a vacuum when Brian Donovan moved to Michigan, and we got unlucky when we hired our staff member. They’d been working for just a couple of years when the previous staff member left, but interest and momentum is picking up since the success we’ve had at the City level.

Madeline: Any idea of what’s coming up next?

Hannah: I have to give the ACBA some props to Board members and volunteers for showing up to my commission. A resolution for worker coops was passed through Delia Garza’s office that forces the city manager to work with my commission on supporting worker co-ops, I’m meeting with Kitchen’s office next week (Sasona’s council rep.) We have solid support from Casar’s office. We’re building a coalition right now and trying to get champions on the city level to get housing and consumer co-op recommendations and resolutions passed at the City level. The recommendations we passed don’t have much teeth right now, but the Council is likely going to ask us to dig deeper on ramifications of these recommendations so that they can vote on putting this into practice. It’s a long road, but I think that this is the best possible route to getting cooperative policies passed at the city level. As far as the City is concerned, it’s relatively tested and new, and they don’t quite trust us yet, but we need to show that we’re worth that trust and the ACBA’s lobbying efforts will help us push that through. It would be really hard for me to do this stuff without the ACBA, they kind of work like a muscle.

Genieva: When do the dues need to be in by?

Hannah: We can pay whenever but need them in by April for CHEA to vote at GMM. This is not a huge amount of money, and I think we need this organization if the co-op movement is going to move further than it does right now.

Madeline: Is there any other org in town that does lobbying on behalf of cooperatives?

Hannah: Nope.

Genieva: I know Sasona was almost shut down because of zoning issues, and was saved because of lobbying.

Hannah: NASCO properties

Josh: We have the funds, last fall we took a vacancy reserve refund and released it from obligation towards our loan so we have a contingency fund to take it from.

**Motion to release $300 from Miscellaneous fund to pay dues to the ACBA (Josh/Genieva)**

**Accepting: 2**

**Rejecting: 0**

**Abstaining: 2**

The motion passes by majority.

#### Community Representative Recruiting

Lana: So the way we do it at ICC, the community rep provides an outsider perspective. Is it the same thing?

Patrick: Yes, that’s true. Practically the community rep functions the same as any other Director with regards to voting rights and ability to hold officer positions.

Lana: Are we working on anything in particular right now?

Madeline: That’ll depend on the input we get with regard to strategic planning at GMM.

Patrick: We often take on action items and work on projects individually. Our major project right now is putting in place an accommodation policies.

Josh: Sinclair wrote that organizations often have interlocking directors in order to consolidate and retain power.

Genieva: Any other questions?

Josh: Can you speak a little bit about your background and why you want this position?

Lana: I’m a gender studies major at UT, I’ve been in co-ops since January 2016. I’ve been on the Board of ICC since the beginning of summer, It’s a big responsibility but it’s given me a great understanding of how co-ops can function and the nuts and bolts of how a Board is supposed to function. I’ve really enjoyed seeing an alternative model for how businesses run and I’d like to continue that work outside of ICC once I graduate.

Natalie: I have a question about recruiting in general. Should I dial back on advertising the position?

Board agrees no.

#### Staff Update

Natalie: We’re getting a keg from black star for GMM. I’m working with Salvation Pizza to see if we can get some pizzas donated as well. I need a headcount though (Board says about 25-30). I’ve created a membership survey to give out at GMM. I think it might be worthwhile to issue an incentive for people to fill it out. I advertised the community rep position, represented us at an ICC event and got some emails for people to contact. Not a lot of updates on the Literati front, I’m periodically following up but it seems like there’s not a lot ready on their end yet.

#### Plan GMM

Natalie has put together a Google form surveying the membership to gauge members’ feelings about their houses and spot potential issues. This will be used for income reporting and demographic data as well.

What time do we want to have GMM? We’re anticipating 2 hours. 2p.m. sounds like a good time. We want to incentivize people to participate in the membership survey. Natalie proposes we allow people to optionally enter their email at the end of the survey for a chance to win a $50 Amazon gift card.

**Motion to set the GMM start time as 2:00 p.m. on April 8, 2017 and authorize $50 from the Miscellaneous fund for an Amazon gift card to use as an incentive to fill out the membership survey [Josh/Madeline]**

Accepting: 4 Rejecting: 0 Abstaining: 0

The motion passes by consensus.

Further discussion: We discuss mosquito control since the event would likely be outside. Citronella candles and tiki torches are brought up as possible options.

**Motion to allocate $30 from the Miscellaneous fund for mosquito control supplies for GMM [Genieva/Patrick]**

Accepting: 4 Rejecting: 0 Abstaining: 0

The motion passes by consensus.

Natalie brings up that it might be better to just have candidate give speeches rather that a full debate. The Board agrees.

For strategic planning discussion, we discuss breaking the planning discussion down by topic, discuss setting up posterboards for each topic that people can write down ideas on.

We need to make a Facebook event and advertise the Nasco Properties Board Rep position. We determine time blocks for each agenda item.

State of CHEA - 5 minutes

Financial Report - 10 minutes

NP rep - 10 minutes

NP rep speeches - 5 minutes each or 20 minutes, depending on number of candidates

Community representative speeches - 5 minutes each or 25 minutes, depending on number of candidates

Strategic planning - 30-45 minutes

#### Member Services Committee

The Board considers the proposed bylaws for the Member Services Committee, attached as **Exhibit “A”.**

Patrick: I would like to this to have contingency plans for vacant positions, if the committee is not doing their job right, or if the policy is not working out and needs to be dismissed altogether.

Madeline: We also need to figure out how we’re choosing representatives.

Board determines to solicit input from each of the houses on how they would like their reps to be chosen.

Josh: We might want to make quorum a majority of people holding office, in case of vacancies.

Patrick: The Committee should be able to offer recommendations to the houses in cases where the course of action falls outside of maintenance or labor.

Madeline: Yeah, I kind of jumbled that line in with the part where they can meet to discuss general issues regarding inclusion. I’ll make that more clear. The committee’s only real power should be to decide if an issue is open or closed, the rest would just be issuing recommendations to officers, houses, or the Board.

Patrick: I’m also putting together a resource binder for officers and committee members to help guide them through what’s legally required when someone requests accommodation.

There is a brief aside on what constitutes reasonable accommodation.

The quorum issue is revisited, the Board agrees to keep quorum at 3 committee members in order to prevent vacancies from giving majority power to a single person.

Josh: I’ve been emailing ARCIL about trainings, but they’re not really getting back to me. Natalie, can you follow up with them?

Natalie: Yes.

#### Board Elections

The Board discusses how to run Nasco Properties Representative elections. Natalie will email Daniel Miller for information, but we would like to use BallotBin like we plan to for the Community Rep.

Madeline: We have some members who don’t really use the email list, is there a way we can get them a paper ballot?

Natalie: A sign-up sheet in a common area should do. I’ll also print out paper ballots and bring them to GMM for the Community Rep elections.

#### Action Items

The Board assigned the following action items:

Madeline & Sasona Reps - Post paper ballot sign-up sheets & flyers for GMM

Madeline - edit Member Services Committee draft bylaws with suggested changes

Josh - pay ACBA dues

Genieva - make Facebook event for GMM

#### Future Meeting Schedule and Agenda Items

The Board determined the following discussion items for the Working Meeting, which was agreed to take place at 7:30 p.m. on April 10 at La Reunion:

* GMM recap
* Member Services Committee
* Consider policy suggestions made by Community Development Clinic

The Board determined the following discussion items for the Voting Meeting, which was agreed to take place on April 24th on 7:30 p.m. at Sasona:

* Community Rep onboarding
* Member Services Committee
* Consider policy suggestions made by Community Development Clinic

***New Business: None***

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

**EXHIBIT “A”**

**Draft Proposed Bylaw Changes - March 27, 2017**

**Proposed: Add the following to CHEA’s bylaws:**

**Article IV, Section 1 -- Member Services Committee**

The Member Services Committee (*“the Committee”*) shall be chaired by a Director, who is tasked with entrusting to the Secretary of the Board all minutes of the committee and reporting the activities of the committee to the Board of Directors. The remainder of the committee shall be composed of 2 representatives from each House. The primary purpose of the Committee is to ensure that all requests for accommodation are processed in a timely manner and in accordance with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws as well as bylaws of the Corporation.

Members seeking accommodation under the fair housing act should submit the CHEA Accommodation Request Form (“the Form”) to the appropriate House officer. House officers are obligated to acknowledge receipt of the Form to Requester within three (3) days of submission. House officers must submit the Form, along with any additional documentation, to the Committee Chair within (1) week of acknowledging receipt of the Form. The Committee shall meet as needed, or within three (3) weeks of the Form being submitted to the Committee Chair. Additionally, the Committee may meet as needed to discuss topics related to diversity, accommodation, and inclusion in the Corporation and may suggest courses of action related to such to the Houses, the Board, or House officers.

The Committee is charged with approving or denying all accommodations requested by members of the Corporation. No request for accommodation is considered completed until it is approved or denied by the Committee. The Committee may, at its discretion, temporarily deny accommodation requests in order to modify the accommodation or suggest alternative accommodations, even if House officers already consider the accommodation “complete.”

House officers are expected to provide accommodation within a reasonable timeframe, and are encouraged not to wait for a meeting of the Committee to begin accommodation procedures. Accommodations already completed to the satisfaction of the requesting member are encouraged for approval by the Committee. If an accommodation has not been completed by the time the committee meets, the committee may recommend courses of action as appropriate to the House, Board, or House Officers.