

## **St. Johnsbury Rental Housing Improvement Grant Program Advisory Meeting**

**May 20, 2022**

**11:00 am**

### **Present:**

Committee members: Patricia Janssen, Alice Kitchel, Irene Nagle, Patrick Shattuck, Fred DeMarzo  
Town Liaison: Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager

Minutes from April meeting were approved as written.

Creston will join future meetings as a resource.

19 applications were received. Joe reached out to some applicants to get additional information.

Just over 45K in the grant budget. We can roll unused funds it into next grant cycle without Selectboard approval. In this round there is over 50K in requests.

### **Reviewed applications**

- **14 Mt Avenue.**  
Requesting 3 K and total project. Replacement windows. It was noted that only the windows in the rental unit could be funded by the grant program. The Town will reach out to applicant to ascertain whether the proposed windows are exclusively for the rental unit.
- **35 Steeple Place, owned by UCC Church.**  
Need updated quotes.
- **36 Steeple Place has been withdrawn.**  
Will be removed.
- **44 Green Street, Apt. 1.**  
Applicant only provided quotes for labor. Owner-occupied building
- **53 Caledonia Street, Units 1, 2 and 3.**  
One application covering 3 units, Joe listed as three separate units on google docs. Broken out by unit, only one has enough improvements to qualify for full \$3,000.
- **56 Church Street.**  
Old quote from New England Foam for a different building. Need quote specific to this building.
- **100 Maple Street.**  
Discussed all three application (basement, Unit 2 and 4). Need a window quote for the actual unit 2. Applicant provided an estimate for windows for 4.

### **Points of discussion on all application**

The following issues were raised during the review of the applications:

- Reiterated that we are funding capital improvements, not just universal design and energy efficiency.

- Concerned that we don't have the capacity and time to reach out to every applicant to let them know how to improve application. Just let them stand and communicate how applications could be improved in the future.
- Is there a way to control whether a rental could be converted to primary residence and taken out of the rental market after the grant-supported improvements. It was noted that the quality of housing stock would still have been improved.
- Estimates for work: as a reimbursement program, there is no risk to the town if an estimate does not comport with the actual money spent. We should reconsider what will be required for an estimate. Is it in the ballpark? Is it too old? Did applicant do due diligence in getting estimates? We will consider scoring in future for quality of estimates. It will be considered complete if any type of backup is provided.
- There was discussion regarding whether the application should be tied to a residential unit, rather than a common area. Patrick pointed out that one grant is allowed per rental unit under our current guidelines. However, recent guidance to applicants in this round indicated a separate application could be made for common areas serving residential units. After this round is over, we will meet to clarify rules pertaining to common areas.

We are invited to score the applications prior to our next meeting. All can be scored, with knowledge that score can be revised after discussion. Don't go into the summary tabs. Every person has their own tab in the application score tracker. There will be a folder that says 2022 and will include all current applications.

Meeting was adjourned to May 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 to finish review of applications.

Joe will send out new zoom invite.

Respectfully submitted by Irene Nagle