



## 2013 CONCORD ANNUAL TOWN REPORT

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### Concord Housing Authority

Judith Lincicum, Director

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From left: Mary Johnson, Chair; Linda Escobedo, KC Winslow, Dennon Rodrigue, Richard Eifler

Judith Lincicum

The Concord Housing Authority owns and manages 129 units of public housing in the Town of Concord and administers 85 Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers. These public housing units and Vouchers provide affordable rents and subsidy to families, elders and disabled of low and moderate incomes.

Modernization work on the Peter Bulkeley Terrace building was completed in March. Twenty-four new residents now occupy the units and an Open

House for the community was held in April. New units included four additional handicapped accessible apartments and as additional funding becomes available, four additional 1BR units will be added on the ground floor. The CHA is proud of this modernization effort, creating indoor and outdoor spaces that welcome residents and visitors into a new and modern facility. Local support for this project was crucial in bringing this renovation to fruition – Community Preservation, Middlesex Savings Bank Charitable Fund, Concord Housing Development Corporation, Belknap House and Town of Concord.

Improvements made this year to our public housing units included new refrigerators for both elderly and family tenants with funding from DHCD's Sustainability Program. Kitchen upgrades were done at turnover; limited stair-tread replacement; and selected paving and curb cuts were done at Everett Gardens and the Expansion. The Concord Friends of the Aging donated funds to replace two benches at Everett Gardens; the Concord Garden Club donated funds for shrub replacement at Everett Gardens; and Concord Carlisle Community Chest continues to fund an Activity Program for elders at our Everett Gardens/Peter Bulkeley Terrace developments. The CHA had six elderly and eight family unit turnovers during the year.

Community Preservation Committee recommended, and Town Meeting approved \$100,000 in funding for roof replacement at our Everett Gardens Expansion development. The design work commenced the end of the year and will be completed in the spring of 2014.

Our elderly and family units are scattered throughout Town in over twenty different locations: Thoreau Street; Bedford Street; Strawberry Hill Road; Grove Street; Everett Street (two developments), Stow Street (two developments); Bartkus Farm Road; Westvale Meadows; Walden Street; Conant Street; Cottage Street; Commonwealth Avenue; Bedford Court; Main Street; Peter Spring Road; Powder Mill Road; Upland Road; and local units on Forest Ridge; Commonwealth Avenue and Old Bedford Road.

Board Member Nancy Crowley completed her term on the CHA Board and was succeeded by Dennon Rodrigue in a Town-wide election. Sequestration cuts to the Federal public housing and Section 8 programs resulted in no new vouchers being distributed at turnover, and a reduction in our Operating Funding for the year.

The Governor's Commission on Reform and Regionalization of Public Housing continues to be unresolved. Legislators do not appear to be in favor of the Governor's proposal that would combine all housing authorities into six regional agencies, with a total of over 12,000 units per agency. This issue will not be brought before the Legislature until early 2014, but Legislators have voiced their support for the MassNAHRO proposal that keeps housing authorities as local entities with local Boards. CHA continues to be

considered a “High Performer” by HUD and no audit findings were noted in the FYE 2012 single audit.

### Concord Housing Development Corporation

David Hale, Chair  
Barbara Morse, Co-Chair  
Donald Lashley, Secretary/Treasurer  
Dean Atkins  
Amy Barrett  
Alan Bogosian  
Greg Higgins  
Marshall McLean  
Phil Posner

The Concord Housing Development Corporation (CHDC) is a non-profit entity established by a special act of the Massachusetts Legislature in August 2006. It assumed the responsibilities of the Concord Affordable Housing Committee, and the Board of Selectmen approved its bylaws in 2007. IRS approval for Recognition of Exemption from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) was granted in 2008. The CHDC is charged with facilitating the preservation and creation of affordable housing to meet the needs of low and middle-income persons, on behalf of the Town. The Corporation works closely with all Town boards, committees and departments to support the Town’s goal of housing diversity.

The goals for 2014 are to continue to build our new small grant program that assists current low and moderate-income residents of Concord with home repairs necessary for health and safety. We will also continue planning and proceeding with new construction on land that the Commonwealth has made available specifically for affordable housing and open space. As always, we will continue to actively pursue the retention of existing affordable properties and the creation of new ones.

### Activities during 2013

Two major activities have occupied the CHDC during 2013. Land formerly owned by the Commonwealth (the Department of Correction) and accessed from Winthrop Street was officially transferred to the CHDC in the spring. This acquisition was achieved by extraordinary effort over almost two decades on the part of the CHDC, Concord’s local and State Representatives, many concerned citizens and the Walden Woods Foundation. In June, affordable housing developers attended an information session hosted by the CHDC regarding development on the land. Interested parties were invited to submit proposals for the best use of the 12 acres (approximately 6 available for building). Twelve proposals were received from nine different developers, ranging in scope and design from 32 units of owner occupied dwellings to a

150 unit family rental design.

In November, the CHDC began presenting the proposals to various Town committees, starting with the West Concord Advisory Committee. (The presentation can be seen on the Town website.) The goal of the presentations is to solicit feedback from residents, committee members and Town officials on how the needs of the Town can best be met on this site, and what type of housing is suited to the land. Those presentations will continue into 2014, with the goal to find agreement on the scope and specific types of affordable housing (scope and use plan). Once the Selectmen feel that they can support a specific scope and use plan, the CHDC will go back to a limited number of the developers who have already indicated interest, and ask them to resubmit plans which are in accordance with the Town's desires. From there a developer will be chosen to carry the plan forward.

The second major focus of the CHDC has been to implement the Small Grants Program, which helps low to moderate-income residents of Concord make repairs to their homes to improve health and safety. Seventeen applications were received and reviewed in three funding cycles (January, May and September). Seven awards were made ranging from rebuilding steps and decks to water damage repair. The average award was approximately \$2,500. Further information is available on the Town website or from the Department of Planning and Land Management at 141 Keyes Rd.

The CHDC continues to monitor and respond to the maintenance of existing affordable units, refurbishing and rewriting deeds as necessary to help maintain Concord's housing inventory. With the assistance of our Selectmen liaison, we have instituted twice-yearly meetings with the other groups in Concord who support affordable housing. We have collaborated with both the Concord Housing Authority and the Concord Housing Foundation supporting efforts in which housing that comes to market might be made available for affordable uses, including in this past year, the McGrath Farm. Even though the Town has reached the State-required 10% affordable housing guideline (through the opening of the Concord Mews rental complex), the CHDC recognizes that number is fluid, dependent on census numbers and building changes. Concord remains an expensive town in which to live, and the need for affordable housing remains constant. We will continue to seek out and support responsible additions to the Town's inventory to help maintain and increase our housing diversity.

#### Concord Housing Foundation

Charles Phillips, President  
Pat Sinnott, Vice President  
Nancy McJennett, Treasurer  
Tina Labadini, Clerk  
Al Armenti

Steve Carr  
Tom Conway  
Jim Craig  
Barbara Powell  
Constance Putnam  
Terry Rothermel  
Win Wilbur

The Concord Housing Foundation, Inc. (CHF), (PO Box 751, Concord, MA 01742-0751) is a 501c(3) non-profit charitable corporation. Founded in 2001 and run by a volunteer Board of Directors, the CHF's purpose is to engage in fundraising, community outreach, and education in support of affordable housing in Concord.

To date, the CHF has undertaken campaigns to support seven affordable housing projects and raised more than \$700,000. Over 350 households, businesses, and religious institutions have contributed to these capital campaigns over the last decade. Otherwise, the CHF relies on annual donations from "Friends of Housing" to defray the costs of the newsletters, fundraising, and annual legal filings, as well as other means of support for Concord's housing programs.

The Foundation's newsletter, The Concord Housing News, is usually published in the spring and fall. The newsletter reports on topics related to affordable housing, including the current activities of the Concord Housing Authority and the Concord Housing Development Corporation. In addition, it covers housing issues at Town Meeting and the work of the CHF itself.

The CHF partnered with the Town this year on the plan for the McGrath house and land on Barrett's Mill Road, which purchase was authorized at the 2013 Town Meeting. A generous donor provided the CHF with \$100,000 toward the renovation of the main farmhouse, as part of a plan to lease the house to a farmer to cultivate adjacent parcels already owned by the Town. A further donation for this project is anticipated in early 2014. In addition, two CHF Directors surveyed 20 area farmers to determine their needs, if any, for affordable rental housing for seasonal farmworkers. The results were summarized and presented to the Town.

The CHF continues to be concerned about the construction of larger homes in Concord neighborhoods with small lots. At the 2013 Town Meeting, several amendments to bylaws for Residence Zone B neighborhoods (lots between 1/4 and 1/2 acre) were passed. These new bylaws replicate those passed at the 2011 Town Meeting for Zone C; namely, the maximum building height of 35 feet will now be measured to the peak (not the midpoint) of the roof, and from the original ground level (not a mounded level). Rules for side-yard setbacks were also altered. The information gathered by a CHF survey of Zone B residents helped the Planning Board bring these amendments to the

Town.

During 2013, the CHF elected Win Wilbur as a new Director. Terry Rothermel stepped down as President after more than 10 years of remarkable leadership, with Charles Phillips succeeding him. A Board of Advisors also supports the Foundation. The Advisors meet semiannually with the Directors and provide valuable counsel. The current members of the Advisory Board are: Nancy Beeuwkes, Nan Conway, Nancy Cronin, Holly Darzen, Carrie Flood, Art Fulman, Phill Gross, Mary Johnson, Jay Keyes, Sally Schnitzer, Norma Shapiro, Gordon Shaw, Steve Steinberg, Kate Villers, Phil Villers, and Alec Walker.