



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE, MAYOR

Housing Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: Omar Boukili, Mayor's Office

FROM: **Dana LeWinter, Director of Housing**

DATE: August 1, 2012

SUBJECT: Recommendation for Appointment of Melissa McWhinney to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund

There is a current vacancy on the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund in the position of a representative of a Somerville non-profit agency whose primary mission includes affordable housing. This recommendation for appointment will keep the composition of the Trust in compliance with the membership requirements under the Affordable Housing Trust Ordinance of 1989.

The following individual is recommended for appointment to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to fill the current vacancy:

- Non-profit representative – Melissa McWhinney, 66-70 Union Square, Somerville, MA 02143

Ms. McWhinney is the Acting Executive Director and Director of Advocacy and Community Services for the Community Action Agency of Somerville, where she has worked since 2004. Prior to that, she served the City of Somerville as the Director of the Office of Human Services and the Director of the Somerville Human Rights Commission. Ms. McWhinney has over 25 years of experience in the field and is also a member of the Massachusetts Bar. She was the recipient of the 20120 Martin Luther King Award from the Somerville Human Rights Commission. Her resume and letter of interest are attached here.

During the past years, the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund has witnessed a high demand for funding. The Trust has carefully selected high impact projects that advance its mission. Recent projects include loans totaling \$315,000 to Somerville Community Corporation for rental housing at St. Polycarp Phase III and rental housing for formerly homeless households at 75 Cross Street and to the Volunteers of America for the development of housing for formerly

homeless and low-income veterans at 1323 Broadway. Additionally, the Trust directly assists individual applicants through a Tenancy Stabilization Program administered by the Somerville Homeless Coalition and through the City's Closing Cost Assistance Program for first time homebuyers. Funds totaling \$86,315 went toward direct assistance in FY2012. The Trust also provides grants to nonprofits in the Somerville area that are committed to housing issues. In FY2012, the Trust advanced \$82,300 to ten nonprofits and in FY2013, the Trust has committed \$55,000 to seven nonprofits. Finally, in order to plan for the long term, the Trust in 2008 adopted a five-year Strategic Plan with specific benchmarks and program objectives.

I hope that you agree that Ms. McWhinney has much to offer the City in terms of relevant experience, skills, and commitment, and that we are fortunate that she is willing to volunteer her time and expertise so generously.