

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH OF
HIGHLAND PARK



The Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Borough of Highland Park met in a Regular Session in the Community Room of the S.J. Kronman Apartments located at 242 South Sixth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ at 6:30 PM on July 22, 2015, the hour and date duly established for the holding of said meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Reh.

Housing Director Blaha read the Notice of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act P.L. 1975, C.231 which provided that notice of this meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Borough of Highland Park was provided in the following manner:

On June 22, 2015, a copy of the notice of this meeting setting forth the date, time and location of this regular meeting was posted on the Housing Authority's official designated bulletin board located at 242 South Sixth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ, sent to Borough Hall for posting and was faxed to the Home News Tribune and Star Ledger and posted on the website.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Upon roll call, those present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT

Commissioners:

Steve Chudnick, Commissioner
Charlotte Quaintance, Commissioner
Diane Reh, Chairwoman
Evelyn Sedehi, Commissioner
Amanda Thomas, Vice Chair
Raysa Martinez, Commissioner

Administration:

Donna Brightman, Executive Director
Kathy Blaha, Housing Director-WHA
Runi Sriwardena, Housing Director-HP
Mike Yannuzzi, Maintenance Manager-WHA

Authority General Counsel:

Terrence Corriston, Esq., Breslin & Breslin

ABSENT

Commissioners:

Morgan Chen, Commissioner

Council Liaison:
Joshua Fine

Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on June 10, 2015 was made by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Thomas.

ROLL CALL: Chen Chudnick Martinez Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas
AYES: Chudnick Martinez Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Chen

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Public Comment:

M.P. asked what improvements will be done with RAD.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we are waiting for the Physical Needs Study.

M.P. stated that she hopes that we do not forget about the plumbing.

Bill Giacalone stated that he has lived here for 5 years and has a studio apartment. His paintings have taken all his space and he would like the BOC to give him a one bedroom unit.

Chairwoman Reh stated that the Housing Authority has policies which govern unit transfers.

Housing Director Sriwardena stated that Mr. Giacalone was offered a one bedroom unit and refused it and now his request to transfer doesn't meet the policy guidelines.

Counsel Corrison stated that if your paintings are taking up too much room, you need to seek assistance in selling them.

Chairwoman Reh stated that perhaps he could speak with someone about having an art show. She went on to say that a board meeting is not the proper forum to discuss this matter and suggested that he meet with Housing Director Sriwardena.

Mr. Giacalone stated that if he cannot get a larger unit, he will have to move and perhaps be homeless as he has received a notice from Housing about the cluttered condition of his apartment.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the Authority's mission is to provide safe, decent and sanitary housing and we have met that objective. Unfortunately, we cannot assist with making additional room for your paintings.

Chairwoman Reh stated that if anyone has any suggestions for Mr. Giacalone, please call Ms. Sriwardena.

Counsel Corrison stated that the Authority has done all that they can and this is a problem that the tenant has to handle/solve. If not, the Authority will have no choice but to pursue eviction due to the state of the apartment.

Dolores Van Lieu, 4H, stated that a tenant is parking in a handicapped space and is too sick to drive and; therefore, should not be taking up the space.

Counsel Corrison asked Ms. Sriwardena to kindly ask the tenant to move to another space.

Nancy Bernstein, 5R, stated that she has volunteered to be on the Affordable Housing board but has not been contacted.

Chairwoman Reh stated that the application to be considered is on the HPHA website.

Communications:

Executive Director Brightman stated that the Medical Alert was out for Request for Proposals.

Commissioner Sedehi asked if we would appoint a provider at the September BOC meeting.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we will.

Chairwoman Reh acknowledged Burt Weltman's resignation and introduced Raysa Martinez as Mr. Weltman's replacement.

Commissioner Martinez introduced herself.

Tenant Meeting Memo: Chairwoman Reh stated that she thought this would be a good idea and a way for tenants who did not attend to stay informed. She pointed out that there was a typo as painting is done every 5 years, not 7.

Chairwoman Reh stated that unwanted TV's can be deposited at the DPW.

Executive Director's Report:

Executive Director Brightman stated that upon doing a 20 year analysis of the RAD program, that in order to make it work, the Authority needs to apply for 4% tax credits. She stated that the RAD applications only call for a one year projection which gives the impression that the Authority only needed to apply for a bank loan. She went on to say that the preliminary physical needs assessment shows that the Authority needs about 2.8 million dollars to do the 20 year work item projections, most of which is in the first 5 years. This is another reason why we need 4% tax credit as we need more money in the early years.

Chairwoman Reh asked what is a tax credit.

Counsel Corrison gave her an in-depth explanation of how this works. He said most use tax credits to find affordable housing.

Commissioner Chudnick said that he learned about tax credits in his class at Rutgers.

Commissioner Martinez asked for an explanation of RAD.

Executive Director Brightman gave a short explanation of the program.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we have to increase the consultant's contract for services as a 4% tax credit application is much more involved.

Attorney's Report:

Counsel Corrison stated that there was an eviction matter pending.

Accountant's Report: no comment

Staff Reports:

Runi Sriwardena's report:

Commissioner Sedehi asked what UPCS was.

Housing Director Blaha stated that it is Uniform Physical Condition Standards.

Commissioner Chudnick asked if the elevators are completed.

Housing Director Sriwardena stated that they are up and running.

Maintenance report:

Commissioner Sedehi asked what is the average work order time.

Housing Director Blaha responded that it is 24 hours for an emergency and 30 days for a routine work order.

Executive Director Brightman stated that work orders are usually completed within 3 days.

Commissioner Chudnick asked what a PTAC unit is.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it is the tenants' air and heating unit.

Chairwoman Reh stated that everyone writes their reports differently, some are essays, some lists and that perhaps a template can be used for reports.

Section 8 Report:

Commissioner Sedehi asked what does searching mean.

Executive Director Brightman stated that a tenant was issued a voucher and they are looking for a unit.

Committee Reports: none

RESOLUTIONS

a) Reso #2015-30 - Adopting Monthly Bill List for June 2015

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Chudnick to adopt Resolution #2015-30.

Discussion:

Commissioners Chudnick and Sedehi asked about the roof.

Executive Director Brightman stated that this is an insurance item and has been submitted as such.

Commissioner Thomas asked if the PSE&G bill included all buildings.

Executive Director Brightman responded that it does.

ROLL CALL: Chen Chudnick Martinez Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas
AYES: Chudnick Martinez Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Chen

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

b) Reso #2015-31 – Authorizing the Executive Director to Pay the July/August Invoices for 2015

Motion moved by Commissioner Thomas and seconded by Commissioner Sedehi to adopt Resolution #2015-31.

ROLL CALL: Chen Chudnick Martinez Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas
AYES: Chudnick Martinez Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Chen

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

c) Reso #2015-32 – Authorizing the Submission of the Housing Authority of the Borough of Highland Park 2015 PHA Plan Significant Amendment

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Chudnick to adopt Resolution #2015-32.

Discussion

Executive Director Brightman stated that this is a requirement for the RAD program.

ROLL CALL: Chen Chudnick Martinez Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas
AYES: Chudnick Martinez Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Chen

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Second Public Comment

Joanne Rodgers, 1A, stated that the announcements that staff makes over the P.A. system are disturbing. Over the weekend an announcement stated “Whoever pulled the cord, please come down.” She was sleeping and the voice jolted her – she asked if they could say this is

an announcement so there is a warning, as she thought someone was in her apartment. Also, it should be used only for emergencies.

Housing Director Sriwardena explained that this particular incident involved 3 medical alarms, one after another. Police, emergency personnel and staff were very frustrated.

Emily Harris, 2C, said just say “attention residents.”

M.P. stated that she thought emergencies went directly to the Police.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we are speaking about tenants who pull the cord and then reset it. She stated that the system does go directly to emergency services.

Karin Jackson, 3P, stated that the emergency cords were pulled a lot this weekend.

Nancy Bernstein, 5R, stated that tenants who pull them accidentally should call and let them know it’s not an emergency.

Juan Ratliff, 219 South Sixth, stated that unauthorized people are using the parking lot and they throw garbage and are out there late at night and he is sick of calling the Police because they divulge the name of the complainer when they answer a call.

Chairwoman Reh stated that perhaps Josh Fine can address this.

Mr. Ratliff then stated “and, I don’t want to volunteer for the picnic.”

Housing Director Sriwardena answered, okay.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Thomas to adjourn at 7:35 PM.

All commissioners present voted in favor.

Donna Brightman, Exec. Director/Secretary