

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 June 14, 2017, the hour and date duly established for the holding of said meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Chudnick.

Runi Sriwardena 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 December 19, 2016, 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

ABSENT

Commissioners:

Steve Chudnick, Chairman
Regis Methven, Commissioner
Donald Monk, Commissioner
William Rainwater, Commissioner
Diane Reh, Commissioner
Evelyn Sedehi, Commissioner

Raysa Martinez, Commissioner

Authority General Counsel:

Terrence Corrison, Esq., Breslin & Breslin
(6:33 PM)

Council Liaison:

Matthew Hersh, Liaison (7:30 PM)

Administration:

Donna Brightman, Executive Director
Runi Sriwardena, Housing Manager
Mike Yannuzzi, Maintenance Director (WHA)

Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on May 10, 2017 was made by Commissioner Reh and seconded by Commissioner Sedehi.

Discussion

Commissioner Reh noted that the minutes say April and should say May.

ROLL CALL: Chudnick Martinez Methven Monk Rainwater Reh Sedehi
AYES: Chudnick Methven Monk Rainwater Reh Sedehi
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Martinez

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Commissioner Reh commented that Al Garlatti was much more than a board member as he served for over 40 years, a proponent of the Authority. She mentioned that a big piece of our history went with Al. He was responsible for this building too!

Commissioner Sedehi noted that she and Commissioner Reh represented the Authority at his wake.

Public Comment I

M.P. commented that she read Housing Manager Sriwardena's article in the newsletter about the children at Park Terrace being supervised while they play outside. She stated that she saw a child dive into the dumpster twice and come out with a green alligator. She noted that there was a little girl watching this and asked where her mom was. The child replied that she can't talk with strangers as she may get taken. She went on to say her mom was working but her uncle was watching her but he was in the house.

M.P. stated that she feels we need to provide the children with a safe place to play because someone is going to get hurt.

Chairman Chudnick stated that the Borough provides activities for children in the park.

Counsel Corrison asked when M.P. witnessed this.

M.P. replied that it was on a Sunday.

Counsel Corrison stated that if this happens while the staff is present, she should let them know so that Housing Manager Sriwardena can talk to the parent as they may be relying on a babysitter to watch their kids. He went on to say that Housing Manager Sriwardena can issue a lease violation notice.

Housing Manager Sriwardena stated that she has spoken to the parents and that in most cases it's visitors that are doing this (the children's' friends.)

Commissioner Methven stated that some parents just don't care – he witnessed five kids ganging up on one and stepped in to help. Some kids have no respect!

Karin Jackson, 3P, commented that the front of the building looks nice with the flowers and thanked Joanne Rogers for doing this. She also commented on the Victory Gardens in the back of the building.

Commissioner Reh agreed and thanked Joanne.

Al Stokes, 6E, stated that the children need to be taken care of no matter what.

Karin Jackson suggested we install a sandbox.

M.P. suggested that we build an enclosure for the dumpsters.

Joanne Rogers, 1C, asked for an update on what the Board was doing about the activity in the front of the building.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the Board purchased a No U-turn sign.

Ms. Rogers stated that the issue is not U-Turns but blocking the crosswalk and it's dangerous especially for sight impaired tenants.

Executive Director Brightman suggested a sign that states hearing and visually impaired live here.

Chairman Chudnick stated that he thought the problem was cars making U-turns.

Executive Director Brightman asked Ms. Rogers what she thought the solution was.

Ms. Rogers stated that it would be to remove the tree before the walkway so drop-offs could occur there instead of at the crosswalk.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she remembered discussing this with her but the U-turns were addressed not the crosswalk and she would look into it.

Commissioner Monk noted that a car just did a U-turn outside.

Ms. Rogers stated that there is one particular vehicle that blocks the walkway.

Commissioner Methven suggested that Housing Manager Sriwardena call the company.

Chairman Chudnick asked that the building and grounds committee look into the issue.

Commissioner Reh stated that they did and they also meet with the Police as they recommended the U-turn sign.

Commissioner Rainwater asked if the crosswalk was painted as such.

Executive Director Brightman responded that it is.

Counsel Corrison stated that if this is a repeat offender you can note dates and times and file a Police report.

Ms. Rogers stated that the tenant needs to be spoken to as she keeps the transport car waiting.

Executive Director Brightman thanked Ms. Rogers and said it will be referred to the committee.

M.P. suggested posting a sign showing fatalities like they have on highways.

Communications

Chairman Chudnick noted that Commissioner Methven's appointment was in the packet and appointed him to the buildings and ground committee.

Executive Director's Report

There was a discussion about the dumpsters and the continual damage caused by the DPW when emptying the garbage.

Executive Director Brightman stated that as directed she did file a damage claim with the Township but there has been no resolve.

Commissioner Sedehi asked if I spoke to the new Borough administrator.

Executive Director Brightman said no.

Commissioner Sedehi suggested following-up with Joan Hullings.

Commissioner Reh asked if a second claim was filed.

Executive Director Brightman answered no, not yet, as Matt Hersh is working on the issue. She stated that Councilman Hersh had a meeting about the situation and the outcome suggested was that the Authority hire a private garbage collector and the Borough will pay for it.

Chairman Chudnick stated he doesn't like the idea as the Borough is pushing shared services and they want us to hire a private company?

Executive Director Brightman stated that we expanded the dumpster pad area based on input from the DPW to improve the pick-up process a couple of years ago.

Commissioner Methven stated that perhaps the drivers need to be consulted.

Executive Director Brightman asked if it was the Board's wish to file another claim.

The consensus was to do so.

Executive Director Brightman responded that she will file it.

Commissioner Sedehi stated that we have tried to use Borough services – snow removal, landscaping, asking for increased bulk pick-up, and services provided have been unsatisfactory.

RAD Update

Commissioner Rainwater asked about the NJCC loan.

Executive Director Brightman said the original commitment expired so we had to get an extension. The letter is attached to my report.

Executive Director Brightman then gave an update as to where things stand at the moment. She also informed the Board that the two Federal Home Loan Bank grants were sent in.

Park Terrace is preparing to close and is in the hands of our lawyer, DeCottis.

Kronman has not received its RCC. We are still trying to make the numbers work and asked HUD if we can partially fund the reserve fund.

Commissioner Rainwater asked if it could be funded by the developer fee.

Executive Director Brightman answered, yes, that's the plan.

Commissioner Monk stated that it seems like a number of adjustments have been made in order to get things done.

Executive Director Brightman replied the adjustments are due to the falling tax credit prices and rising interest rates.

Commissioner Monk requested that the RAD committee meet via a phone conference.

Executive Director Brightman asked him for available dates.

Executive Director Brightman informed the Board that she and Susan Lenz have a meeting tomorrow at NJHMFA to discuss Kronman.

Chairman Chudnick appointed Commissioner Rainwater to the RAD Committee.

Chairman Chudnick noted the smoking policy.

Commissioner Rainwater asked how it will be enforced.

Housing Manager Sriwardena responded by the tenants and by inspections.

Chairman Chudnick noted that the policy was very thorough.

Executive Director Brightman noted that there will be two benches placed at Park Terrace with ash trays to accommodate the smokers. She also stated that the gazebo at Kronman was more than 25 feet away from the building and can be used by the smokers.

Attorney Report - nothing to report

Accountant Report - nothing to report

Housing Manager Sriwardena's Report

Commissioner Rainwater asked to be notified of the cookie fundraisers.

Commissioner Reh asked about the flea market.

Housing Manager Sriwardena responded that it was good but not well attended. She thanked Joanne Rogers for all her hard work and help.

Maintenance Report

Commissioner Reh asked about replacing the PTAC units.

Executive Director Brightman responded they are replaced when they no longer work.

Committee Reports - none

Resolutions

a) Reso #2017-32 – Adopting Monthly Bill List for May 2017

Motion moved by Commissioner Reh and seconded by Commissioner Rainwater to adopt Resolution #2017-32.

Discussion

Commissioner Reh asked if the JIF bill of \$20,000 is paid twice a year.

Executive Director Brightman answered, yes, that is correct.

ROLL CALL: Chudnick Martinez Methven Monk Rainwater Reh Sedehi
AYES: Chudnick Methven Monk Rainwater Reh Sedehi
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Martinez

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

b) Reso #2017-33 – Four Day Work Week for the Summer Months

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Reh to adopt Resolution #2017-33.

Discussion

Executive Director Brightman explained that there are two resolutions: one with maintenance working a four day week and one with their regular hours. She asked the BOC which resolution they wanted to vote on.

Commissioner Reh stated that the Borough doesn't allow the DPW to work a four day week, it's only for office personnel.

The Board voted on the resolution that had the office working four days and maintenance working five days.

ROLL CALL: Chudnick Martinez Methven Monk Rainwater Reh Sedehi
AYES: Chudnick Methven Monk Rainwater Reh Sedehi
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Martinez

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

c) Reso #2017-34 – Reso of HPHA Making Application to the Local Finance Board Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A: 12A-29 and N.J.S.A. 40A:5A-6 in Connection with the Issuance of a Bond (RAD Project) Series 2017 and Authorizing and Approving Certain Matters in Connection Therewith

Motion moved by Commissioner Rainwater and seconded by Commissioner Monk to adopt Resolution #2017-34.

Discussion

Executive Director Brightman explained that this resolution was necessary as we need permission to borrow money from the finance board and we also need permission from the Borough.

Commissioner Reh asked if the Borough should approve this first.

Executive Director Brightman said, no, we do it first then the Borough.

New Business

Executive Director Brightman stated that the audit is scheduled for the end of July. We are also subject to a PHAS REAC inspection which is early July. The scores do not count as we are in the RAD pipeline but since we did not close we are subject to the inspection.

Executive Director Brightman asked the BOC if they wanted her to install the tenant computer as there would be a monthly cost.

Commissioner Monk brought up instituting Wi-Fi security and a discussion ensued about the computer and community room Wi-Fi access.

Chairman Chudnick referred the matter to the tenant relations committee for discussion.

Councilman Hersh entered the meeting at this time and was asked to give an update about the dumpster.

Councilman Hersh stated that he met with Councilwoman Welkovits to discuss the matter and the suggestion was made for the Authority to hire a private garbage pick-up company and the Borough would pay for it.

Councilman Hersh felt this was not the best solution.

Housing Manager Sriwardena stated that Joe Thurston felt that the dumpsters could be reinforced. The Board felt this was not a solution.

Executive Director Brightman informed Councilman Hersh that the Authority was going to file another damage claim.

Commissioner Sedehi asked for an updated Board member list and committee list.

Councilman Hersh reported that he met with Susan Welkovits about having a representative of the Authority on the Planning/Zoning screening committee.

A discussion ensued about the benefits of having a representative on the committee.

It was agreed that the representative should be from the HPAHC not the HPHA.

Councilman Hersh will continue to work with Councilwoman Welkovits on this matter.

Commissioner Monk stated that the meetings are public so anyone can attend.

Commissioner Reh asked Councilman Hersh if the Borough had an affordable housing trust fund.

Councilman Hersh said he was not sure but he noted that the Borough is in litigation about its fair share numbers.

Commissioner Monk stated that's why we need a representative on the committee.

Councilman Hersh reported that the HPHA PILOT resolution passed last night at the council.

Executive Director Brightman thanked him for his assistance in the matter.

Second Public Comment

Joanne Rogers stated that the garage sale went off well and they had a lot of volunteers. Three years ago there were more outsiders involved and this time it was just the building. We earned \$200 and the left over items were donated to the church.

Ms. Rogers stated that the garbage outside, in the small cans, smells bad and questioned why tenants don't put it in the dumpster.

Commissioner Methven stated that some people are just lazy.

Karin Jackson stated, yes, they don't even put the garbage in the can; they leave it on top of the lid.

Housing Manager Sriwardena stated that she will discuss the issue with Joe Thurston.

Al Stokes stated that if the DPW owned the dumpster they would take better care of it and not damage it.

Ms. Rogers asked about the REAC inspection and door locks.

Housing Manager Sriwardena said the door can have a lock but not a heavy lock or bolt.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Monk and seconded by Commissioner Rainwater to adjourn at 7:55 PM.

All commissioners present voted in favor.

Donna Brightman, Exec. Director/Secretary