

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 March 8, 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

Commissioners:

Steve Chudnick, Chairman
Raysa Martinez, Commissioner
William Rainwater, Commissioner
Diane Reh, Commissioner
Evelyn Sedehi, Commissioner

Council Liaison:

Matthew Hersh, Commissioner

Administration:

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

ABSENT

Commissioners:

Donald Monk, Commissioner

Authority General Counsel:

Terrence Corriston, Esq., Breslin & Breslin

Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on February 8, 2017 was made by Commissioner Martinez and seconded by Commissioner Reh.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Discussion

Commissioner Rainwater stated that he abstained on the approval of the 1/11/17 minutes, not voted yes.

Commissioner Reh pointed out that on page 4, middle of the page, “new units to be leased with (should be without)” passing HQS.

Commissioner Sedehi asked what HOTMA was.

Executive Director Brightman replied that it was the Housing Opportunities through Modernization Act.

Florence Stein, 5S, stated that she heard that the HPHA will be losing their social worker, Kettly, and that this is very distressing. She went on to say that she prefers Kettly’s work as opposed to using the social worker at the senior center. Kettly was able to help her figure out transportation to the doctor for her husband as they do not currently have a car and she was grateful for her help.

Chairman Chudnick stated that Kettly is at Highland Park due to a grant.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she and Housing Manager Sriwardena are trying to work out something with Kettly that would allow her to work reduced hours at the HPHA. She also stated that Kettly’s grant was ending as of June and there was no guarantee that it would have been funded again.

Executive Director Brightman went on to say that HUD prohibits the ROSS grant in non-public housing entities so RAD does not qualify.

Housing Manager Sriwardena stated that there is no way possible that she could fill Kettly’s void.

Executive Director Brightman stated that Kettly goes above and beyond what is required.

Commissioner Sedehi said her reports show that.

Commissioner Martinez stated that her reports show the value of her service and asked if there are any other grants to fund the position.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it would be unlikely, especially with the senior center next door and reminded the Board as that was the reason Jani's position ended.

Tom Nolan, 3H, asked when they were getting new windows and asked about the window guards.

Executive Director Brightman responded the time frame for the windows is still unknown.

Communications - none

Executive Director's Report/RAD

Executive Director Brightman stated that she wanted to follow-up on a matter that was raised last month by Commissioner Monk regarding the Maztek bill.

Executive Director Brightman explained that the charge of \$1,197 for web maintenance is a one-time fee not a monthly or quarterly fee.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she signed the loan documents for NJCC and was uploading documents to the RAD website. She informed Councilman Hersh that she may need some assistance in obtaining the environmental, part 58, from the Borough.

Executive Director Brightman stated that there is still no word on the 4% tax credit program and there was a rumor going around that there may not be one.

Commissioner Reh asked if Executive Director Brightman ever followed up with sustainable Highland Park on the solar roof panels.

Executive Director Brightman responded, yes, both Councilman Hersh and she had a conversation with them but so far there were no suggestions on how to get funding for installation.

Councilman Hersh stated that we are still trying.

Commissioner Rainwater questioned the legal bill.

Executive Director Brightman explained that it was for obtaining an opinion as to whether or not WHA could lend money to HP. The answer was, no, that was not possible.

Commissioner Martinez questioned if environmental, part 58, was correct.

Executive Director Brightman responded that it is.

Attorney Report – nothing to report

Accountant Report - nothing to report

Staff Reports

Housing Manager Sriwardena's Report:

Chairman Chudnick questioned Housing Manager Sriwardena on the illegal guest issue.

Housing Manager Sriwardena stated that it was rectified by sending a letter and the tenant cooperated.

Chairman Chudnick asked Councilman Hersh to see if the DPW could remove the tree branches in the back of the building.

Councilman Hersh stated that he would.

Regis Methven, apt. #3R, volunteered to do it.

The Board thanked him but said they have to ask the DPW to do it due to insurance reasons.

Committee Reports

Tenant Relations:

Commissioner Sedehi reported that she attended the tenant meeting earlier today. There was discussion of reoccurring issues with garbage, throwing food off of balconies, and feeding the animals. She stated that the meeting was well attended and positive and people feel free to express themselves. She also stated that Housing Manager Sriwardena runs a good meeting and that tenants not attending get a copy of the agenda.

Grounds:

Commissioner Reh reported that she was here the day the tree branch fell and that Joe Thurston took it down with a rope. She stated that we need to look into a tree maintenance plan.

Executive Director Brightman stated that we did last year and the price to do the trees was \$10,000 which was cost prohibitive. She further stated that Joe Thurston said he could do most of the work if he had the proper equipment (chain saw/pruner.)

The Board agreed that it was a good idea to let Mr. Thurston do it and to invest up to \$1,000 for the equipment.

Tenant Relations:

Commissioner Martinez stated that the letter for a tenant commissioner went out and that so far two responses have been received. She said that Executive Director Brightman handed out the selection policy for the Board to see. Once a selection is made they will be referred to the Mayor and Council for appointment.

Juan Ratliff, 219 South 6th Ave., asked why he has to stand outside and cannot get in to the public meeting.

There was a discussion about tenant security.

Maintenance Manager Yannuzzi stated that he will contact the electrician to install a doorbell that rings in the community room.

Resolutions

- a) Reso #2017-10– Rescind Reso #2017-5 (Award Contract for RAD Financing for Park Terrace to Atlantic Stewardship Bank (ASB) in an Amount not to Exceed \$500,000

Motion moved by Commissioner Reh and seconded by Commissioner Sedehi to adopt Resolution #2017-10.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

- b) Reso #2017-11 – Designate Official Newspapers 4/1/17 – 3/31/18

Motion moved by Commissioner Reh and seconded by Commissioner Sedehi to adopt Resolution #2017-11.

Discussion

Commissioner Reh asked why we do not use the Highland Park Planet.

Chairman Chudnick stated that we looked into that and it was too costly.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

c) Reso #2017-12 - Adopting Monthly Bill List for February 2017

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Rainwater to adopt Resolution #2017-12.

Discussion

Commissioner Rainwater asked about the PSE&G bill - \$21,397.78.

There was a discussion about putting covers over the thermostats in the hallways which was agreed upon.

Commissioner Reh stated that every new Board member remarks about the PSE&G bill.

Commissioner Sedehi stated that this was discussed at the tenant meeting, encouraging residents to save energy. She also said at one time they discussed metering Park Terrace.

Executive Director Brightman stated there has not been any energy saving measures at Kronman and that the RAD conversion would address some items: roof, windows, and PTAC units.

Commissioner Reh asked about the Intrep Solutions bill for \$3,619.00.

Executive Director Brightman reminded her that this was discussed last month; it was to purchase a new computer server.

Commissioner Martinez asked about the elevator bill for the State of NJ - \$1,252.

Executive Director Brightman said it was for inspection fees.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

d) Reso #2017-13 – Authorizing a Salary Increase of \$900 Effective 4/1/17 for all Employees

Motion moved by Commissioner Reh and seconded by Commissioner Sedehi to adopt Resolution #2017-13.

Discussion

Commissioner Reh asked if this was discussed with the Personnel Committee.

Executive Director Brightman replied that it was and Commissioner Sedehi confirmed this.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

e) Reso #2017-14 – Write-off Uncollected Rent Balances

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Reh to adopt Resolution #2017-14.

Discussion

Commissioner Sedehi asked if they were submitted to the collection agency.

Housing Manager Sriwardena replied that they were.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

f) Reso #2017-15 – Ratify the Renewal of the Contract for Plumbing Repair Services Contractor through January 31, 2019

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Rainwater to adopt Resolution #2017-15.

Discussion

Chairman Chudnick stated that a prior contract was being rolled over.

Commissioner Rainwater asked why not re-bid.

Executive Director Brightman stated to hold the price.

Commissioner Martinez asked when they are called.

Executive Director Brightman responded when there is a problem that Mr. Thurston cannot fix.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

g) Reso #2017-16 – Renew the Flooring Contract to 3/31/18 with Aleman Carpet

Motion moved by Commissioner Reh and seconded by Commissioner Sedehi to adopt Resolution #2017-16.

Discussion

Chairman Chudnick stated that this is the same situation, a rollover.

Commissioner Sedehi asked about the carpet installation.

Executive Director Brightman stated the first floor is laminate and the other floors have carpet in the living room and bedroom.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

h) Reso #2017-17 – Renew Mason Contract with CMS Construction from 4/1/17 – 3/31/19

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Reh to adopt Resolution #2017-17.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

i) Reso #2017-18 – Final Renewal of the Landscaping Contract to D’Onofrio & Son to Provide Landscaping Services for the 2017 Season

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Reh to adopt Resolution #2017-18.

Discussion

Commissioner Sedehi said the property always looks nice but she didn’t know if it was due to the landscaper or the tenants.

Commissioner Reh asked if they do tree removal.

Housing Manager Sriwardena stated that they do not.

ROLL CALL: Chudnick Martinez Monk Rainwater Reh Sedehi
AYES: Chudnick Martinez Rainwater Reh Sedehi

NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Monk

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

j) Reso #2017-19 – Designate Fee Accountant – 4/1/17- 3/31/19 to William Katchen

Motion moved by Commissioner Reh and seconded by Commissioner Rainwater to adopt Resolution #2017-19.

Discussion

Chairman Chudnick said this contract went out to RFP and was reviewed by a committee.

Commissioner Sedehi said it's our first time doing a two-year contract.

Executive Director Brightman responded, yes, it was your idea.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

k) Reso #2017-20 – Designate General Counsel – 4/1/17- 3/31/19 to Breslin & Breslin

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Rainwater to adopt Resolution #2017-20.

Discussion

Executive Director Brightman stated that this went to RFP and was reviewed by a committee. She stated that one bid was received.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

l) Reso #2017-21 – Reso in Support of Building a Thriving NJ

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Rainwater to adopt Resolution #2017-21.

Discussion

Chairman Chudnick asked Councilman Hersh if he knew of anyone else who passed this resolution.

Councilman Hersh replied that Elizabeth did.

Commissioner Reh asked if the Borough did.

Councilman Hersh replied, not yet and that he will present it at the next meeting.

Commissioner Rainwater asked if this passes will it help the Town with its COAH obligation.

Councilman Hersh replied, yes, indirectly. He stated that the resolution is sponsored by the Housing and Community Development Network of NJ. He thanked the BOC for considering it. He went on to say that this proposal is encouraging the legislature to allocate 600 million dollars to create affordable homes. The purpose of the initiative is to “build a thriving NJ” by funding current programs such as lead prevention, neighborhood revitalization, etc.

Councilman Hersh stated that passing this resolution poses no burden to the Authority as it is just a show of support. Hopefully, it also serves as an election stimulant for the upcoming Governor’s race.

Commissioner Martinez stated that although she is in favor of this initiative, her position working with the State of NJ prevents her from voting on this so she will abstain.

Executive Director Brightman asked Councilman Hersh to please inform her as to who this resolution needs to be sent to.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

New Business

Commissioners Reh and Sedehi stated that for the next meeting Commissioner Martinez should be placed by Commissioner Chudnick.

Councilman Hersh stated that he has attempted to follow-up on this traffic concern in front of the Kronman building but the officer was on vacation. He mentioned that he will report on it at the next meeting.

Chairman Chudnick inquired as to whether or not we send sympathy cards to deceased residents’ families.

Housing Manager Sriwardena replied, yes, and we also attend funeral services.

Second Public Comment

Joanne Rogers, 1K, stated that when placing covers over the thermostats be mindful of the fact that the stair wells are not heated and are drafty especially if you live in an end unit.

Karin Jackson, 3P, stated that the hallway lights are on all night.

Maintenance Manager Yannuzzi responded that they have to be as ordered by the Fire Dept.

Juan Ratliff, 219 South 6th Ave., wanted to know why his bathroom sink is always stopped up.

Commissioner Sedehi asked if he called it in.

Mr. Ratliff responded, yes, also the kitchen counters are poor quality and a piece of his fell off. He went on to say that every time the upstairs tenant showers water leaks into his bathroom.

Ms. Sriwardena stated that Joe Thurston has been there and she will send him again tomorrow.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the tubs leak because there are two tubs on top of each other. We are waiting to see if we get Home Funds to address this problem

Raymond Jones, apt. 6P, requested a copy of the bill list.

Executive Director Brightman stated that he could get a copy from Ms. Sriwardena tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Reh to adjourn at 7:30 PM.

All commissioners present voted in favor.

Donna Brightman, Exec. Director/Secretary