

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 May 11, 2016, the hour and date duly established for the holding of said meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Reh.

Kathy 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 January 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:

Commissioners:

Steve Chudnick, Commissioner
Matthew Hersh, Commissioner (6:43 PM)
Raysa Martinez, Commissioner
Diane Reh, Chairwoman
Evelyn Sedehi, Commissioner

Morgan Chen, Commissioner
Donald Monk, Commissioner

Authority General Counsel:
Terrence Corriston, Esq., Breslin & Breslin
(6:40 PM)

Council Liaison:
Joshua Fine

Administration:
Donna Brightman, Executive Director
Kathy Blaha, Housing Director - WHA
Mike Yannuzzi, Maintenance Manager - WHA

Administration:
Runi Sriwardena, Housing Director

Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on April 13, 2016 was made by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Martinez.

Discussion

Commissioner Sedehi noted that there was a spelling error on page 2, first paragraph under public comment, should read well check.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Public Comment:

Juan Ratliff, 219, inquired as to when the exterminator was coming?

Housing Manager Blaha responded that exterminations were cancelled due to inclement weather and that a new schedule was going out.

Mr. Ratliff also stated that the Authority posted “no loitering” signs but the kids are still in the parking lot. He doesn’t want to call the police as they tell who calls.

Chairwoman Reh stated that she would talk to Councilman Fine about this issue.

M.P. stated that 4 year’s ago there was a flood and All Risk was assigned the clean-up and they had tenants back in their apartments in record time. They also were sent to clean-up the recent flood and did a good job and so did Jeff Marder.

Commissioner Chudnick asked if there was a way to avoid these types of floods.

Executive Director Brightman responded by installing a water sensor faucet.

Karen Jackson, 3P, stated that Jeff Marder stayed until 2 AM the night of the flood to clean-up and did a good job.

Communications:

- a) Email from Venus Majeski to Executive Director Brightman dated 4/27/16 regarding the HUD ROSS program

Chairwoman Reh asked who Venus was.

Executive Director Brightman stated that this is Ketley’s supervisor.

Chairwoman Reh asked who Raquel was.

Executive Director Brightman responded that it is Ketley's counterpart in Perth Amboy.

Executive Director Brightman's report:

Chairwoman Reh noted that Executive Director Brightman provided a follow-up report from April's BOC meeting.

Commissioner Chudnick thanked Executive Director Brightman for the follow-up on the RFP process.

Chairwoman Reh stated that RAD will be discussed during the Committee reports section.

Attorney Report

Counsel Corrison stated that he just read a report from PHADA about next year's HUD budget funding for: Public housing 86%, Section 8 Admin. at 83%, and this is not good that is why Authorities are pursuing RAD as it is 100% funded under Section 8.

Executive Director Brightman asked Counsel Corrison if he had any experience with an Authority that ran out of capital money and needed additional funding and what the process would be.

Counsel Corrison stated, no, he did not know what HUD would do but perhaps sell the building and convert to vouchers.

Executive Director Brightman stated that if HUD passes a budget after 9/30, cuts would be retroactive back to that date.

Accountant Report: none

Staff Reports:

Chairwoman Reh stated that the big news was the flood.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it was not as bad as originally thought.

Commissioner Hersh asked how residents are notified of this type of situation.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it depends on the extent of the situation as sometimes emergency personnel are notified and other times we do it.

Commissioner Hersh remarked that the bathroom sinks have a drain at the top of the sink but kitchens do not.

Executive Director Brightman stated that Woodbridge provided manpower in Joe Thurston's absence.

Committee Reports:

Tenant Relations: Commissioner Martinez reported that she, Chairwoman Reh and Commissioner Sedehi met with Housing Director Sriwardena, Bonnie and Ketley and there were a couple of issues that came up:

- The tenants want a budget item, in our budget, so they can purchase refreshments and have a Holiday party.

Executive Director Brightman stated that food is not an appropriate budget item. She went on to say that this is why she encouraged tenants to form a Resident Council so that they can receive the \$15 per apartment for tenant activities.

- The next item was a copy machine – the tenants noted that the office would make copies of items needed for recertification but not for personal use.

Karen Jackson, 3P, stated that the senior center has a copy machine.

After a discussion the following conclusions were reached:

- Ask Housing Director Sriwardena to talk to Bonnie for assistance in setting-up a Resident Council.
- Purchase a copy machine for tenant use and establish a fee and use policy.

Facilities:

In Commissioner's Chen absence Executive Director Brightman handed out a report written by him on the garbage issue.

A discussion took place about the damaged dumpster.

Executive Director Brightman was directed to file a claim with the Borough Clerk and purchase a replacement.

RAD Committee:

In Commissioner Monk's absence, Commissioner Hersh gave the report.

Chairwoman Reh revised the RAD committee to include Commissioners Monk, Chudnick and Hersh (Commissioner Hersh replaced Diane Reh.)

Commissioner Hersh stated that a conference call was held with the consultant, Executive Director Brightman, Commissioner Monk, Commissioner Chudnick and himself. He stated that he and Commissioner Monk were trying to contact other Authorities to get their RAD testimonials and that they were looking into RAD case studies to gather information.

Commissioner Hersh explained that the conference call was about separating Samuel Kronman and Park Terrace into two projects. Samuel Kronman would continue to proceed with tax credit financing due to the amount of work needed. Park Terrace needing about \$225,000 in repairs would be financed by a bank loan. However, Commissioner Monk wanted to see the expenses associated with Park Terrace. Currently, the expenses are co-mingled because it is one AMP.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she wanted direction on how to proceed with the RAD as she does not want to continue to spend money pursuing RAD if the Board is not going to go through with the conversion.

Commissioners Sedehi, Reh and Chudnick suggested that a formal resolution be put forth to authorize the Executive Director to continue the RAD conversion.

Commissioners Martinez and Hersh felt that they did not have enough information and felt uncomfortable to vote on such a resolution.

Executive Director Brightman explained that the Board previously voted to participate in the RAD program prior to Commissioner Martinez' and Commissioner Hersh's appointment to the commission.

Chairwoman Reh gave the Board a summary of what she felt the pros were for the RAD conversion. She made the point that the Borough attorney has reviewed RAD and the Council is in support of the project. She noted that federal money for public housing is shrinking while Section 8 is not. She commented that Bill Katchen and Terry Corrison are involved in over 17 RAD conversions. She further went on to say that the improvements would be of benefit to the tenants and we would be doing energy improvements which would save money. She also stated that we have invested in this process by having a consultant submitting an application, establishing the affordable housing corporation and we need to move forward.

Commissioner Sedehi stated that the HPAC has three board members on it and it will protect the Authority's interest.

Commissioner Hersh noted that he likes the idea of the HPAHC as it can do other housing projects.

Commissioner Chudnick stated that he wanted to move forward with the process.

Counsel Corrison stated that the Board has the option to opt-out of RAD at any time prior to the closing.

Commissioner Hersh asked that the Board continue to be informed of RAD expenses.

Executive Director Brightman summarized what she was going to do: separate the RAD into two projects, Kronman and Park Terrace; continue to wait for tax credit funding on Kronman and to apply for a bank loan to finance the Park Terrace repairs as well as apply for a federal home loan bank grant.

Commissioner Hersh commented that he feels tax credits benefit larger projects not smaller ones and that he has a concern about transferring ownership.

Commissioner Chudnick commented that he wants Executive Director Brightman to be able to do her job and to know that the Board backs her.

Counsel Corrison commented that the bank loan does not change ownership, only tax credits.

The consensus of the Board was not to put forth a resolution but to continue to move forward with the RAD conversion and for the Director to continue to update the commissioners in her monthly RAD update report.

RESOLUTIONS

- a) Reso #2016-28 – Extend Contract for Laundry Service Provider through May 2018

Motion moved by Commissioner Chudnick and seconded by Commissioner Sedehi to adopt Resolution #2016-28.

Discussion

Commissioner Chudnick asked if we were happy with the service.

Executive Director Brightman responded that we were.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

b) Reso #2016-29 – Adopting Monthly Bill List for May 2016

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Chudnick to adopt Resolution #2016-29.

Discussion

Chairwoman Reh commented that we were using Minuteman press and asked what Trane was.

Maintenance Manager Yannuzzi responded that it is for the furnaces.

Commissioner Martinez questioned the PSE&G bill and the addresses.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

c) Reso #2016-30 – Designate Auditor FYE 3/31/16 to Hymanson, Parnes & Giampolo for the Sum of \$7,050

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Martinez to adopt Resolution #2016-30.

Discussion

Chairwoman Reh asked if there were any other submissions.

Executive Director Brightman answered that this was the only one.

ROLL CALL: Chen Chudnick Hersh Martinez Monk Reh Sedehi
AYES: Chudnick Hersh Martinez Reh Sedehi

NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Chen Monk

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

d) Reso #2016-31 – FY 2015 Annual SEMAP Certification Form 52648

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Chudnick to adopt Resolution #2016-31.

Discussion

Commissioner Martinez pointed out that one form has Woodbridge on it.

Executive Director Brightman explained that this was a self-certification that HUD reviews.

Chairwoman Sedehi asked if there were ever any discrepancies.

Executive Director Brightman answered yes, as the data is maintained in the PIC system.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

e) Reso #2016-27 – Reso Authorizing a Board Retreat on June 26, 2016

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Hersh to adopt Resolution #2016-27.

Discussion

Counsel Corrison added the language “and post on the official bulletin board.”

Commissioner Sedehi asked about the agenda.

Commissioner Martinez stated that Commissioner Monk and Chairwoman Reh met and made a list of discussion points: mission statement, website, RAD, overall goals and objectives, elderly only designation and where do we want to be in 5 years.

Commissioner Chudnick asked what happens to the Board when we convert to RAD.

Counsel Corrison stated that the Board will oversee the project based vouchers.

Commissioner Chudnick asked why an affordable housing agency was needed.

Executive Director Brightman responded that HUD rules state that you cannot be the owner and the voucher administrator.

Commissioner Martinez asked that anyone send her discussion items.

ROLL CALL: Chen Chudnick Hersh Martinez Monk Reh Sedehi

AYES: Chudnick Hersh Martinez Reh Sedehi

NAYS: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Chen Monk

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

New Business

Chairwoman Reh asked that the members follow Roberts Rule of Order (she did not know Commissioner Monk would be absent.)

Second Public Comment

Juan Ratliff stated that tenant meetings should be mandatory.

Executive Director Brightman stated that this is a good idea but we cannot mandate attendance.

M.P. said she appreciated the meeting as everyone was interested, cordial and respectful.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Martinez to adjourn at 8:15 PM.

All commissioners present voted in favor.

Donna Brightman, Exec. Director/Secretary