

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 October 5, 2016, the hour and date duly established for the holding of said meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Reh.

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 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
Donald Monk, Commissioner
Diane Reh, Chairwoman

Morgan Chen, Commissioner
Raysa Martinez, Commissioner
Evelyn Sedehi, Commissioner

Council Liaison:

Joshua Fine (7:00 PM)

Authority General Counsel:

Terrence Corriston, Esq., Breslin & Breslin

Administration:

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

Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on Sept. 14, 2016 was made by Commissioner Hersh and seconded by Commissioner Monk.

Discussion

Page 2 needs to state that Commissioner Chudnick was reappointed not Commissioner Monk.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Public Comment:

Karin Jackson, 3P, stated that she heard that Kettly Giles was leaving and stated that the tenants need her.

Executive Director Brightman explained that Ms. Giles' grant is up in the spring and that we could not have a ROSS coordinator in conjunction with the RAD program as it's prohibited by regulation. The seniors have the resources available at the senior center. Also, that the Authority is looking into funding for Kettly.

Communications - none

Executive Director Brightman's report/RAD Update:

Executive Director Brightman noted that she attached the Use and Occupancy Agreement that Joe Thurston signed for 616 Benner Street and also, the correspondence from HUD concerning the projected overspending in the voucher program. When given architectural data HUD decided that we would not overspend. We are monitoring the situation closely.

Attorney Report – none

Accountant Report - none

Commissioner Monk stated that he hoped Bill Katchen would be present to discuss the audit.

Executive Director Brightman stated that is not Mr. Katchen's function as it's the auditor who was asked to come tonight but he had a prior engagement and could not attend.

Staff Reports:

Manager's report – Commissioner Chudnick asked if the bed bug situation has been remedied.

Housing Manager Sriwardena answered that it has.

Commissioner Chudnick asked about the waiting list and lack of Highland Park residents.

Executive Director Brightman responded that prior to the meeting she and Dian Reh were talking about reaching out to the Highland Park apartment complexes.

Chairwoman Reh volunteered to do this as some may be more suited for housing at the Kronman building.

Commissioner Hersh inquired about the tenant eviction for smoking and how the process works.

Housing Manager Sriwardena responded that she first speaks to a tenant about the issue, then issues a warning, next a letter to cease and finally a notice to quit which results in a court action.

Commissioner Monk inquired as to whether or not Vinnie Sammartino (pest control) reached out to the Rutgers contact concerning bed bugs.

Executive Director Brightman responded that he did.

Section 8 Report:

Commissioner Monk asked who performs the Section 8 inspections.

Executive Director Brightman responded that a Woodbridge staff member does (Sean Cashin).

Commissioner Monk asked how often this is done.

Executive Director Brightman responded that it is every two years or upon request.

Commissioner Monk asked how the information was kept.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it is by name and address.

Committee Reports:

RAD

Commissioner Monk informed the Board that we received two banking proposals for Park Terrace. He felt that the conditions and terms were egregious. He further said that the RAD committee will also meet with Susan Lenz to discuss the proposals.

Executive Director Brightman stated that our loan amount is too low to attract the bigger banks. Also, perhaps if we receive the FHLB funds and have a healthy reserve we might not need to borrow from a bank. This would be discussed when we meet.

Chairwoman Reh asked if there was any news on the dumpster claim.

Executive Director Brightman responded that there was not.

Commissioner Monk asked when the next bulk trash pickup is.

Commissioner Hersh responded that it will be December 14th.

Executive Director Brightman asked Councilman Fine if there was any news on the Authority receiving defibrillator or CPR training.

Councilman Fine stated that he would check.

RESOLUTIONS

a) Reso #2016-40 – Establishing the Payment Standards for the HCV Program

Motion moved by Commissioner Monk and seconded by Commissioner Hersh to adopt Resolution #2016-40.

Discussion

Executive Director Brightman explained this is a “housekeeping” issue that occurs every October when the Fair Market Rents change and at this time they need to be reviewed. There is no change in the amounts.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

b) Reso #2016-41 – Annual Update of HCV Utility Allowance

Motion moved by Commissioner Chudnick and seconded by Commissioner Monk to adopt Resolution #2016-41.

Discussion

Executive Director Brightman noted that this resolution is also a housekeeping issue with no change.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

c) Reso #2016-42 – Revision of Flat Rents

Motion moved by Commissioner Chudnick and seconded by Commissioner Hersh to adopt Resolution #2016-42.

Discussion

Executive Director noted that this resolution is also a housekeeping issue with no change.

Commissioner Monk asked what happens when we go to RAD.

Executive Director Brightman stated that flat rents are for public housing tenants and when we go to RAD we will use voucher payment standards.

Commissioner Chudnick asked if the tenants are given the option to pay flat rents at recertification.

Executive Director Brightman responded, yes, the option is flat rent or 30% of income.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

d) Reso #2016-43 – Adopting Monthly Bill List for September 2016

Motion moved by Commissioner Chudnick and seconded by Commissioner Monk to adopt Resolution #2016-43.

Discussion

Chairwoman Reh stated that we had the trees analyzed and it would cost \$10,000 to clear all the dangerous branches.

Executive Director Brightman responded that the Authority was looking into other options such as shared services with the Borough as \$10,000 was too much money.

Commissioner Monk inquired about the RAD attorney expense.

Executive Director Brightman responded that we needed to setup a limited partnership for the FHLB application which the attorney prepaid.

Commissioner Chudnick asked how the medical alarms were working.

Housing Manager Sriwardena responded great as we do not have any more false alarms. She remarked that the pendants are an issue when they are returned.

Executive Director Brightman asked if the Board felt comfortable adopting the Audit. She noted that there are no findings.

Chairwoman Reh and Commissioner Monk stated that they had no issue with doing so.

e) Reso #2016-44 – Resolution to Accept the Audit for FYE 3/31/16

Motion moved by Commissioner Hersh and seconded by Commissioner Chudnick to adopt Resolution #2016-44.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

New Business

Commissioner Hersh informed the Board that he attended the meeting concerning Buck Woods. The plan is to build two buildings with a total of 144 units of which 20 would be affordable rentals. The other units would be condos selling at \$350,000 to \$400,000 for one and two bedrooms.

Councilman Fine stated that currently this is zoned single family and the court master was asking if the Borough would be amiable to a zone change.

The next Planning Board meeting is on October 13 at 7:30 PM to discuss the area in need of rehabilitation designation.

Ms. Sriwardena informed the Board that the tenants have started a petition against the development.

Karin Jackson said she is doing it and presented the Board with a copy of the petition.

A discussion ensued as to whether or not the Board should take a position on the development and in what form.

The Board agreed that this development would affect the quality of life of the Highland Park Housing Authority residents and that they would support the position of the residents.

Commissioner Hersh and Executive Director Brightman will present a resolution on the matter at the next meeting.

Second Public Comment

Karin Jackson asked why all of you can't sign the petition.

Executive Director Brightman stated we do not live here, you do, and you will be directly affected.

Dee Donally stated that there is already a lot of traffic in town and adding another development will make it worse.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Monk and seconded by Commissioner Chudnick to adjourn at 7:45 PM.

All commissioners present voted in favor.

Donna Brightman, Exec. Director/Secretary