

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 10, 2019, the hour and date duly established for the holding of said meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Martinez.

Housing Director 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 April 16, 2019, 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
Raysa Martinez, Chair
Regis Methven, Commissioner
Diane Reh, Commissioner
Evelyn Sedehi, Commissioner

Authority General Counsel:

Terrence Corrison, Esq., Breslin & Breslin

Council Liaison:

Matthew Hale (6:40 PM)

Administration:

Donna Brightman, Executive Director
Runi Sriwardena, Housing Director
Mike Yannuzzi, Maintenance Mgr. WHA

ABSENT

Commissioners:

Ruby Hope, Commissioner
William Rainwater, Commissioner

Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on September 12, 2019 was made by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Reh.

Discussion

Add to page 2 – last line, regarding Chair Martinez’ statement, “and also the grounds should be inspected periodically.”

Commissioner Sedehi asked if the gazebo was repaired.

Commissioner Methven responded that it was in progress.

Commissioner Chudnick noted that Chair Martinez was referred to as Chairman and it was noted to just use Chair.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Public Comment I:

Karin Jackson, 3P, stated that she hears people complaining about the construction and they are upset, they need to have patience.

Chair Martinez commented that they will be happy when the work is done.

M.P. stated that she looked at the new showers and you can only enter by the toilet and the space is very small and people will have trouble getting in. She urged the BOC to go and look and let her know what they think.

Commissioner Methven stated that it may be an issue for some tenants.

Commissioner Reh asked if the showers were supposed to be handicapped accessible.

Executive Director Brightman responded, no, just aging-in-place friendly. They are handicapped showers on the first floor.

Commissioner Sedehi asked if she could see a new shower.

M.P. stated that she was grateful for the improvements. She noted that when the kitchens were done, the contractors left a gap between cabinets and then they had to fix it.

Debbie Bradley, 6F, stated that she has a completed shower and she doesn’t want to use the seat and wonders if the water will spray outside the walls. She also stated that there was only about 10 inches of space to get into the shower and it also has a step. Bigger people are

going to have a rough time getting in. She went on to say that she is not a morning person and she left dishes in her sink and the contractors used the sink to wash their hands with her soap and she did not appreciate them touching her things. She went on to say that the building personnel need to communicate more with the tenants so that they know what is going on, for instance my shower was just completed and no one told me when I can use it. She also offered her apartment, for the BOC to come look at the shower, after the meeting.

Raymond Jones, 6D, said they can look at his apartment right now too.

Tom Nolan asked if he had to stay home to wait for the contractors.

Executive Director Brightman answered, no; go about your normal routine.

New Business: none

Communications:

Executive Director Brightman reported that about \$300 a month is being saved with the new phone system.

Attorney's Report: none

Account's Report: none

Executive Director's Report:

The BOC decided they would not have a November meeting as it would be combined with December.

Counsel Corrison stated that there should be a resolution.

Resolution #2019-39

AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO PAY THE MONTHLY BILL LIST FOR
OCTOBER 2019

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority has an ongoing commitment to improve internal controls within the Finance Department; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners has adopted a Bill Review Procedure to ensure this commitment; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners will not be having a November 2019 meeting; and

WHEREAS, our vendors need to be paid on a monthly basis, thereby eliminating interest charges and maintaining a healthy relationship.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Borough of Highland Park, New Jersey, authorizes the Executive Director to pay the monthly bills without the Board of Commissioners prior approval for the month of October.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Executive Director will include a listing of our bills paid without prior authorization in December's 2019 Board packet.

Motion to adopt Resolution #2019-39 moved by Commissioner Methven and seconded by Commissioner Reh and upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

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

I hereby certify that the above is a true and exact copy of the Resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Borough of Highland Park at their Regular Meeting of October 10, 2019.

Staff Reports:

Housing Director Sriwardena report:

Housing Director Sriwardena handed out her monthly report to the Board of Commissioners.

Resident Services report: none

Committee reports:

Grounds: Commissioner Methven stated that the gazebo will be repaired shortly and that the part just came in. He also reported that he looked at the speed bump outside the front entrance and he feels it would be in everyone's best interest if it was painted yellow for people to see.

Housing Director Sriwardena stated that she will put in a work order.

RESOLUTIONS

a) Reso #2019-37– Reso to Accept the Audit for FYE 3/31/19

Motion moved by Commissioner Chudnick and seconded by Commissioner Reh to adopt Resolution #2019-37.

Discussion

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

b) Reso #2019-38 – Adopting Monthly Bill List for September 2019

Motion moved by Commissioner Chudnick and seconded by Commissioner Methven to adopt Resolution #2019-38.

Discussion

Chair Martinez commented that the bill list has been significantly reduced as the bills are going to HPAHC and Kronman LP.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Old Business:

Commissioner Reh asked if we checked as to whether there were any warranties on the Park Terrace roofs.

Executive Director Brightman stated that Larry Stecker checked and they have expired.

Commissioner Chudnick asked if the landscapers were any better.

Housing Director Sriwardena said, yes, they are better than the previous contractor but there is room for improvement.

Public Comment II

Mr. Nolan stated that he wanted a new carpet.

Executive Director Brightman responded that Housing Manager Sriwardena will check on it to see if it warrants changing.

M.P. stated that the window and door contractors were fantastic and very professional. She also stated that the tenants were told that they cannot use their showers for five days and she can't imagine having to use the showers at Park Terrace. Also, her water was shut-off without notice and what if she was in the middle of using it.

Commissioner Methven stated that there is going to be some minor inconvenience during construction.

Mr. Jones stated that there was a water shut-off notice and why is everyone affected.

He was ruled out-of-order by the Chair.

Counsel Corrison informed Mr. Jones that he must respect the Chair when she has the floor.

Chair Martinez responded that if there is a problem with tenant communication during the construction, we can work on trying to improve it by providing as much detail as possible.

Housing Manager Sriwardena stated that the first batch of showers was trial and error and communication could have been better. She stated that communication was improved with the second set of shower installations.

Ms. Jackson stated that notices were put up.

Mr. Nolan asked who will decide about his carpet.

Executive Director Brightman responded that it will be Housing Director Sriwardena.

Ms. Bradley stated that we all know that we are getting showers so we all know that the water might be shut-off during working hours. Again communication is so important and communication needs to improve between maintenance staff and the contractors. She went on to say that her apartment was entered illegally twice without proper notice and they left her door open for four hours. Furthermore, the contractors wanted to install her shower earlier without notice and she refused as she was not ready and wanted to clear items from the bathroom.

Ms. Bradley also stated that today a maintenance man walked into her bedroom to change a filter while she was sleeping.

Housing Director Sriwardena said that she will investigate the matter.

Chair Martinez stated that the construction crew needs to provide a schedule.

Executive Director Brightman responded that they do, however, she had asked them to be mindful of the tenants observing the religious holidays so it had an effect on their schedule. She also stated that Housing Director Sriwardena was on vacation for three weeks and that contributed to the lack of communication.

Mr. Jones again spoke out of order.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Chudnick and seconded by Commissioner Reh to adjourn at 7:40 PM.

All commissioners present voted in favor.

The commissioners went to Ms. Bradley's unit to see the shower install.

Donna Brightman, Exec. Director/Secretary