

**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 for a Regular Session at 6:30 PM on Dec. 14, 2023 in the conference room of the HPHA, 242 South Sixth Ave., Highland Park, NJ.

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Hope at 6:30 PM.

Executive Director Brightman read the Notice of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act P.L. 1975, C.231 which provided that adequate 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 18, 2023 a copy of the notice of this meeting setting forth the date, time and location of this regular meeting was posted on the Highland Park website and Housing Authority's official designated bulletin board located at 242 South Sixth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ, and sent to Borough Hall for posting. It was also emailed to the Home News Tribune and Star Ledger.

Upon roll call, those present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT

Commissioners:

David Copperman, Commissioner  
Ruby Hope, Chair  
William Rainwater, Commissioner  
Evelyn Sedehi, Commissioner

Council Liaison: Matthew Hersh

Authority General Counsel :  
Terrence Corriston, Esq., Breslin & Breslin

Administration:

Donna Brightman, Executive Director  
Deborah Hurley, Executive Director/Edison  
Denise Blake, Housing Director

Other:

Sgt. Culver – Highland Park Police Dept.

ABSENT

Commissioners:

Gail Chonoles, Commissioner  
William Malloy, Commissioner  
Raysa Martinez, Commissioner

Chairwoman Hope gave the floor to Sgt. Culver, who introduced himself and said he was here to address the concerns with the semi-roundabout. He stated that the department is brainstorming solutions for the speeding and delivery truck access. We can't solve all the problems; all we can do is our best to foster good police relations.

Karin Jackson, apt. 3P, told the officer about a white car with a loud muffler.

Sgt. Culver asked her to try to narrow down the times that it happens.

Angela Perone, apt. 1J, told the officer about homeless people coming into the lobby and asked what could be done.

Sgt. Culver responded that they will try to find shelter for them.

Housing Director Blake stated that this is not the time to ask questions as Sgt. Culver is here to introduce himself and that once we have some possible solutions, we will discuss them at a tenant meeting.

Ashok Stokes, 6E, asked about speedbumps.

Sgt. Culver responded that a study has to be done and that sometimes the DOT is involved and this can be very costly.

The same resident stated that he gets a lot of scam calls.

Sgt. Culver responded that a good way to find out if it's a scam is to call them back.

Commissioner Sedehi stated that she had a meeting with the Police Dept. and feels that it's going to be a great relationship (Police/HPHA.)

A motion to approve the minutes of the regular scheduled meeting held on Nov. 9, 2023 was made by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Rainwater and upon roll call the vote was as follows:

### Discussion

Commissioner Copperman stated that Gail Chonoles should be listed as absent.

Commissioner Sedehi mentioned that page 2, mid-way down is not DPW Administrator but Borough Administrator. She then spoke of page 3 and stated that it was not what was said and should read that "Chairman Hope agreed to investigate as to whether or not a private garbage company is feasible", and that after take garbage out, "more frequently" should be added.

Commissioner Sedehi then stated that on page 4 the answer after Commissioner Rainwater's comment when he asked if a committee could be reassigned should be changed from no to: "Chairwoman Hope said she would review the committee list and get back to the Board."

ROLL CALL: Chonoles Copperman Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi  
AYES: Copperman Hope Rainwater Sedehi  
NAYS: None

Abstain: None  
Absent: Chonoles Malloy Martinez

Public Comment:

Juan Ratliff, apt. #219, asked Edison's Executive Director Hurley that since Edison is taking over in January how are they going to handle complaints?

Edison's Executive Director Hurley stated that it will be the same way they are being handled now. They would first go to Housing Director Blake and then to her. She mentioned that she will be at Highland Park two days a week with an open door to speak to tenants personally.

Ms. Perrone, apt. 1J, stated that there is a problem with the hot water as it is luke-warm.

Housing Director Blake stated that this is the first that she is hearing about it and asked if she called in a work order.

Ms. Perrone replied, no.

Housing Director Blake stated that she will look into it the first thing tomorrow morning.

Ms. Jackson, apt. 3P, spoke of the garbage and mentioned that people that can walk should take their garbage outside so there is room in the inside garbage room for those who cannot easily get around.

Housing Director Blake stated that she would put a reminder out tomorrow.

Ashok Stokes, apt. #6E, asked if the hot water is on a cycled thermostat.

Housing Director Blake stated that she does not know but will check.

New Business:

Chairwoman Hope stated regarding committees that she will review them and then send out an email to see who is interested in what committees. She also stated that she sent an email to the Mayor about the BOC vacancies.

Commissioner Copperman asked if Commissioner Malloy was still on the Board.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she just received his resignation letter as he did not take the required classes.

Commissioner Copperman then asked if Commissioner Chonoles is still on the Board.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she will look to see when her 18 months are up and if they are, she will send her a letter saying she is deemed resigned.

Communications:

William Malloy's resignation letter was mentioned.

Attorney's Report:

Counsel Corrison reported that there is an eviction pending at Park Terrace and that there has still been no movement in the garnishment. Also, that he prepared the HPHA and Edison contract.

Accountant's Report: none

Executive Director Brightman's Report:

Executive Director Brightman stated that she emailed each commissioner a list of outstanding items, as well as a list of when things are due.

Staff Reports:

Social Worker's Report:

Commissioner Sedehi stated that the residents gave Kettly a nice round of applause when Executive Director Brightman commented that she would remain in Highland Park two days a week.

Housing Director's Report:

Chairwoman Hope commented that the garbage situation seems better and asked if maintenance is okay with the frequent pick-ups.

Housing Director Blake responded that they are.

Section 8 Report and Comments:

Commissioner Rainwater commented that rent collection was low at Park Terrace.

Housing Director Blake agreed and stated that it is the eviction case.

Commissioner Copperman asked what does 70 tax credits files mean.

Executive Director Brightman and Housing Director Blake explained that these are HUD re-certifications and tax credit re-certifications that have to be done independently of each other.

Maintenance Report:

Commissioner Copperman asked why there are open work orders.

Housing Director Blake stated that they are waiting for parts.

Committees: none

Resolutions:

a) Reso #2023-36 – Adopting Monthly Bill List for Nov. 2023

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Rainwater to adopt Resolution #2023-36.

ROLL CALL: Chonoles Copperman Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi  
AYES: Copperman Hope Rainwater Sedehi  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Chonoles Malloy Martinez

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

b) Reso #2023-37 – Authorizing the Submission of the HPHA PHA Streamlined Annual PHA Plan 2024

Motion moved by Commissioner Rainwater and seconded by Commissioner Sedehi to adopt Resolution #2023-37.

Discussion

Commissioner Copperman stated that it was the first time he is seeing this and questioned how long it was on the website and if the 45 day public review was met.

Executive Director Brightman and Counsel Corriston both stated that the requirements were met.

Counsel Corriston stated that you will have to schedule a special meeting as this needs to be submitted to HUD.

ROLL CALL: Chonoles Copperman Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi  
AYES: Hope Rainwater Sedehi  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: Copperman  
Absent: Chonoles Malloy Martinez

MOTION FAILED

Please note that since this motion failed the following resolutions will change in number and be reflected on the website as such.

c) Reso #2023-38 – Reso Authorizing the Executive Director to Enter into a Contract with the Edison Housing Authority for Management Services

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Copperman to adopt Resolution #2023-38.

Discussion

Commissioner Rainwater asked why it's authorizing the Executive Director to sign.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it is because I am the contracting agent for the Authority.

Counsel Corriston stated that the Executive Director signs all contracts.

Commissioner Sedehi stated that she reviewed the document against the prior one and all looks good.

Edison's Executive Director Hurley thanked the BOC.

ROLL CALL: Chonoles Copperman Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi  
 AYES: Copperman Hope Rainwater Sedehi  
 NAYS: None  
 Abstain: None  
 Absent: Chonoles Malloy Martinez

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

d) Reso #2023-39 – Award Change Order #1 for the Balcony Improvements to EKO Construction, LLC for \$11,772.06

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Rainwater to adopt Resolution #2023-39.

Discussion

Commissioner Copperman asked who did the specifications.

Executive Director Brightman replied the A/E firm.

ROLL CALL: Chonoles Copperman Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi  
 AYES: Copperman Hope Rainwater Sedehi  
 NAYS: None  
 Abstain: None  
 Absent: Chonoles Malloy Martinez

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Old Business:

Commissioner Rainwater stated that he wants to thank Executive Director Brightman and the WHA for their years of service.

Commissioner Copperman wanted to know if there has been any follow-up with the Mayor and DPW concerning the dumpster. He also wanted to know what HOTMA is?

Counsel Corriston explained that they are new rules pertaining to income. HUD is working out some details so it has been delayed.

Commissioner Copperman stated that most of his concerns regarding the website have been addressed but he will follow-up with an email.

Commissioner Copperman then stated that he believes that we are out of compliance as our SEMAP score is not on the website.

Executive Director Brightman and Counsel Corrison stated that it is not required as we are a High Performer.

Counsel Corrison stated that he will send Commissioner Copperman a list of what is required to be published on the website.

Commissioner Copperman stated that he has a concern about the WHA/Edison transition in terms of passwords.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the WHA terminated its passwords and Edison has established new ones. We have a very secure data system.

Commissioner Copperman then asked what is OCAF.

Executive Director Brightman replied that it is HUD's term for rent increases.

#### Public Comment II:

Juan Ratliff, apt. #219, asked again how complaints would be handled.

Edison's Executive Director Hurley stated first to Housing Director Blake and then to her.

Mr. Ratliff then stated that people are blasting music outside his door and that Kettly Giles should be full-time not part-time.

Mr. Stokes, apt. #6E, stated that the Town should purchase the dumpsters and also asked when they can pay their own rent on-line.

Executive Director Brightman replied that the system has a feature to do that but we have yet to enable it.

The same resident stated that the toilets are setup at a right angle and not installed correctly.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she will send Maintenance Director Stecker to look at them.

Joy Carroll, apt. #1E, stated that the health aides need to follow the garbage rules. She also wanted to know if the parking lot has the required number of handicapped spaces.

Executive Director Brightman replied that they do.

Counsel Corrison stated that if someone has an issue with parking, they can fill out a reasonable accommodation.

Mr. Stokes, apt. #6E, stated that parking rules are different in every state.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Rainwater to adjourn at 7:52 PM. All commissioners present voted in favor.

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Donna Brightman, Exec. Director/Secretary