

**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 Nov. 9, 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.

Asst. Executive Director Noll 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
Raysa Martinez, Commissioner
William Rainwater, Commissioner
Evelyn Sedehi, Commissioner

ABSENT

Commissioners:

William Malloy, Commissioner

Council Liaison:
Tara Canavera

Authority General Counsel :

Terrence Corrison, Esq., Breslin & Breslin

Administration:

Denise Blake, Housing Director
Elizabeth Noll, Asst. Exec. Director

Administration:

Donna Brightman, Executive Director

A motion to approve the minutes of the regular scheduled meeting held on October 12, 2023 was made by Commissioner Rainwater and seconded by Commissioner Martinez and upon roll call the vote was as follows:

ROLL CALL: Copperman Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi

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

Public Comment: none

New Business:

Commissioner Copperman raised a concern about the HPHA website and stated that it is not well maintained and is missing important information. He then volunteered to put a list of recommended changes together. He stated that the briefing section is odd because the video is from North Dakota.

Asst. Executive Director Noll stated that online briefing has been working well for our applicants. Although, the video is from North Dakota it is generic and all the information is the same across the board. However, she stated that she would put a disclaimer attached if it would make it more agreeable to Commissioner Copperman.

Commissioner Copperman agreed to this disclaimer.

Chairwoman Hope spoke of Commissioner Sedehi's email to Denise Blake, Commissioner Rainwater and herself. She stated that Commissioners Sedehi and Copperman walked the perimeter of Kronman to address garbage issues. She mentioned that this was also discussed with the Mayor. The first issue was that garbage was not being collected in a timely manner. They then met with the DPW administrator who wants open communication and will try to do better and help when they can.

Housing Director Blake suggested dumpsters with side doors.

Commissioner Copperman stated that side door dumpsters are not efficient because garbage piles up.

Housing Director Blake stated that garbage is a big point of contention and would like to experiment with a new side door dumpster.

Commissioner Rainwater stated that he would like to see it in action.

Commissioner Copperman asked why the tenants are going to the dumpster at all and shouldn't maintenance dump garbage?

Chairwoman Hope stated that there are garbage cans in front for those who can't make it to the dumpster but they are always full.

Again, Commissioner Copperman suggested that it should be solely the responsibility of maintenance.

Chairwoman Hope stated that maintenance worker, Miguel mentioned that he is not lifting the cans up to the dumpster.

Commissioner Sedehi suggested that if the garbage were dumped more often then it would not be a problem for maintenance.

Chairwoman Hope agreed that maintenance workload is substantial.

Commissioner Martinez asks why the DPW just can't come to empty our garbage two times per week?

Housing Director Blake stated that a private garbage company would be better.

Chairwoman Hope agreed to investigate the cost of a private garbage company and will talk more to see if it is feasible to have maintenance take garbage out.

Chairwoman Hope then spoke of trucks breaking curbs. She stated that Highland Park should have grant money for that but the project has not started yet. She mentioned that it must be done by spring; otherwise, this will be an issue for the PNC inspection. She stated that the Mayor seems open to having no parking on Mansfield during the day.

Commissioner Sedehi stated that ordinance changes would be required.

Chairwoman Hope stated that cars are pulling into the U and; therefore, in front of the building there is a problem. She would like the police to come talk about solutions.

Housing Director Blake stated that they want to put a bus-stop shelter between the pole and the tree.

Chairwoman Hope stated that the meeting with the Mayor was in an overall positive direction and that she wants joint parties.

Housing Director Blake stated that she spoke to the previous housing director, Runi Sriwardena, who claimed that this had never been done and cautioned against insurance issues.

Attorney's Report:

Counsel Corrison stated that there was no action on the Sheriff issue and that there are extraordinary delays. He mentioned that this is not a priority to the Sheriff.

Commissioner Sedehi asked if a letter from them would help.

Counsel Corrison replied that it would not.

Accountant's Report: none

Executive Director Brightman's Report:

It was mentioned that balcony issues are very important but needs bidding. There are no health or safety concerns.

Staff Reports:

Housing Director's Report:

Housing Director Blake stated that a sliding door sensor is being ordered and that Jeff Marder is doing a good job spraying the door.

Commissioner Copperman asked if we need a new c/o for the upgraded elevator or generator.

Counsel Corrison stated only if the permit is pulled.

Chairwoman Hope stated that Kettly Giles continues to do a great job.

Section 8 Report:

Commissioner Rainwater asked why the number of vouchers are decreasing.

Asst. Executive Director Noll stated that it is because of the elderly population and several people are deceased but we are currently working to put new people on the list.

Comments

Chairwoman Hope asked for committee reports. There were none.

Commissioner Rainwater asked if committees can be reassigned? The answer was no.

Commissioner Copperman read the by-laws and stated that he did not see committee reports and asked if they are functioning?

Chairwoman Hope responded, as needed, but not that much since COVID.

Chairwoman Hope then stated that we should re-evaluate who is in what committee and if they are necessary.

Resolutions:

a) Reso #2023-33 – Adopting Monthly Bill List for Oct. 2023

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Rainwater to adopt Resolution #2023-33.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

b) Reso #2023-34 – Amend the Personnel Policy

Motion moved by Commissioner Rainwater and seconded by Commissioner Sedehi to adopt Resolution #2023-34.

Discussion

Counsel Corrison explained JIF & MEL and stated that every two years we have to update the policy. He mentioned that we get a reduction in fees for doing so.

Commissioner Copperman asked Counsel Corrison to elaborate on the marijuana policy.

Counsel Corrison did so.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

c) Reso #2023-35 – Award a Five Year Monitoring of a Medical System at Kronman

Motion moved by Commissioner Rainwater and seconded by Commissioner Sedehi to adopt Resolution #2023-35.

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

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Public Comment II:

Donna Haring, 6H, thanked Housing Director Blake and the commissioners for due diligence with all the issues. She agreed with the garbage issues and also that maintenance is overworked. She mentioned that there is an issue with security in the building as people are letting other unknown people into the building.

Commissioner Rainwater asked what kind of problem is there with security and wanted to know if people were stealing.

Ms. Haring stated that they are just creating a ruckus.

Housing Director Blake said that she will hand out notices to reiterate the building rules. She then implored Ms. Haring and other resident not to approach visitors that they may not know

for their own safety.

Ms. Dee Donnelly, 1st floor, stated that she witnessed a homeless lady and all of her stuff in the community room.

Baleria Tatum stated that she thinks it's people from the 5th floor.

Ms. Donnelly then stated that she has a problem with the garbage room being closed.

Housing Director Blake stated that the staff had a meeting and decided to keep it open 24 hours.

Chairwoman Hope then closed the public comment section of the meeting.

At this time, Commissioner Copperman suggested that the minute topics be grouped together. He also doesn't think it is necessary to have roll call on every resolution and should just be adopted or not. He then asked if there is a plan to transition from Woodbridge to Edison and if there is a contract?

Counsel Corrison advised him that it is in the works.

Chairwoman Hope stated that the new Executive Director has already been chosen and there is nothing to worry about. She stated that there is no formal plan.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Rainwater and seconded by Commissioner Martinez to adjourn at 7:45 PM. All commissioners present voted in favor.

Donna Brightman, Exec. Director/Secretary