

HIGHLAND PARK HOUSING AUTHORITY

BOARD MEETING

November 14, 2024

6:30 PM

MINUTES

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Highland Park Housing Authority was held in the conference room at the Highland Park Housing Authority. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Please note that adequate notice of this meeting as required by the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975, has been provided adequate notice. A copy of the meeting notice was provided on November 1, 2023, and posted on the Highland Park Housing Authority website and Housing Authority’s official designated bulletin board located at 242 South Sixth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ and sent to the Borough Hall of Highland Park for posting and submitted to the Home News Tribune and Star-Ledger.

Roll Call

In attendance: Vice Chair Commissioner William Rainwater, Commissioner Seth Hahn, Commissioner Padriac Millet, Commissioner Thuy Bozzet, Commissioner David Copperman, Deborah Hurley, Executive Director, Borough of Highland Park, Council Liaison, Matthew Hersh, Terrance Corrison, Esq., Counsel

Absent:

Chair Ruby Hope

Approval of Minutes:

October 10, 2024 board meeting

Motion: Commissioner David Copperman

Second: Commissioner Thuy Bozzet

Discussions:

Commissioner Copperman inquired about the status of the voice classes. Denise Blake, Director of Housing, provided an update, explaining that the classes had to be discontinued due to low participation. Executive Director Deborah Hurley added that programs are typically initiated by both staff and residents. She emphasized that the community is encouraged to propose ideas, and the organization remains open and willing to explore new opportunities for engagement.

Minutes for October, 2024

	<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
Chair Ruby Hope			X	
Commissioner Thuy Bozzet	X			
Commissioner David Copperman	X			
Commissioner Seth Hahn			X	
Commissioner Padriac Millet	X			
Commissioner William Rainwater	X			

Public Comment

Resident 219 S. 6th Avenue: There was a discussion about the illegal dumping of furniture in dumpsters, and it was proposed that installing cameras could help address this issue. Concerns about illegal residency and loud music disturbances were also raised, with an agreement to monitor the situation closely to ensure it does not disrupt residents' access to public spaces. Denise highlighted the importance of reporting such incidents to the police, which enables the housing authority to assist and follow up effectively.

Resident Apt. 1J: A concern was raised about receiving a notice about items not permitted outside or on a door. Deborah Hurley, Executive Director clarified that the issued notice stemmed from a citation issued by the Fire Marshal.

Resident Apt 1C: Resident shared that she and her family have been subjected to harassment and threats from a neighbor, causing significant emotional distress. Although she has been offered relocation to different apartments multiple times, the harasser has refused to move, prolonging the situation. The challenges have been compounded by her recent cancer diagnosis, leaving her feeling overwhelmed and without options. She hopes to raise awareness about the difficulties of living next to an abusive individual. Legal action has been recommended as a possible step forward.

Apt 5F: A question was raised about why rent bills were not being sent out. Director of Housing, Denise Blake, explained that all residents consistently pay on time, so issuing bills has not been necessary.

Closed at 6:38 pm

New Business: There was no new business to discuss.

Communications: An updated Board list with contact information was provided in each board packet.

Attorney's Report: There was no discussion.

Executive Director Report

Deborah Hurley, Executive Director, announced plans for a Gratitude Day to express appreciation for auxiliary services, including the fire department, police, EMS, City Hall, Township, and Board of Commissioners, for their dedicated efforts. With Thanksgiving around the corner, the initiative also aims to support identified families in need of a meal on Thanksgiving Day.

Staff Reports:

Commissioner William Rainwater acknowledged that staff reports were included in the board packets. In response to Commissioner Copperman's observation that the reports appeared repetitive, Executive Director Deborah Hurley explained that the work outlined in the reports reflects routine tasks performed on a daily and monthly basis. She assured the board that any significant events requiring their attention would be promptly reported. There were no further comments or discussion.

Committee Reports:

There was no discussion.

Resolutions:

2024- 25 Resolution by the Commissioners of the Borough of Highland Park Housing Authority to approve bill list for the month of November in the amount of \$17,570.81

Moved: Commissioner Copperman

Seconded: Commissioner Millet

Discussion: There was no further discussion

	<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
Chair Ruby Hope			X	
Commissioner Thuy Bozzet	X			
Commissioner David Copperman	X			
Commissioner Seth Hahn	X			
Commissioner Padriac Millet	X			
Commissioner William Rainwater	X			

2024- 26 Resolution by the Board of The Commissioners of the Highland Park Housing Authority Approving the schedule of the Board of Commissioner Meetings for the year 2025.

Moved: Commissioner Copperman

Seconded: Commissioner Bozzet

Discussion: There was no discussion

	<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
Chair Ruby Hope			X	
Commissioner Thuy Bozzet	X			
Commissioner David Copperman	X			
Commissioner Seth Hahn	X			
Commissioner Padriac Millet	X			
Commissioner William Rainwater	X			

Old Business

HUD Audit Update

Deborah Hurley, Executive Director, provided an update on the HUD audit, confirming that the response to the HUD report was submitted within the required 30-day timeframe, with the board chair actively involved in the process. While awaiting HUD's response, no conclusions have been finalized. Deborah explained that many of the required actions are procedural, and some immediate changes have already been implemented. Also, it was noted in the report that Kronman and the Affordable Housing minutes were not included in the audit, as those minutes reflect more financial details and to ensure transparency, the Affordable Housing and Kroman board meetings minutes are included in the housing authority board member packets that have detailed financial reports.

Section 8 Program Update

Zena Sutton, Director of Section 8, provided a program update, addressing several challenges and ongoing initiatives. She explained the distinction between "high performer" and "standard" status, noting that late recertifications and underutilization led to a deduction in points. Efforts are being made

to address these issues, focusing on timely data submission to HUD through the PIC system, as HUD prioritizes submission deadlines over procedural details.

Zena also highlighted active outreach efforts to strengthen landlord partnerships and secure housing for applicants, including collaboration with other counties when necessary. The next voucher briefing session will take place on December 5th.

Commissioner Inquiries:

- **Section 8 Staffing:** Commissioner Copperman asked about the status of hiring a Section 8 staff member. Deborah Hurley responded that the search is ongoing, with several strong candidates identified, but their salary expectations exceed the available budget.
- **Pole Light Repair:** Commissioner Seth Hahn inquired about the status of the pole light repair. Denise Blake, Director of Housing, is determining whether the responsibility falls to the Borough or Kronman/Park Terrace. Councilman Matthew Hersh and Commissioner Millet offered their assistance in researching ownership of the light.

Public Comment for Other Matters:

Apt. 1J: Resident addressed accusations of spreading rumors, asserting they were wrongly accused and urging that such claims should cease.

Apt. 2G: Resident inquired about decorating balconies, specifically whether displaying items like flags would affect fire safety regulations. The response was that the situation would be checked with both insurance and the fire department to ensure compliance.

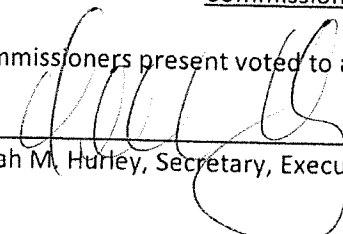
Apt. 5F: Resident question about the process for finding housing for the homeless. The response clarified that the program does not actively find housing for them; instead, individuals are responsible for finding their own apartments. However, the people on the waiting list, which has thousands of individuals, will eventually receive assistance. Zena Sutton, Director of Section 8 mentioned that they are currently focusing on the first 25 individuals on the list and providing them with vouchers.

219 S.6th Ave: A resident inquired about if a notice was sent to Park Terrace residents regarding staying off the porch and directed their question to Denise Blake, Director of Housing. Ms. Blake clarified that a letter requesting residents to practice good etiquette and maintain a quiet environment will be distributed.

Commissioner William Rainwater closed the Public Meeting at 7:08 pm

Motion to adjourn: Commissioner David Copperman
Seconded: Commissioner Thuy Bozzet

All commissioners present voted to adjourn at 7:10 pm



Deborah M. Hurley, Secretary, Executive Director