

**MINUTES OF THE HIGHTSTOWN HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS  
WEDNESDAY, February 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 AT 7:00 P.M.**

**Call to Order:** Vice Chairperson Pascale Emmanuel called meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

**Open Public Meetings Act Statement:** In compliance with Chapter 213 of the Public Laws of 1975, Notice of this Meeting was given by way of the Annual Notice published in the Trenton Times, Princeton Packet and are posted on the calendar at The Hightstown Borough Municipal Building by the Authority and posted in a public place reserved for such announcements in the lobby of the Community Building of the Housing Authority Office.

**Roll Call:** by Keith LePrevost showed that those present and absent were as follows:

- **Present:** Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director, Commissioner Esther Velázquez, Commissioner Carole Nelson, Commissioner Pascale Emmanuel, Vice Chair, Commissioner Christopher Moraitis, Commissioner Yolanda Swiney and Commissioner Brent Rivenburgh.
- **Also Present:** Denise Hanson, Council Liaison, Mayor Larry Quattrone
- **Absent:** James Eufemia

**Approval of Minutes:** Regular Meeting Minutes of: January, 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Commissioners Nelson motioned to approve the minutes which was seconded by Commissioner Velasquez. Commissioner Emmanuel questioned one line on the second page where there was an incomplete sentence. Keith offered to table the minutes for review and reconsideration. The board felt that was unnecessary and the minutes were approved as written.

Mayor Quattrone swore in Yolanda Swiney for her second term in office.

**Open Public Meeting:** At this time the public is invited and encouraged to participate in open forum. It is requested by the Chairman of the Board and the Commissioners of the Housing Authority that all comments and opinions be relevant and timely, and be expressed in a manner which contributes to and advances the orderly progress of the meeting and for all concerned. The Chairman or presiding Commissioner may determine that it is necessary to limit the amount of time allotted to speakers from the public.

Kian Piquet. Kian is concerned with the use of the security cameras at the Housing Authority. She received a letter regarding 2 incident of men smoking on her porch, including one that was suspected of using drugs. She thinks Keith should only be able to view the cameras during business hours. Keith explained the use of the cameras and who is able to view them. He explained that the person was lighting the object repeatedly, which is typical of drugs.

Marisol Marrero questioned why there is a camera on the third floor balcony. Keith mentioned that camera is aimed at building 4

Edwin Figueroa spoke regarding the letter he received regarding his selling of food out of his apartment. He claims all the Facebook posts from the past year were all fake and he put them on line as a joke. He is being harassed by Keith and his privacy is being invaded. Commissioner Swiney noted it is illegal to produce food out of your apartment for sale or for fundraisers. Edwin argued that it is illegal for Keith to look at his Facebook. Commissioner Velasquez noted that unless his settings on Facebook are correct, anyone can look at your profile. Keith explained and read several of the Facebook posts to the board, Edwin argued it was all a joke. Edwin

claims that Keith does not understand the Puerto Rican lifestyle. Edwin claims he does fundraiser for the Church, the school, birthday party's etc. Commissioner Moraitis stated that cooking and food preparation for fundraisers needs to be done in a commercial kitchen. Commissioner Emmanuel asked Edwin to show her his phone so she can see when the pictures were taken. He says that he can't do that with his phone.

Marisol Marrero commented her car was damaged in the parking lot. Keith explained the police have the tapes and have identified the person involved. She also discussed the gravel lot. Keith explained the gravel lot is being redone in March, and actually change the direction of parking. Keith discussed the problems with parking, especially during snow events.

The Commission discussed Edwin's situation and what we are going to do. The board felt the steps Keith are taking are reasonable, and he should proceed as he feels is reasonable.

**Affordable Housing Plan:** Denny Hanson discussed the current status of the Housing Plan. Not a lot has happened since the last meetings, we have filed a report last week to the special master. The town has prepared a "vacant land analysis" to show what land is undeveloped in the borough that could be used for affordable housing. The analysis show there really aren't any tracts available. The plan has not been voted on by the planning board or council. It will be made public probably within a month for public meetings and comments. Keith discussed how our subcommittee is making progress. In one of initial meetings, Tamara Lee suggested an overlay zone, making the entire area around the Housing Authority "affordable" Keith said he objected to this, as he felt it would create a larger "pocket of poverty". Tamara has changed the zone to include market and moderate incomes to the site. Keith feels it's a win for the Borough and for the Housing Authority, giving the Borough an immediate 20 credits and the HA future flexibility. The commission discussed the 2012 COAH plan, and the \$805,000 the borough pledged to the HA for renovations. Denny mentioned that she did not believe the borough would ever do that. Mr. Moraitis elaborated on what the thinking was at the time. Commissioner Rivenburgh moved to send a letter to Tamara showing support for the Overlay zone. Keith mentioned he will include Tamara's letter in the next month's packet for consideration.

Keith discussed the meetings that we have had with the churches regarding homelessness in the area. Keith noted the difficulties with that business and how he would not want to do that again. Denny noted that the development of the Mill is a long process, and affordable housing will be discussed and possibly included. Keith commented there is talk around town and it needs to come up in public so that everyone understands what we are doing. Denny agrees, but we need get through the legal process first, so that we know what we are required to do. Keith noted, like he has stated before in public, we need to begin discussing what we are doing not just for today, but 15-20 years out so that we are not being backed into this corner again.

#### **Committee Reports:**

**By Laws:** Keith discussed the changes to the By-Laws so that we can accommodate a resident commissioner. The changes are minor, and Keith recommends the commissioners review the changes and we will adopt them next week.

#### **Resolutions:**

**None at this time**

#### **Discussion Items:**

**Capitol Planning Update:** We have an architect, solar engineer and mechanical engineer coming on board. Final proposals will be available at the next meeting. We

have received our 2016 capital funding and we will be developing our submission for HUD.

**Water Issues:** The borough continues to address our water problems, and are going to install a new water service to our office. We had a sewer line problem under building 6. It seems the residents think they can flush whole vegetables down the toilet, which caused a backup into the crawlspace. Keith continued to discuss the repair and replacement of a section of heating line under building 3.

**Executive Director Report:**

- We are currently at 99% occupancy. We have 1 vacant apartment that has been renovated and ready for occupancy this week. The new family will move in by the end of February.
- Office renovations will begin next month when the 1 apartment is completed. This includes new LED lighting, motion controlled switching, painting and flooring. We will also be working on air-sealing the windows in the office as a “test-run” before we begin that work around the campus.
- The staff struggled with the snow storm in January. We had equipment and staff issues that made dealing with the snow more difficult. Going forward we need to look at either upgrading equipment, having additional manpower available or contracting our snow removal. I believe the best course of action is to hire a company to handle the bulk snow removal. We can use our own staff to clear smaller areas such as porches and balconies.
- The 2016 budget has been submitted to HUD. The tool was finally available late in January. The Capitol funding worksheets have just become available and they will be submitted next week. Our annual amount has increased this year by about \$6000 due to our designation as a “High Performing Housing Authority”
- We have met with our Architect and mechanical engineer to begin the planning process for the replacement of our boiler systems and roofing on the property. At the same time we are considering installing solar panels to generate electricity and hot water. We are currently working over several sets of assumptions to make sure the work that is proposed will produce the best overall results for the Authority. This will be a 5 year process which will be funded by capital and operating funds. We will be actively seeking local, County, State and Federal grants to cover as much of this work as possible.
- Emergency boiler piping repairs were done under building 3. We replaced about 12 feet of 2 inch heating line due to a leak. We noticed a gradual loss of heating water pressure on the third floor of building 3. Physical inspection revealed the deteriorating pipe in the crawl space. It appears there was a leak in a toilet trap years ago that dripped on this pipe. Over time it has deteriorated. While the system was down we installed new in line air separators and a new auto filling valve.
- We have had our annual State of NJ Boiler plant inspection with positive results. The inspectors always comment on the neat and clean appearance of our boiler rooms. We passed and have our boiler certificates for another year.

- We have hired a new generator service company. Atlantic Switch and Generator will be the new service company. Our previous company lost their lead mechanic and felt they would no longer be able to service our account. We had an issue with the generator behind building 1. The carburetor idler bracket (Plastic) broke and we have had it temporarily repaired until the factory replacement part is available.
- We discovered evidence of one of our residents running a catering business out of their apartment. This tenant has always claimed he cannot work or even do community service due to a bad back. Come to find out he has a lunch wagon and truck, and does weddings, corporate lunches and other events, with much of the food prepared in their apartment. He also works for cash in one of our local restaurants which was not reporting that income also. We confirmed his working for cash with the owner. We have made every effort to get the family to account for their additional income, and they refuse. We have adjusted their rent as of March 1 to market (\$1746) and if not paid we will be forced to evict them from the premises and file documents with the IRS, State and County. (He also receives almost \$500 dollars per month from Food Stamps)
- The water department has been on site several times working on solutions to our water problems. They are going to have to run a new water main to our office to provide clean water. Plus, they are monitoring the water quality in all of our buildings on a monthly basis to check for clarity and quality. We are hoping to have a permanent fix for the water issues in the next month, depending on if the Borough approves the cost. They have installed a water filter on our service line to help with water clarity as a temporary fix.
- We had a sewer line break under building 6 that was repaired. We had to call in a cleaning company to clean and dispose of the waste in the crawl space. The space has been cleaned and disinfected.

### **Financial Update: January, 2016**

In review of the financial reports for the month of January, 2016, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the month and the year with positive results. Highlights include:

Income:

- Residential income has come in above budget due to incomes of our residents, and the diligence of the staff to research and follow up when tenants either increase their work hours or find a new job.
- Other Operating receipts includes maintenance fees and refunds from our insurance company.
- Laundry income is slightly over budget for the month, an over budget for the year.
- Subsidy income is slightly over budget due to the Federal 2016 budget. This will change now that our 2016 Subsidy Submission has been completed. Due to our

energy saving efforts, our subsidies from HUD are beginning to drop. This year that will equate to approximately \$1000 per month.

Expenses:

- Administrative and Maintenance salaries are on budget for the month of January.
- Legal Expenses are over budget for the month due to review of court filings for the Boroughs affordable housing plans.
- Travel expense is over budget due to the PHADA conference in January and the registration for the IREM conference in February.
- Sundry Administrative is over budget for the month due to the cost of the annual dinner meeting.
- Computer supplies are over budget due to the renewal of software licenses for accounting and tenant management.
- Electricity is under budget.
- Gas continues to be well below budget.
- Maintenance salaries are under budget, but will be over budget in February due to snow removal from the blizzard.
- Misc. Maintenance supplies are over budget due to apartment turnover and renovations.
- Extermination costs are over budget due to bed bugs being treated in several apartments.
- Boiler Contract costs are over budget due to repairs to one leaking pump that were done.
- Extraordinary Maintenance is over budget due to emergency boiler piping repairs.

The enclosed financials include: Income Statement for the Current Periods-January 1 to January 31<sup>st</sup> (VS Budget), Cash Flow and General Ledger-Cash account.

**Announcements:** The next meeting is scheduled for March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 7:00 pm.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned by a motion made at 8:45PM.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director