

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF  
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH  
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Chairperson James Eufemia called meeting to Order.

**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:** showed that those present and absent were as follows:

**Present:** Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director, Commissioner James Eufemia, Chair, Commissioner Esther Velázquez, Commissioner Brent Rivenburgh, Commissioner Yolanda Swiney, Commissioner Christopher Moraitis and Commissioner Pascale Emmanuel.

**Also Present:**

Denise Hanson, Borough of Hightstown Council Liaison

Steven Misiura, Borough Council, Planning Board

Patricia Albanese (Resident)

William Moody (Resident)

**Absent:** Commissioner Carole Nelson

**Approval of Minutes:** Regular Meeting Minutes of July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**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

- Patricia Albanese addressed the Commission and the 2 borough council members regarding the public water system and the continued problems they are experiencing in building 6. Keith reiterated his continued concerns with the public infrastructure and the deteriorating water lines in the street. Ms. Hanson stated that she was not aware of the issues, as the staff at the water/sewer committee meetings do not feel there is a problem they can solve. Pat continued that she knows Keith is addressing her concerns every time, but she feels she needs to take it to the next level. She stated the Mayor will not return her calls and refuses to meet with her. She has called the Board of Health and sent a water sample to the CDC for testing. She is getting a rash and is on antibiotics from the water. Ms. Hanson promised to look into the issue and get back to her.

**Affordable Housing-Fair Share Plan:**

- The Planning Board has asked for the HA to review the proposed Fair Share plan before it is formally introduced and formalized. The plan, drafted by Tamara Lee, borough planner was distributed ahead of the meeting and Steve Misiura and Denise Hanson were present to discuss. Mr. Misiura stated this document is the culmination of the litigation and the last 18 months of discussion with the Council and the Planning board. Two of the issues directly relate to the HA. One is the entire property of the HA. This would rezone the site to allow

for a mix of affordable and market rate units on this site. The second is the Academy Street affordable housing zone. The planning board is considering appointing the HA the Redevelopment Authority for this zone. Other issues that are in the plan include the inclusion of the Randolph's boarding home. Ms. Swiney questioned why they needed a deed restriction. Keith responded COAH requires a deed restriction on every rental unit. Mr. Moraitis questioned the expenditure, is this a wise use of the funds. Steve mentioned the opportunity for the HA to do the income certifications. Keith acknowledged he had a conversations with Henry, but is reluctant to give prices on things without speaking with the board. Also, he found it odd that Henry was reaching out to him after they had a contract signed with REHABCO. Steve and Denise were under the assumption Henry reached out before they had the deal with REHABCO.

- Chris questioned why the HA was not considered as part of the plan-providing units in exchange for some consideration. Ms. Hanson mentioned this goes back to the discussions going back a year or so, and the cost per unit was too high. Keith stated that the cost per unit was given to us by the Borough Planner, so that is what we went along with.
- Mr. Misiura stated the goal is to get a plan into the Master Plan so that we can avoid a "Builders Remedy".
- Commissioner Swiney questioned why we would spend money for Randolph's, when the plan has not been approved by the Borough or the Courts.
- Keith is concerned the plan does not accomplish anything. He feels we will all be old and retired before anything in the plan occurs. The entire plan is based on speculation and "what-ifs". We need to create a real workable plan with a time table for addressing affordable housing.
- Commissioner Moraitis feels the development of Academy Street is hap hazard and appears random in nature. The HA should be overseeing the redevelopment of that street so that there is continuity.
- Commissioner Eufemia questions who makes the determination when and if HUD were to turn over the property to the HA. Mr. Misiura feels that would be up to the HA, as long as it met the goal of the Master Plan.
- Keith questioned whether the Borough planned on the GAP period. Mr. Misiura does not think so, but will leave it to the Courts to decide.
- Homeownership programs were discussed and how we can use it
- Commissioner Emmanuel questioned whether the HA could institute a Section 8 homeownership program. Keith noted we do not have any section 8 units, and they are very difficult to come by. They government is currently facing a serious financial shortfall, and are not issuing any new vouchers.

#### **Resolutions:**

- **Resolution 2016-5 To approve the 2017 Budget**
  - Keith reviewed the budget with the Commissioners. Commissioner Rivenburgh motioned to approve the budget as presented. The major change in the budget is the addition of an additional maintenance person. This was seconded by Commissioner Velasquez. The motion was approved.

#### **Discussion Items:**

- **Dawes Park.** Keith is getting a detailed list of tenants that attended the park program. He feels the program is under subscribed by our tenants and that the commission needs to consider how we fund this program going forward.
- **Affordable Housing Certifications.** The Borough has asked Keith if the HA would be willing to provide the affordable certifications for the other units in town. The board discussed providing this service for the town and the difficulties dealing with the transient population.

- **RFP for parking and Boilers.** Keith will be putting out 2 RFP's this year. One for the refurbishing of the 4 smaller parking lots and one for the Design/build of the boiler rooms. Both of these projects are scheduled for 2017.

**Executive Director Report:**

- We are currently at 99% occupancy. We currently have one unit that is being renovated for a new tenant in July.
- The painting of buildings 3, 4, 5 have been done, as well as the garage on Academy Street. Some touch up work is to be done in the coming weeks.
- We continue to utilize our security cameras, almost on a daily basis.
- We were visited by Mercer County Department of Human Services this past month. They showed up unannounced and reviewed our boiler rooms, boiler documentation and our pest control process. The State of NJ has contracted the County to take over this function. We have all the required documentation and practices. They were pleased with our community.
- Our accountant, Peter Polcari and I have drafted a 2017 budget for your review. The budget is fairly consistent with our annual expenditures, with the exception of the hiring of a full time maintenance person. We have tried to hire a part time person, without any luck. I feel the addition of a full time position will attract more interest and talent.
- I hosted a group of high school and college students who were attending the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed academy this summer for a tour and discussion on storm water management. We spent a couple hours touring our site, going over plans, photos and practical solutions to a number of storm water conditions. It was a good morning activity and I am pleased the Watershed asked me (and the Housing Authority) to participate. The Watershed considers the HA one of the best examples in the area of proactive storm water management.
- After 13 months of effort on our part, our effort to repaint the crosswalk on Rogers avenue has been officially quashed by the Borough. The Borough Engineer recommended almost \$10,000 dollars to study the crosswalk to make sure it is in compliance with the State codes. As there are no records of when this was installed, it would need to be removed and reinstalled to meet current standards. The Mayor asked if the HA would be willing to pick up the bill, and I responded I would not recommend it to the board.
- The garage on Rogers Avenue has been re-sided and painted.
- We have had issues with water quality in buildings 6 and 7 again this summer. The borough came out and was not able to resolve anything. They are going to flush the water lines on a regular (monthly) basis for a while to see if they can clear the line of whatever debris is in it.
- We have removed 2 large dead trees from the Rogers Ave, building 7 parking lot. We have one of the diseased Pin Oaks by building 7 that has been removed.
- We have new non-skid stair nosings for buildings 6 and 7. The nosing on the existing treads is steel, and over time has begun to rust and deteriorate. The new

nosings are aircraft grade aluminum with an epoxy based nonskid insert. They have been installed.

- I attended the PHADA legislative conference in Washington this month. There were 3 days of meetings including a meeting of the national Small Housing Authority's committee.

### **Financial Update: July, August, 2016**

In review of the financial reports for the months of July and August, 2016, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the months with positive results. .

#### **Income:**

- Residential income has come in higher than our 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.
- Excess utilities are for air conditioner units installed.
- Laundry income is slightly over budget for the period.
- Subsidy income is slightly over budget due to the Federal 2016 budget.

#### **Expenses:**

- Administrative and Maintenance salaries are under budget for the period, but on budget for the year. September is a 3 pay month, so this expense will come into line over the course of the next couple months.
- Legal Expenses are under budget for the period but over budget for the year due to review of court filings for the Boroughs affordable housing plans.
- Staff training is over budget due to the registration for an upcoming conference.
- Audit is under budget for the period, but on budget for the year.
- Water is under budget for the period but over budget for the year. This is still due to the rate increase by the Borough. This will be modified in the 2017 budget.
- Electricity is under budget.
- Natural Gas is under budget.
- Maintenance supplies are under budget due to full occupancy.
- Misc. Contract costs are over budget due to generator work that was done.
- Extermination costs are over budget due to bed bugs being treated in several apartments and the cost of termite treatment and inspections.

**Next meeting is scheduled for October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 7:00 pm.**

The meeting was adjourned by a motion made by Commissioner Emmanuel and seconded by Commissioner Velázquez.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director