

Attending: Chairman Josh Howroyd, Vice-Chairman Robert Shanbaum, Paul Rubin, Carol Shanley
Patrick Barder, Executive Director

Absent Flora Jimenez

I. Call to Order

Chairman Howroyd opened the meeting at 6:08 PM and welcomed the residents of West Hill Gardens.

II. Public Comments

These minutes are intended to be an overview of the comments made and are not necessarily verbatim.

Chairman Howroyd welcomed residents of Ada Lane and other MHA complexes. He stated there is a sign-up sheet for those wanting to speak. Since there is a large crowd he asked residents to limit their comments to 3 minutes to allow everyone a chance to share.

Mr. Mike Kelley 22D Case Drive addressed the Board.

Mr. Kelly reported that if a resident locks himself out of his apartment there is a \$50 lock out fee that is charged to them. Recently it has come to his attention that residents are calling the Fire Department to come and open their units so they won't have to pay the lock out fee. He wanted the Board to be aware of this and remind residents that this is misuse of town services.

Ms. Donna Geller 71 Bluefield Drive addressed the Board.

Ms. Geller stated she was sitting on her front porch and a man came along with a yellow bulldozer and when she asked what he was doing she was informed that he was going to cut down the bush in front of her unit. When asked who authorized it she was told it was ordered by the Housing Director. Ms. Geller said the birds live there and now it is gone. She wants to know why it was cut down. There are other things in this complex that need attention, like the mold in the cellars.

Ms. Karen Lemire 30F McGuire Lane addressed the Board.

Ms. Lemire asked why she has to beg for heat. It was cold in September and very cold in her apartment. She also indicated that she has experienced 3 power surges since December 2012 and she has had to replace several of her appliances using her own insurance. She had to pay a \$250 deductible and it cost her \$1000 to replace her DVD player. She has not yet received her reimbursement and wants to know why she has had to wait so long.

Ms. Susanne Lajoy addressed the Board for her mother Frances Clemente.

Ms. Lajoy stated she contacted Mr. Barder complaining about the lack of heat in her mother's unit and the air conditioning was on but she did not receive a response. Ms. Lajoy commented that Mr. Barder uses intimidation and bullying tactics with residents and that will not be tolerated. She commented that this complex used to be a clean nice environment and now it is not. She hopes he does not get re-elected.

Mr. Allen Dowd 105D Bluefield Drive addressed the Board.

Mr. Dowd expressed his concern about the lack of professionalism that the Executive Director exhibits. He cited an instance where the Executive Director yelled at an employee in front of him which is very unprofessional. Mr. Dowd stated that elderly and disabled people need help and understanding and they do not see any leadership. There are no community activities here anymore. The Executive Director should have an open door policy and talk with residents, help them understand about what is going on around the complex.

Ms. Fran Clemente 10 Ada Lane addressed the Board.

Ms. Clemente asked why it took two weeks to fix the air conditioning and get the heat turned on. Residents were sitting around with sweaters and jackets on because it was cold. She emailed Mr. Barder

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and got no response. The area outside this complex has not been kept up, bushes were trimmed today. She has asked several times if something can be done about the front doors; residents have difficulty walking in the doors with canes and walkers. Ms. Clemente asked why so many trees and bushes were taken down; the money could have been spent elsewhere.

Ms. Janet Metheney 10 Ada Lane addressed the Board.

Ms. Metheney said she wanted to remind everyone at Ada Lane about the snow storm last year. Mr. Barder came up here; he spent the night making sure that residents were safe. Mr. Barder does care about people.

Ms. Ann Swan 27J Bluefield Drive addressed the Board.

Ms. Swan said the bush from in front of her window was removed. The laundry room has no lock on the door and she fears for her safety, anyone can walk in there. There is mold in the laundry room and nothing has been done about it. When units are refurbished and she asked why the water pipes are not being replaced. The water tastes terrible.

Mayor Leo Diana addressed the Board.

Mayor Diana shared he is here with the Deputy Mayor, Director Gates, Director Pelletier, Director Kissman and Director Pitman. The Manchester Housing Authority is very near and dear to him. His father, Vincent Diana was chairman of the Board for many many years and his great uncle was one of the first tenants at the Housing Authority. Mayor Diana went on to say he and the other directors are here this evening because he has received several complaints from residents regarding health, welfare, safety and community. The community is something they described as very fun, great residents, great spirit and that is being destroyed. He asked if there is a process for these people to use to have grievances heard possibly by a mediator or ombudsman before it gets to the Commissioners or the Board of Directors. He also said that he has no authority other than he wants to show his support to Manchester residents and see their issues addressed.

Ms. Catherine Oliver 32C McGuire Lane addressed the Board.

Ms. Oliver said she also lost a bush when they were cutting bushes. She planted the bush in front of her unit because her unit gets warm and it provided shade on her unit and a little privacy on her porch. There was no warning, no notice, just cut down. She is very disappointed that it was cut down.

Mr. Nino Pagani 42C Bluefield Drive addressed the Board.

Mr. Pagani stated that for 10 years he has commented about the drain pipes leak into the basement, there is poor drainage. The basement floods, there is mold down there. His storage bin was broken into and his bicycle was stolen. Nothing is being done.

Ms. Valerie Roche 14B McGuire Lane addressed the Board.

Ms. Roche when she moved in one year she asked that the bushes in front of her unit be cut down because she has trouble breathing. She commented she spoke to Steve but he does things for some and not for others. Nobody told her to talk to Patrick Barder about this issue. There is mold in the basement and she has to wear a mask to go down there because of her severe allergies and trouble breathing.

Ms. Priscilla Dorsey 46D Case Drive addressed the Board.

Ms. Dorsey shared that she spoke at the Board of Directors meeting this week and so she does not want to repeat herself. She wanted to emphasize to Mr. Barder that he needs to have tact and he does not know how to speak with people. She would like to know how much money was spent on the offices when the roofs need repair. Trees and bushes were cut down in front of her unit and maintenance people went up on the roof to see if it was okay and there were afraid to walk on it. Maintenance people came and

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looked at the roof and they said it was fine. There is water in the basement should be fixed. The septic system needs to be fixed because toilets are overflowing and it is unhealthy and resident's things are damaged. The things were removed from the senior room, the piano and other things. There needs to be benches around the complex so residents can get out an exercise and stop and rest.

Mr. Wayne Madden 28G Pascal Lane addressed the Board.

Mr. Madden commented there have been many complaints tonight and yet there are things getting done and improvements have been made. Maybe what is needed is to have a meeting with the communities to tell what is being done, show residents the progress that is being made around the units and where the money is being spent.

Mr. Charles Fuller 105F Bluefield Drive addressed the Board.

Mr. Fuller asked if he is in danger if someone has oxygen in his unit and they smoke cigarettes. He is concerned about his well-being and wants something done ASAP.

Ms. Evelyn Babella 12 Bluefield Drive addressed the Board.

Ms. Babella stated 10 years ago she planted a lilac bush in the back of her unit, it was chopped down. She has emphysema and arthritis and has submitted 2 doctors note for a first floor unit but was told no by the Executive Director. She has had to have neighbors help her bring her groceries up. She gave away her pet dog because it is too difficult for her to be going up and down the stairs to care for her dog. In September the temperature in her unit was 64 degrees. Ms. Babella also asked why this is no longer an elderly complex, now we are Section 8 project and there are children here. This is no longer a senior housing complex. It is not right.

Mr. Marty Baser 27K Bluefield Drive addressed the Board.

Mr. Baser said he wants to comment the staff on handling the incident that happened here a few days ago. There was an incident with a non-resident and the police had to be called to have this person removed. The staff was excellent in handling the situation.

Ms. Sandy Custer 10 Ada Lane addressed the Board. Ms. Custer said everyone likes the trees and the bushes and watching the animals that live in them. She complimented the Ada Lane Staff. They are here 24/7 and they care for us. Ms. Custer did ask why staff is not allowed to help a resident should they fall or need help.

Mr. George Sheffield 11 Bluefield Drive addressed the Board.

Mr. Sheffield asked why he has had to wait for a walk in shower that he was promised when he moved in 14 months ago. He asked if he is retired the government does not penalize him so why does he have to pay extra in his rent if he works a part time job.

Mr. Richard Browne 16 Case Drive addressed the Board.

Mr. Browne shared he has been a resident here for 7 years and he had and still has several issues with the Executive Director Barder. Mr. Browne reported that he went on line and goggled Mr. Barder and found that he was fired from his last job in Indiana. Mr. Browne stated that Mr. Barder is rude and disrespectful to residents. Mr. Brown commented about misdirected funding and units that are not ADA compliant. Residents used to have a community room and that was removed and the residents want it back. Mr. Browne has a cat and he was told by Mr. Barder if he wanted to keep the cat he would have to have it declawed. This complex used to have a wonderful picnic every year and since Mr. Barder came on board there has been no picnic. Residents are not going to tolerate this anymore.

One resident asked why she has to pay an electric bill and Ada Lane residents do not.

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Chairman Howroyd answered her by telling her that Ada Lane is a State run complex and Bluefield and that complex is a Federal project and they operate under different criteria.

Mr. Charles Fuller commented that this is what happens when people don't pay attention, don't talk to people, don't have meetings and let people know what is going on. Mr. Barder does not listen to people. Residents would not be upset as they have shown tonight if he would just sit and talk with residents. Tell us what is going on, we deserve to know what is going on, we deserve respect, we are not stupid.

Chairman Howroyd closed the public hearing at 7:00 pm.

A. Discussion of Public Comments

Chairman Howroyd commented that many of the issues raised by residents here tonight have been heard before. Tenants do have an opportunity to express their concerns at any of the Board meetings. He asked if any Commissioners would like to discuss any of the comments raised tonight by residents.

Mr. Rubin asked about the removal of bushes and we get that at most meetings. Mr. Rubin wanted to know if more bushes are going to be removed or are we done with that. He asked what the status is.

Mr. Barder commented there were still a few bushes in the front of the units that needed to be removed because they were overgrown. If residents are upset that their bush was removed they will be replaced. Mr. Barder explained that he did discuss this with West Hill residents as they were taking them out.

Mr. Shanbaum commented the Board discussed this before and thought it was decided there would be a meeting to talk to tenants and discuss the plans for the landscaping that was being removed.

Mr. Barder shared he did speak with residents, not at a specific meeting, but when they were being removed and they had nothing but positive comments.

Mr. Shanbaum said it would have been more meaningful to residents if we were to have had some kind of discussion or meeting and show them what we are planning on doing. Show residents that we are not just interested in ripping out all the stuff and that seems to be the conclusion that they have come to. He is disappointed that we are still doing this kind of thing because if we are going to continue to remove landscaping we need to let them know what is coming so they can have some input. We would be able to respond to their input.

Mr. Rubin asked about the air conditioning at Ada Lane and why it took so long to get it fixed.

Mr. Barder shared a new air handler was installed at Ada Land and there was a problem was with the wiring. A damper was stuck open and the air conditioning stayed on and the heat would not come on. Once we found what the issue was it was fixed right away.

Mr. Barder discussed the issue raised by a resident not being reimbursed for appliances that were blown out when the power surges occurred on McGuire Lane. All those residents were reimbursed.

Mr. Shanbaum asked how that was MHA's responsibility.

Mr. Barder explained that it was not but as a goodwill gesture to the residents any appliances that were damaged were replaced.

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The surges were caused by lines being worn out and there were breaks that caused arcing. Connecticut Cable and the Building Inspector came in and found that several lines were patched with duct tape. We had all the lines inspected and any repairs or replacements were done. This work cost \$9,800. These lines had not been inspected or serviced for many years.

Mr. Shanbaum mentioned he had a discussion with an employee of MHA who said she was told by her supervisor that they were not allowed to speak at Board meetings.

Mr. Shanbaum stated this is a hot button for him and he does not want anyone telling an employee that they cannot come to a meeting and address the Board. He wants to get a sense from the Board what they feel about this. The Board members agreed with Mr. Shanbaum.

Mr. Barder stated that there is no such prohibition that he was aware of.

Mr. Barder shared that there is a policy that if any employee has a personnel issue they must take it through administrative channels first, pursuant to the Personnel Policy. In the past employees would go directly to a Commissioner and discuss their issues with them.

Mr. Shanbaum suggested that in the memo to employees that if they have any strictly employment issues that it should be handled through channels. If they have other issues they can come and speak at a Board meeting.

Mr. Barder said he would get a memo out to all employees saying that if any employees want to attend a Board meeting and speak on a non-personnel policy issue, they can.

A resident asked why the Board doesn't respond to questions or comments made by residents during Public Comments.

Mr. Shanbaum shared the Board does in fact respond to public comment even if residents are not present. That was why the Board added to the Agenda a Discussion item so that people could at least listen to what we have to say about the issues.

Specifically, comments made by some residents about this complex now being "Section 8" have been repeatedly made over the last two years and repeatedly the Board has repeatedly pointed out that the Manchester Housing Authority and Mr. Barder have absolutely no say in this. The Federal Government has decided that we no longer will have elderly-only public housing developments.

III. Adoption of Minutes – Meeting of September 11, 2013

Chairman Howroyd asked to a motion to approve the minutes of the September 11 board meeting. Mr. Shanbaum moved to approve the minutes of September 11, 2013 as written. Ms. Shanley seconded. Motion passed 3-0 with one abstention and one absence.

IV. Correspondence - None

V. Accounts Payable - None

VI. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Barder shared as of this evening the House had not passed a resolution to reopen the government. If the furloughs stay in place there will be no payments to Section 8 landlords in November. MHA is \$47K

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short and any money that is available will not be paid out because there is not one to cut the checks due to HUD being on furlough. MHA has exhausted all net restricted assets for Section 8.

Chairman Howroyd asked if payments can be retroactive should the federal budget situation be rectified.

Mr. Barder stated he thought so but as long as there are no federal personnel to give us our approved shortfall funds it will not happen. He also shared Section 8 is on a calendar year so if no budget has been set there will be no money coming on January 1.

FYE 9/30 Financial Reports

Mr. Barder reviewed the year-end financial reports in detail.

FYE 9/30 Management Reports

Mr. Barder presented and reviewed cumulative management reports for the fiscal year.

Mr. Shanbaum commented that was suggested that these reports be posted so that residents can see how much work is being done when they call. One of the issues is that people complain to the Commissioners about some things not being done.

Mr. Barder reported that some residents absolutely refuse to use the Maintenance call line to report a problem or they see a maintenance worker and tell them about their problem rather than call it in.

Mr. Shanbaum commented this report would actually tell residents that the system works, when they call in a work order it gets to the right department and handled. It might motivate them to use the system.

Mr. Barder will be sharing the management reports with the staff to show them that all their hard work is reflected properly.

VII. Chairman's Report – None

VIII. Old Business - None

IX. New Business – RFP Food Service Contract

Mr. Barder shared a RFP was sent out for the food service contract for the Congregate and we received only one response and that is from Hummingbird Food Service.

There were significant changes in their proposal from present practice. They will be using a professional dietician service who will actually print the menus 4 months in advance. We have a meeting scheduled this week to discuss the particulars and some contractual provisions. The proposal presented is in line with what we budget this year. Our lawyer will look at the contract and they will be making changes for us. We do have a food committee at the Congregate and he will meet with them and the manager of Hummingbird and talk about the menus.

Architects/Engineers –

Mr. Barder explained the State will be awarding MHA money to have comprehensive plans and specifications done on Spencer Village (Pascal Lane) and the Congregate.

Public solicitation was made and a list of interested A/E firms was presented.

MHA needs to form a development team.

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Consultants from the State came out and reviewed each of the complexes and outlined what repairs need to be done and their recommendations.

The State consultants recommended MHA not apply for the State Bond funded program. They suggested that the State would give us for capital subsidy; similar to what we get on the federal Capital Fund Program.

Their recommendation is that we not go after that on a tax credit basis but the State should fund it over a 20 year period. Some of it could be grant or loan but they felt that Spencer and the Congregate would be much better served if we had a regular continuing amount of Capital subsidy in addition to our operating subsidy. We would be much farther ahead at getting things done if we did that.

Mr. Shanbaum asked if the State expects us to be able to put that much in reserves so that we are able to say fix the roof.

Mr. Barder stated he could not answer that because no such funding mechanism exists. He shared that based on the same demographic data the Consultants expected the base rent at Spencer and the Congregate should be \$600. .

If the State elects to go with an annual capital subsidy in addition to the operating subsidy, we will have to have a development team and plan in place because MHA would be on the clock to spend the money.

The State will not give us the money unless we can submit plans and cost estimates associated with the improvements we want to make.

X. Items for Future Agenda - Chairman Howroyd asked for items to be forward to both he and Mr. Barder.

XI. Executive Session –

Chairman Howroyd called for a motion to go into Executive Session. Mr. Rubin moved to go into Executive Session at 8:40 PM. Mr. Shanbaum seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Rubin moved to terminate Executive session @ 9:23 pm. Ms. Shanley seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Rubin moved to suspend the rules to add an item to the agenda to authorize a search for an Executive Director and to retain a professional search firm for such purposes. Ms. Shanley seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Shanbaum moved to adopt the item added to the agenda. Ms. Shanley seconded. Passed 4-0.

XII. Adjournment

Mr. Shanbaum moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Mr. Rubin. Motion passed 4-0.

The meeting adjournment at 9:27 PM

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST: _____