

CORPORATE MINUTES - BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE TOWN OF MANCHESTER

2014

April 16, 2014

Mayfair Gardens

Attending: Chairman Josh Howroyd
Robert Shanbaum
Paul Rubin
Mary Ann Murray – Interim Executive Director

Absent Carol Shanley

I. Chairman Howroyd opened the meeting at 6:30 PM.

II. Public Comments – *These minutes are intended to be an overview of the comments made and are not necessarily verbatim.*

Mr. Mike Kelly 22 D Case Drive addressed the Board. Mr. Kelly reported he has termites in his unit which he reported to the office on March 31. The termites are swarming and crawling all over his floors and baseboards and now they are moving in to the kitchen. He is upset that to date nothing has been done. He spoke to his neighbor and they are having the same problem. Mr. Kelly said his unit had been treated last year for the same thing. No one from the office has contacted him to let him know when the exterminator will be coming. Mr. Shanbaum shared that even when the exterminator does come the termites will not immediately go away. It does take some time for the chemical to work. The chemical treatment for termites used to be chlordane but that is no longer used because it is poisonous. Ms. Murray shared that the property manager, Steve has been in contact with Four Seasons who MHA's exterminator. We were informed by 4 Seasons they do not handle extermination of termites but subcontract that kind of work out to another company. Unfortunately in this case the sub-contractor is very busy this time of year. Termites are not considered an emergency and the earliest available time will be April 17 and 18. Both units will be treated for termites. Mr. Kelly voiced his frustration that the office did not call him back and tell him what was going on and a date when things would be handled. Ms. Murray said she will have Steve call Mr. Kelly. Chairman Howroyd notes the tenant's frustration and unfortunately MHA is at the mercy of the sub-contractor. He also shared that it is important for tenants to bring these issues to the attention of the Board.

Mr. Wayne Madden 28G Pascal Lane addressed the Board. Mr. Madden reported that he has a leak in his roof and he did call the office to report it. The leak is in the ceiling right over his stove and he has been keeping a bucket under the drip. Mr. Madden asked if it would be possible for tenants at Pascal Lane to hold a tag sale and if residents could use the strip of land across from the parking lot. Ms. Martha Bertrand remarked the previous Executive Director did not allow tag sales. She requested tenants use the court yard for their tag sale. She also reported that a large dumpster will be at the complex this week and tenants should be using it to get rid of their large junk items. Ms. Bertrand said she has contacted Shop Rite Supermarket about coming to get the shopping carts that residents have been allowed to bring from the store.

Ms. Cindy Parkington addressed the Board and said that the fence that has been installed at the back of the Mayfair Gardens property is really nice. She added that other tenants also are happy with how nice the fence looks and that it separates MHA property from the surrounding neighbors. Perhaps this will stop people from cutting through the property.

Mr. Kelly addressed the Board. He asked if it would be all right for him to plant flowers and small shrubs at the back of his property before the CL&P property. The Board commented it would be best not to plant anything close to the CL&P property. Chairman Howroyd commented there is an issue with the soil erosion and he will ask maintenance to check into planting something to preventing further erosion.

Mr. Don James 281 C Main Street addressed the Board. He asked if it would be possible to get rid of the stone gardens and residents be allowed to plant their own flowers. Chairman Howroyd shared that the flower beds had become terribly overgrown and that was why they were taken out and the rocks put in. Residents were invited to put potted plants on the stones. Mr. James said that potted plants do not do well and he had put flower bulbs in pots but they did not survive the winter because the pots do not keep the bulbs warm in the winter and they died. Ms. Bertrand said that she will speak with the new executive director and see what can be done.

Chairman Howroyd shared a new executive director has been selected by the MHA Board. Mr. Joseph D'Ascoli will start on May 1. He comes from East Long Meadow Massachusetts and has over 20 years' experience with Section 8 and a few years' experience with Public Housing. We will be scheduling a "meet and greet" with the residents and Mr. D'Ascoli.

Ms. Linda Kuban 255 A Main Street addressed the Board. Ms. Kuban asked what can be done about allowing visitors to park at Mayfair Gardens without the threat of being towed. Chairman Howroyd shared the Mayfair complex has very limited parking and the policy of having stickers has helped to alleviate illegal parking both here and at other complexes. The Board is revisiting the issue of cars being towed. Ms. Bertrand explained that residents having visitors staying overnight can put a sign in the passenger rear window that they are a guest and their car will not be towed.

Mr. Don James asked about if some of the clothes lines in the court yard could be take down because residents don't seem to be using them. Chairman Howroyd shared that topics of this nature would be ideal for a Tenant Group to discuss because if there is no need for them the tenants can help making decisions of this nature.

Mr. Jackie Lintle 231A Main Street addressed the Board. Mr. Lintle asked if the sliding screen doors can be replaced. They are continually falling off the track and maintenance constantly has to fix them.

The public hearing closed at 7:25 pm.

A. Discussion of Public Comments - None

III. Adoption of Minutes

A. Meeting of March 19, 2014

Mr. Shanbaum moved to table approval of the March 19, 2014 minutes. Mr. Rubin seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

IV. Correspondence - None

V. Accounts Payable

Mr. Rubin asked about the \$30,000 CL&P bill and why it is so much. Chairman Howroyd stated this is the monthly cost for electricity. The units are not the most energy efficient and this bill covers 280 units at both Mayfair Gardens and West Hill Gardens. Mr. Rubin asked about \$1,400 to MARC and what it is for. Chairman Howroyd shared MARC staff cleans the MHA office building and the Congregate. Mr. Rubin also asked about a \$4,000 entry for D&V Associates/Mainsail. Chairman Howroyd explained that this was for advertising and search for the new Executive Director. Mr. Rubin asked about \$1,000 to the reserve account. Chairman Howroyd said it must be a transfer from one account.

VI. Executive Director's Report

A. Financial Report –

Chairman Howroyd shared HUD did an audit of our Section 8 unit that needed immediate attention. Ms. Murray reported an error in Section 8 the amount of \$192,000. Monies in the amount of \$183,000 was transferred from to the COCC (Central Office Cost Center) from the NRA account by Mr. Barder last July. There is still \$9,200 unaccounted for and we don't know what the auditors are going to do about that. The auditors will send a report of their findings in 45 days. MHA will have 30 days to respond with a Corrective Action Plan. Ms. Murray stated the auditors demanded an immediate action for transferring the funds back and they were transferred back to the NRA account.

Ms. Murray also reported that a representative from the Hartford HUD office, Dwoun Byrd, stated that Mr. Barder changed the designation of West Hill Gardens from elderly/disabled and that should not have happened. Chairman Howroyd shared that for the last three years MHA was told by HUD that we would no longer be allowed to have Elderly/Disabled designation. Mr. Shanbaum shared he checked into this and while it is true, HUD wanted to have broader categorization represented in the applications. As long as we had a written policy, we could in fact designate them almost any way that we wanted as long as it represented the majority of the needs of the population. Ms. Murray explained that to Ms. Byrd said it should absolutely have not been done. Ms. Byrd also had issues with the Waiting List saying it was improperly managed and people were improperly housed and they have to be moved to alternate housing. Chairman Howroyd shared he would like nothing more than to have West Hill have a designation of Elderly-only or Elderly/Disabled. From what he has read in HUD guidelines you have to request a waiver in order maintain that type of designation and HUD was not willing to continue to do that. Mr. Shanbaum said he looked into it and there is no provision for a formal waiver. It seems to be that you have to have a well-documented admission policy for your community's general population.

B. Vacancy Report – Ms. Murray compared this report to the same time last year and noted a significant drop in the number of vacant units. The financial loss for having vacant units dropped by half from last year.

Ms. Murray shared the MHA newsletter will be insert in with the monthly statements and this will save on postage. She also reported the business cards we currently are having printed cost \$80 for 500 cards. The printer came up with a new style that will reduce the cost of 500 cards to \$38.

Ms. Murray has been reviewing the Verizon bill and discussed alternate plans with a sales representative. We currently have 14 lines and only use 9. Verizon came up with a new upgraded plan where we will have 10 basic flip phones and 5 smart phones that will allow us to text and take photos. The cost will be \$523 down from the \$678 we are currently paying. Chairman Howroyd mentioned eventually he would like the maintenance staff to have smart phones whereby they could process work order requests from their phone.

Ms. Murray reported we have received a bid from another landscaping contractor for the same amount of lawn cuts but significantly less than we are currently paying. The company, Gleason, submitted a bid of \$24,450 which is down from our actual cost last year of \$42,690.

Ms. Murray informed the Board that two hot water heaters had to be replaced. Most of them are 20 years old and need to be replaced. This is something we could put under a Capital Improvement Energy project. We did talked about this last year and looking into tank less water heaters which would only heat water when it is called for. This would be more energy efficient that storing water and keeping it hot.

Ms. Murray stated we are late with some of our SEC 2014 filings. Mr. Brian Schlosnagle has helped us determine what is due. One document was due by 3:00 on April 15 and we filed it in time.

Chairman Howroyd reported that an employee working at the Congregate gave her notice. This person works the second shift on weekends. The question was asked if we need to have a staff person filling this shift or a security guard. Ms. Murray received proposals from several security companies. We are looking for a middle aged female for this position. One company, SecurAmerica seems to be able to fill our

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criteria. The hourly rate is \$23. Chairman Howroyd asked if we have to have a long term contract. Ms. Murray reported the company has a 30 day cancellation policy.

Resolution 2014-4. Motion was made by Mr. Shanbaum to add to the agenda entering into a secure service agreement with SecurAmerica. Mr. Rubin seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Mr. Shanbaum moved to authorize the Chairman to enter into agreement with SecurAmerica to provide security for the Congregate. Mr. Rubin seconded. Motion passed.

C. Tenant Commissioner Update

Chairman Howroyd suggested keeping this item an on-going agenda item.

VII. Chairman's Report

Chairman Howroyd reported he has a signed agreement with the new Executive Director Mr. Joseph D'Ascoli. Chairman Howroyd will show Mr. D'Ascoli some of the MHA properties and will introduce him to MHA staff on Thursday, April 17.

VIII. Old Business

A. **Parking/Towing Issues** - Chairman Howroyd asked that this item be tabled to the next meeting. Mr. Rubin moved to table the Parking/Towing issues to the May Meeting. Mr. Shanbaum seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

IX. New Business - None

X. Items for Future Agenda

Mr. Shanbaum commented we need to resolve the issue about a Tenant Commissioner. Chairman Howroyd said he would get a notice out to the tenants. He will also follow up with Joe D'Ascoli. Ms. Murray offered to assist with this.

XI. Executive Session - None

XII. Adjournment

Chairman Howroyd asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Shanbaum moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Rubin seconded. Motion passed at 8:20 pm to adjourn the meeting.