



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

January 14, 2019

APPROVED MINUTES

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met in Regular Session at “McDonald House” at 49 Old South St. Northampton, Ma. on Monday January 14, 2019.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Upon Roll Call, those present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT: Vice Chairperson Brooks, Commissioner Budgar, Commissioner Richards, Commissioner Laufer and Chairperson Jones. .

ALSO PRESENT: Cara Clifford; Deb Dunphy; Keith Walsh; Sharon Kimble; Jack Redman; Cheryl Cardinale; John Wyda; Roy Martin; Toni Parizo; Joseph Santaniello; Angela Santaniello; Donald Moran; Lynn King; Heudi Sousse; Pat Sullivan; Marilyn Clare; John Gibner; Ron Terren; Peter Cushing; Cathy Donaghy; Brenda Thompson; Diane Mader & Rose Faille.

Public Comment: NONE

EMPLOYEE ISSUES

Employee Issues: None.

TENANT ISSUES:

Peter Cushing- Forsander - Thanked NHA for having a meeting with residents on the door situation. Rent recertifications – hope next year will be easier – six months is a long time. Cara – yes, NHA deals with a third party for information and it is time consuming getting the paperwork. Peter – will there be another recertification next year? Cara responded yes every year there is a recertification and we start it approximately 120 days out. Federal has 30 days, State is 15 days, but we still try to do the 30 days.

Marilyn Clare – Salvo- she has been in a wheelchair for a few years. 1 ½ years ago she asked for a designated parking space and has not received it yet. Jack Redman responded that Jason Potts has the sign and it has her name on it and it will be installed. There was a delay in obtaining the signage. NHA did install another van parking sign. Once her sign is up, she can call the towing company and have the vehicle in her spot removed. A letter has been sent from NHA saying that Marilyn can call the towing company. If she calls NHA and has them call and it goes through our answering service or our Maintenance Staff, it could take an extra half hour for the towing company to arrive. This issue has been discussed with the towing company and the Commission on Disability. Ms. Clare said that she is afraid of blowback. Jack said there will be two reflective signs and they are very large reflective signs. People can get upset if they get towed, but that is why we have the signs up.

John Wyda – Salvo – Does the tenant have the right to tell someone not to park there? Cara – you can call the police. Email any issues to Jack Redman.

Heidi Sousse – Salvo – Gardening plot – emailed Maria – when is the sign up? Also regarding crime at Salvo – she signed up with the neighborhood watch. She is very upset that a tenant was seriously assaulted. Drugs are still being sold – Apartment 514 – people are staying there. People are still getting into the building. She emailed the police about the assaulter and also to see if they had a mugshot. On the

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police website there is a no trespass and pictures. Cara – the neighborhood watch will help with this and in getting those kinds of things up and running. Did you get my memo on the December 19th assault? On our website there will be a link, such as text a tip to the police dept, etc. but NHA can't post certain things, especially with someone's social security number on it. Heidi – tenant can't see because of the camera. Cara – these are just temporary cameras, and we are still working with DHCD about getting the cameras for Salvo. Heidi – since we can't have weapons how do we defend ourselves? Cara – self- defense classes may help. The Housing Authority can't get involved in that but she may have the RSC arrange classes. Follow the law for whatever you can carry for defense.

Don Moran – Salvo – Salvo #414- For a few months there has been a water leakage in the kitchen where they have the AA meetings. The last meeting water was gushing down from the ceiling and the buckets are still there. Cara – There was a problem with a backup and a showerhead leaking in an apartment. The problem has been resolved but the buckets were left for any residual water. If it happens again, let us know.

Ron Terren – Forsander – There is still a tenant who is parking at Forsander, parks in the middle of the parking lot, and is staying there, can we tell the towing Service? Cara – she personally gave them a notice and NHA had the vehicle towed. If it is there, let us know and we will have it towed. We are getting parking stickers for all properties. The towing company will do a sweep and tow vehicles without stickers. Ron – when does that start? Cara – we have to order them. We will provide a log to the towing company.

Diane Mader – Salvo – What weapons are we not allowed to have? Cara responded that tenants have to follow the law and look at their lease. Diane stated that mug shots are available for people to review at the police station.

Diane stated that she is getting verbal abuse. There is a lot of anger towards her and she doesn't know why. She found a newspaper holding the back door of Salvo open. She reported it and it was fixed. There is also loud screaming coming from a tenant. How does she handle issues?

Cara – put it in writing to NHA and we will start an investigation. Also police reports.

Diane – why don't we have security? There are people coming in the door with her. She went outside to smoke and almost got robbed. She shouldn't have to live in fear. Hate crimes on her religion. Also the door of the community room is not handicap accessible. Handicap button on the door?

Cara – NHA cannot afford security, it requires 2 people at \$100.00 per hour, that is why we are installing the cameras. Cara will check on the handicap button – please put the request in writing. Jack will have Peter Doppman look into it.

Joseph Santaniello – Salvo – had two meetings with the Police Chief and Sgt. Robinson will have a meeting at Salvo and explain about Mace. We are now part of the National Sheriffs Association.

Toni Parizo – McDonald – there is still mold in her apartment on the counters, floors, etc. She has a nurse two hours a day to clean. She is getting sicker and sicker. What happens now? She has filled out all the applications. I feel like NHA doesn't understand the seriousness of this. She washed all her bedding four days ago and they are already covered in mold. She is concerned for everyone's health at McDonald.

Roy Martin – Salvo – NHA should send out a flyer to residents saying Marilyn Clare has her own handicap parking space and there should be no problem. Still wants a corkboard, can't read what is in the locked cabinet, there is so much stuff in it. Cara – Salvo has a locked bulletin board that the RSC cleans out and puts up to date information in. Roy - He puts magazines in the community room and they keep getting thrown away. Cara – there is to be nothing in the common area other than books.

John Wyda – Salvo – Thanks to Lynn King’s Mom for the Thanksgiving party it was out of this world. The Christmas party that was catered – on a scale of 1-10 – was a one! Cara – the Log Cabin catered the Christmas party. People enjoyed the event that wasn’t catered more!
Peter Cushing - the party held at Forsander was delightful.

Approval of the December 2018 Minutes

Commissioner Richards put forth the motion to approve the Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Brooks.

VOTING AYE: Commissioner Budgar, Richards, Laufer, Brooks and Chairperson Jones.

VOTING NAY: NONE

Whereupon Chairperson Jones approved the December minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

Air Conditioner Policy – Tabled. Commissioner Budgar said hopefully we get information soon before it gets warmer. Cara said she and Jack are still working on it, pulling stuff from other housing authorities.

MOTION - ADOPT FEDERAL INCOME LIMITS

To be tabled at this time due to the Federal Shut Down.

DISCUSSION OF PARCEL BEHIND MCDONALD HOUSE;

Cara – We have asked the City for information about the land and additional snow plowing concerns and we raised the concern the residents have about clearing the trees and taking away of the view. We asked the City for their input and they responded “there will be removal of trees from the project but almost all of the trees are on city land or land they are acquiring. The changes to the Housing Authority property would be minor. We have put \$19,000 aside for damages to the Housing Authority. We would be happy to either pay those funds to the Housing Authority and they can plant trees or do whatever mitigation you want or we can plant trees and pay the remaining funds to the Housing Authority.”

Commissioner Brooks - Are there any schematics? Cara - Just the map that I gave you the last time.

Commissioner Brooks – I don’t know how much parking they can put in with that land – 7 feet.

Chairperson Jones – it basically eliminates all the trees. Old forest and it has been there forever.

Cara – she thinks they are getting land from other people as well. The portion they are getting from us is a small amount. A lot of residents have voiced their disdain, many of them do gardening in that area, they like the shade of the trees. Cara – we can do a resident survey and give it to the City.

Commissioner Richards – eminent domain then? Have we had an appraisal?

Commissioner Budgar asked if we had a consensus from the McDonald tenants? Cara responded that they do not want us to give it to the City. They are very adamant about keeping that land. Jack said the biggest feedback he is getting, is that the trees cover the building in the back, so the view will now be another building instead of seeing those trees. The email from the City said the trees that will be removed will be city trees or trees from the property they are taking. The email we sent was if they could mark the trees for us, because it is hard to determine what the layout will be. I don’t think Tom has heard back.

There is no schematics on how they will rearrange the parking lot. And yes, Marilyn, they can take it by eminent domain. I think the survey has already been drafted and we want to do that. I think it is an unfortunate situation for 7 parking spaces. Cara – we will do the survey and compile the results before the next Board Meeting.

Commissioner Brooks – do a survey from the tenants and give to the Mayor before the next Board Meeting.

Commissioner Richards – do we have 7 or 8 parking spaces NHA can spare?

Commissioner Brooks – The horseshoe parking lot in the back of McDonald at one time was open land.
Commissioner Budgar – have the tenants talked to the City Councilor? This area is Ward 4, the councilor is Gina Sciarra. Cara – let's put this information on the survey also- to contact their Ward 4 Councilor.
Chairperson Jones – does eminent domain go before the City Council?

DISCUSSION OF GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

HUD Reps are not working. No Budget approval, no Section 8 Payment Standards approved. We have reserves to cover Section 8 rent payments through February and hope the shutdown ends before March. We can operate the Housing Authority without paying the landlords through October, but not more than that. A lot of agencies are fighting for us, like NAHRO, to get us some information. We are having a lot of calls coming in from Landlords about how they will be paid, and also from tenants.
Commissioner Laufer- what does rent subsidy loss look like? Cara responded that the landlord would expect the tenant to pay the difference that is lost. Jack has been coming up with some strategies to help tenants understand that they will not lose their apartments and reassure them that the Housing Authority will do everything it can to keep tenants in their apartments during this time.

By Law Update

Commissioner Richards said they had a meeting on January 3, 2019. They are ready to draft the new version with a few changes. Much of the bylaws will remain the same, a few things will be added. They will meet with Cara and the Attorney before presenting it to the Board. Cara – when you get it done, can you send me a copy and I will get it to the two Attorneys to review.

At this time, the Executive Director's Report Was Read

Financials – still working with approved 2018 budget for 2019. We are at 41%. The 4190 account which is for administrative expense, is at 45% but when doing a comparison to the 2018 budget and once the 2019 budget is approved, we will be under budget in the 4190 line item.

Went over the rents collected, re-certifications, waiting lists, etc.

MCAD case was settled by means of mediation. The "Oxygen in Use" signs were ordered and some have arrived. Section 8 payment standards are at a standstill due to the government shutdown.

Fall Cleanup has been completed at all properties. A temporary camera system was installed at Salvo while we work with DHCD to complete the formal bid. A meeting was held at Forsander with the Executive Director and Senior Manager about the intercom systems. One test intercom system is scheduled to arrive by end of month. A discussion about testing intercoms before purchasing all took place and residents of Forsander present agreed with the process.

DHCD continues to work with Waterfield Design Group on the Hampshire Heights Basement Project. It will be included in our 5 year capital plan. More information will be available during the February Board Meeting after we have district hours with DHCD.

Our Website is scheduled to launch in March 2019. The site is 85% complete at this time, content is being finalized. All NHA staff participated in the Fair Housing training through MCAD.

Commissioner Jones – Is there anything else on the Hampshire Heights Basement Project?

Cara – DHCD wants us to tie in the drainage to the flooding issue and replacing pavement. It will add \$400,000.00. We will know more after our District Hours with DHCD.

Commissioner Brooks put forth the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Laufer.