



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

APPROVED JUNE MINUTES

JUNE 27, 2022

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met via “Zoom” on Monday, June 27, 2022 at 5:30 P.M.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 5:31 P.M.

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

PRESENT: Chairperson Richards; Vice Chairperson Brooks; Commissioner Jones; Commissioner Cancel; Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield; Commissioner Laufer & Commissioner Carney.

ALSO PRESENT: Cara Leiper; Jack Redman; Sharon Kimble; Attorney Tom O'Connor; Kaitlin Hanning; Jose Cruz; Amanda Huertas; Danielle McColgan; Mia Weibel; Heather Maxwell; Angela Santaniello; Gwen Nabad & Deb Charow;

TENANT COMMENTS

Deb Charro – McDonald #504. There was an incident over the weekend. The power in her outlet went out and she thought her air conditioner was broken. Checked the circuit breaker. Called maintenance on call and asked to have them call her back and it wouldn't let me. The weekend operator told me to call National Grid and I feel I shouldn't as the electricity is included with the rent. National Grid asked for an account number or a phone number associated with the account and address and was told there was a power outage. Maybe this could be corrected for the future.

Angela Santaniello Salvo #425. Tenants at Salvo are looking at starting an annual tag sale. Working with the management team in getting this done. Police calls for neighborhood watch have gone down tremendously – not nearly as many calls these days. Working in partnership with the Housing Authority and trying to hold tenants accountable for their lease violations. That has seemed to really calm the waters in this whole building. I want to thank the Housing Authority for their partnership.

STAFF COMMENT

NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT

NONE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Cara read the report and gave updates on the COVID vaccine clinics, securing a podiatrist, family sites hosting lunches starting July 29th, Grow Food tilling gardens and distributing seedlings and plants. Every site except Florence Heights has a market table every week with fresh fruits and veggies for free. The Florence heights garden beds were cleaned out and are getting prepped to plant pumpkins. Forsander had Grow Food help in tilling the garden and planted flowers for residents. Trees at Tobin were taken down and stand- alone mailboxes at Forsander were installed as well as mulch installed at the Florence heights playground. The new playground ribbon cutting at Hampshire Heights was cancelled due to inclement weather.

Chairperson Richards – do you know when we will reschedule the ribbon cutting?

Cara – we have a HUD visit coming in August and depending on COVID it will be sometime in August.

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Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – regarding spring cleaning – how much did it cost this year and the past 8 years?

Chairperson Richards – this is not on the agenda. Can you get back to Joella on that Cara?

Cara – yes.

Commissioner Carney – regarding the scheduling of the ribbon cutting. Commissioners are suggesting that it happens earlier in the day. Wondering if it is because you have HUD visitors. Is that why one of the reasons it is scheduled for that time of day rather than for a time when it was suggested when residents and other people could be there?

Cara – it was originally set for 2:00 p.m. because the kids were getting out of school right then and we were hoping for lots of participation from the kids. That is when we could coordinate the Mayor, etc. I did receive an email from Commissioner Laufer asking for it to be later in the day so people can attend. In August after our HUD visit we will put it together and we will take that into consideration when rescheduling.

APPROVAL OF THE MAY 2022 MINUTES

Chairperson Richards put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Carney.

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Richards; Vice Chairperson Brooks; Commissioner Cancel; Commissioner Tarbutton- Springfield and Commissioner Carney.

VOTING NAY: NONE

ABSTAIN: Commissioners Jones and Laufer.

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the May minutes.

Commissioner Carney – are we actually approving minutes that would require all voters to have been at the actual meeting or is it an acceptance of the minutes where it required the Commissioners to read through and accept them as written? I know often I have heard that if you weren't at the meeting you would have to Abstain. I just need a little clarification on that, please.

Attorney O'Connor – it is my understanding in practice for the two decades that I have been around is that if you weren't at the meeting you abstained. Is that legally required, I can't say for certain without a little bit of research, but I would image it is.

Chairperson Richards – we will go with that for now, but that is a very good question because I have heard it both ways. Thank you, Commissioner Carney.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion – Corticelli Street Update

Cara – on June 17th I received a letter from DHCD approving the sale of Corticelli Street as voted for by the Board. The next step is having Attorney O'Connor drawing up the proper paperwork so that we can facilitate that to occur.

Chairperson Richards – what is the timetable on that?

Cara – He will get that finished in July. Tom do you foresee any issues with that happening in July?

Attorney O'Connor – No, there will be a purchase and sale circulating by mid- week, then once the other side agrees to it that will set the dates in place. I don't know what the financing situation is, if they are borrowing money. If they are, the likely closing date will be August not July, but in any event that is the time frame.

Cara– thank you, Attorney O'Connor.

Chairperson Richards – it looks like we can expect the finale of Corticelli Street sometime in early fall. Thank you, Attorney O' Connor and Cara.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – when the people from Corticelli St. were here in the meeting, because I definitely voted for this, I don't know if anyone else saw this, but they were like, please don't vote for it. I didn't get a chance to talk to them and I didn't know how to text them because I thought it

was something pretty good, but are you aware of some of the objections from the residents on that Street?

Cara – the people making comments were asking to vote for it. A lady was emailing me at the same time – she wanted it sold, the people on the Street want it sold terribly. It has been an ongoing issue for over 20 years. The input I have had is that everyone can't wait for it to be dealt with.

NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSSION – The Board and the Executive Director: The Team That Makes It Work

Cara – In an effort to be most transparent, I was asked to share some highlights from Chapter 4 of the Commissioners Handbook and some events that have occurred recently. Cara went on to read some of the highlights.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – that is a great idea to have the Board acting in the highest respect. In October before the voting both Cara and you called me to get my assurance that I would vote for you for Chair and not Elizabeth Silver because she is a mean ole bully and she feared Marilyn would resign if she was not elected as Chair. I was stunned, I just got on the Board, that an Executive Director not even part of the Board would be trying to manipulate where the Board would vote. You called me right after. I was so distressed by that I couldn't go to my other meeting. I have proof of it and I think it is so very amazing that the two of you are sitting here saying how the Board should act and you are the ones who are not acting ethically. I am sure there is some violation of the open meeting law that you would do this,. You two need to look at yourselves please. You are the one that is violating it. Also, Cara called me once she was here visiting someone who was getting their place done, I was still new and I didn't know any of the Board members or Edgardo. Cara said Edgardo had been evicted from the property. Why is an ED telling a newly appointed tenant who wasn't even sworn in yet about a fellow Board member to make me not want to know him, vote with him. This is the two of you and you need to think about it and if any of you Board members and I see Commissioner Carney your face is shocked, if you see this going on, if they did it to me I wonder how many people you called and assured a vote so it can be run the way you are running it, Cara. You have the concept of unclean hands and if anyone wants a copy of that I will – the phone call, Marilyn you too.

Chairperson Richards – I will respectfully disagree with you but we will let people air their grievances and discuss this. Cara do you have anything to add?

Cara – Attorney O'Connor can you tell me if it is common practice for someone to call a Board member and ask them if they have their support if they run?

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I would love that.

Attorney O'Connor – I don't know whether it is common practice but there is certainly nothing illegal about trying to find out how someone is going to vote ahead of time. I would think it is common practice, you are trying to line up votes, trying to find out who is voting where. The use of the word of illegal for that conduct just isn't appropriate.

Chairperson Richards – I just want to clarify I have in the past asked for people's support, but I haven't asked them how they were going to vote, I wouldn't do that.

Commissioner Carney – question to Attorney O'Connor – I heard a few things, the one Attorney O'Connor just confirmed, which I know from my experience on other governmental bodies that phone calls are actually the preferred way to communicate in order not to violate any form of open meeting laws and that would still preserve that one to one phone calls as long as they weren't serial phone calls on a specific matter. Director Leiper brought up a couple of incidents that I would also like to get confirmation from Attorney O'Connor that are not illegal. There are many references to the handbook – thank you for that. However, I don't believe that a Housing Authority handbook is anything more than just guidance. I am asking Attorney O'Connor to confirm that the use of a handbook – those are great

suggestions and great guidance, however, I don't think in any way it restricts Commissioners from doing those things the Director mentioned such as handing out a survey. I don't know if there is any prohibition from what I am hearing. Even the suggestion that the Board needs to show a united front. I can see that is good guidance and probably good practice but why would a Board show a united front, a Board that is not united and it seems to me that is the case. I think it is better that we are getting at the kind of disagreements and things that we have. I am not hearing in any of the incidents described anything illegal or anything that would be reported on any part of the commissioners or management – the phone calls, etc. It sounds that people have complaints and disagreements about those. But I am not hearing there is anything wrong or illegal.

Attorney O'Connor – I think you are hitting the nail right on the head, Commissioner Carney with respect to the handbook. It is exactly that, it is a guide, it is not a statute book or regulations it is modeled to the best of its ability after the statutes and regulations but you are exactly right – it is a guide. I think what you are hinting at are some first amendment issues that people have to say and act how they want. Ideally the guide is hoping the Board can all be on the same page at the same time presenting a united front to the residents and the community but it is exactly that, a guide.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I think Maureen brought up some issues. As I am on this committee and I am learning and going through resident board trainings I can't believe people's mouths were agape when I said what happened. I think it is positioning to try to garner a majority on how votes are supposed to be and I think that is really wrong. I don't know about the law, but I think it is seedy and underhanded. I don't want anyone calling me to get my assurance. I just got on this Board, but I don't know if you say this is wrong Maureen, I think it is wrong for an ED to tell me whether it is true or not whether a Board member or tenant was evicted. I have to say to you that I am sorry Edgardo that I didn't stand up for you when she said that and reported that I was shocked. I didn't know you, I am sorry and I want to ask for your forgiveness because that is wrong, wrong, wrong.

Cara – I did not ever say because it is not the case, that Commissioner Cancel was evicted. I want to make that clear on the record for the record to Commissioner Cancel and everyone else.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – that is a lie I didn't even know him from Adam.

Chairperson Richards – Commissioner Tarbutton I don't want to get into a back and forth here, this is a discussion period where we are grateful for your comments because as Commissioner Carney has reminded us and Attorney O'Connor, we would like to be more united, if we are not we want to be. This is an effort to try to move toward that goal.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield - I didn't know him from Adam so I wouldn't know anything about his business. I didn't know anything about it until I was told by Cara.

Chairperson Richards – to avoid going back and forth if you could ask to be recognized I would be happy to recognize you.

Commissioner Laufer – I really appreciate Maureen's approach to this and I think it is also important to recognize that if Marilyn and Cara are going to bring this specific situation up, there will be back and forth and that is fair. I think that we just have to ride the emotions not cut Joella off and make sure that we are really giving everyone a fair chance because just putting it out there, it seems like you just singled her out and she has every right to respond and you should have expected a response like this because it's really not fair. I don't know if you have had a one on one conversation with her, this seems really inappropriate to do with the Board and on public record. I think if you have had one or two failed attempts to have one on one conversations, then you should try again one on one or bring in a mediator like Tom.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield - I at my own expense will take a lie detector test and I swear on my grandmothers name all I said happened.

Commissioner Jones – I didn't know anything about a survey being circulated, that is very interesting and I don't think it is necessarily illegal, but to the naked eye it gives the impression that it was issued by

the Housing Authority office. If you are going to do that then at least acknowledge the source of the survey and that wasn't done in this case and so I find that very troubling. There is a lot of stuff I am going to say, well maybe not. That is my initial comment - is I think that whole thing was highly misleading to put that out the way it was apparently put out. This is all news to me and I will leave it at that.

Commissioner Cancel – I just want to say I appreciate those who brought issues forward, I appreciate Cara for bringing her report and her ideas in regards to the Board and our relationship with the ED. I think this is a healthy conversation and I hope that it will yield some good positive forward progress. Thank you.

Commissioner Carney – I guess I would be looking for us to find some way to kind of keep this talk. I don't think we will achieve a resolution on this matter tonight especially since we have another 12 pretty meaty items, but I would like us to have some way to bring it back either to the next Board meeting or having some next steps. I know there was at one point a talk of a retreat. Maybe something like that would be the place where there would be a consultant or some help that would be agreed upon by the Board because my sense is that right now there are some trust issues and some other things and I don't think that is unnatural. I think that is often the case in many Boards. I appreciate the whole thing and how we can consider some next steps.

Cara – I have asked Attorney O'Connor to speak up on what he informed me about a retreat because in some of the emails that transpired throughout the month one of the Commissioners, Commissioner Cancel had suggested a retreat which I think is a great idea but Tom said in doing some of the things that were suggested we would potentially have some issues with open meeting law. Attorney O'Connor if you would please discuss that I would appreciate it.

Attorney O'Connor – I agree, it is a wonderful idea but I think the constraints of the open meeting law make it unrealistic. You would not be able to discuss any Northampton Housing Authority business and I think if I stick you all in a room it is just an impossibility. It is what you are naturally going to do at some point and the moment you do it you are committing an open meeting law violation.

Commissioner Carney – not a great solution but what if we do it in the open.

Attorney O'Connor – well that you could do.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I think we should have an independent investigator maybe someone from the AG's office, maybe some outside person to come talk about these issues because I think it is that serious when someone is talking bad about another person who is on the Board and as a new person made me really uncomfortable. I don't want anyone to ever do that. I am in a community now that is as various to under represented people on Boards, this would be the main one. I think it is important that if it is thrown under the rug it is not happening. I have on the Mel King Institute they are willing to give scholarships to all Board members to take a racism and implicit bias webinar free because I know Cara said you can go to these but I am not paying for it, so this is free. I really think it would be really good for us to be part of that.

Chairperson Richards – Again, I agree with Commissioner Carney, I think this is a healthy discussion and I know it is going to create some discomfort but it is time we talk about it and I for one hope it brings us closer to get our stuff out in the air even though our perceptions of things are sometimes very different.

DISCUSSION

Request for Agenda Items email and Chairperson Response

Chairperson Richards read her response. The email from Commissioner Cancel to Marilyn and copied to the Mayor. As the Chair felt she needed to respond.

Cara also read the emails from Commissioner Cancel.

Chairperson Richards – I think we are closer in agreement then we are apart because many things he said and many of his ideas I think are great and I totally agree with. I think we joined this Board for the

tenants and I hope that we use hashing this stuff out as an effort to become closer with one another and as a commission.

Commissioner Cancel – that was a lot of writing in those emails clearly full of frustration, not necessarily in the way I like to communicate. For me it was obviously a last resort especially copying the Mayor on it, it is a very last resort. I felt like it had been really difficult to get items on the agenda, things people have been asking about and complaining about and they are usually things I don't really need to get involved with because we have competent folks on our staff that can do their job. A lot of times I am simply asking for clarification or updates about what is going on when I continue to see folks coming up to me and say "hey you are on the Board what is going on, this is happening, this is not happening." When I try to email and ask for items to go on the agenda it had been often refused. At this point when I sent this last email I was obviously frustrated. I really don't like the tone of it, I don't like how it's received on the other side because what's not a good way to address it. For that I apologize because for me this is not personal. I apologize to you, Marilyn and to folks that may feel insulted or dis-respected by it, that is not my intent. I just want to see things getting done in a good way and I want to do work that I am proud of and that we can all be proud of as a Board. So I am glad we are talking about it and has been brought forward but I recognize that is certainly far from being the best way to handle and communicate among the Board and staff. That is my piece anyways for requesting items on the agenda.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – the amount of time devoted to that I kind of feel like if Cara has something to say or you or the lawyer you make time for that. Before I got on the Board I remember Emily trying to ask a question, no you can't ask that, so if somebody gets on the Board you know you can't ask a question. So it's very interesting those who make the agenda can make it for themselves for the things they want to share. I don't really have a problem with that. I think that before it got to this level with Commissioner Cancel there were times when he said it feels like it, if we got to that letter and Marilyn you went off – "I resent that you said I am a racist." I don't think he said that but he was trying to voice his opinion in one of the meetings and you went into defensive mode. I thought how can you argue with someone and how they feel and how they perceive this especially and I don't want to get technical, a white woman not paying attention or respecting what a man of color is saying. I think that you have and you get defensive about it like how dare you call me a racist or say that. I am doing things that aren't equal. I am a teacher, I have had students from the Dominican Republic or PR saying miss, I feel like you are racist. I don't get defensive about that. I said my Lord knowing this kids experiences and what he has been through in life, what am I doing that is making him feel that because I am devoted politically, personally and professionally to interrupt racism and all forms of oppression. That is something to do some self- reflection, not to lash out. I can understand in the times I've known him and seen on the Board, I have seen him to be very calm, very cerebral, and very fair and all that. I think when somebody gets to the point to ask for help and it kind of seems like the larger administration we just got out- how dare anyone say anything about me, they embarrass him in front of other people, this is like gaslighting when someone brings something up for consideration but you turn it off and use the power of the mike and who can recognize and not to shame him for it without any introspection or insight and that's really kind of sad. I remember Commissioner Cancel raising his hand up again and again you say you didn't see him but I'm telling you if it was Tom or Cara, you got bionic eyes when you see them, to the point where I could sense he was so frustrated that he left. I didn't know him except when somebody told me about it and I felt really bad about it. I know tenants heard it. That is one of the things I think we should do to work through this. I think we should have these meetings televised. I think there is a Northampton Cable TV that it would be really good, because maybe some people and I know I do this in acting, see yourself how you are and let someone else comment on it. I think that would be something that is very helpful.

RE: Agenda items – I don't get them on the Board, and I ask but one time I had an agenda item and Marilyn said Cara would put it in her report. It is not what I asked, I can speak for myself, I think I am articulate enough to be able to express what I want. What she talked about was not what I wanted to

bring up. I didn't even get the chance, I don't understand this group, some people say you've been in groups and this happens all the time. I'm in several groups and Boards and this doesn't happen like this. But I do want to tell you something that is happening in other groups that you are ignoring. Massachusetts and Connecticut and probably the country now is trying to incorporate DEI – Diversity, Equity and inclusion in everything they do. The very fact that someone would say that a woman of color who has a baby who would be willing to take on the Vice Chair and man is like no I want two – to me that seems really greedy, but whatever the case may be. Before we could even talk about the Treasurer you said that is how it has always been, people here at McDonald. You don't have to say no hell no blah, blah, it is what you say and how you say it that has a large meaning. I think these are the things we are talking about that you are excluding. I think that is really wrong. The only reason I suggested that because it was overheard and someone recorded it a certain Commissioner cussing saying he is tired of Cara and blah, blah. I won't get into that but let's act professional every time at all times against everyone.

Chairperson Richards – I just want to say I don't ever remember Commissioner Cancel saying I was racist. Just leave it at that.

Commissioner Carney – What I am hearing is that it is not even the details of the email exchange it's not even the particular items, but instead it is the exchange of and unfortunately ulterior motives, nefarious motives, that are given to things and I believe this is really unfortunate because it demonstrates the level of distrust that exists among this Board which is in contrast to the handbook that we read earlier about a “unified” Board. The fact that there are suggestions in the email of sweeping things under the rug to me is less illegal than more illegal things that were suggested even in that followed by a sentence that we all agree that our purpose here is to be here to serve the public. It is just too bad that those two statements had to exist. I would have preferred that first statement didn't exist in that highlighted area. I think the most important paragraph that thankfully to both Marilyn and Cara was read in its entirety twice for those who weren't paying attention, we heard that whole email exchange twice so thank you. I think there are some things that we can put to bed. For example we have a certain governmental structure as a Board, it was changed in 2018 when it expanded to include the number of commissioners, at that time officer structure had been as it had been for the existence. I think it had been very common for the person who was living in McDonald to serve as the Treasurer because of the proximity. It made it easier for everybody. I think in terms of the Vice President that was something that happened. There was a level of that whole nomination there, a suggestion that the person who had served in that position as a Vice Chair for a number of years without any preparation of there being a supposed change which can happen of course at any time any year that there is a changeover of officers, it just doesn't usually happen in Boards like this. So to attribute a nefarious motive to the person who has agreed to stay on as Vice Chair and of course he had already been elected Vice Chair and then the position of Treasurer came up, I don't think the members of the Board who voted for Vice Chair, myself included, had heard any other reason. Typically when there is an expected nomination, people will talk about it before, I intend to run for Chair of the Board and we know nominations are coming up this is when people have those phone calls for these particular purposes. I hadn't received a phone call from anyone saying hey I am interested in stepping up for Vice Chair. So it had taken me by surprise. I'm talking too long about this to say there are items that can be put to bed. Those elections happened, there are elections again next year. If other commissioners want to serve in those positions talk about it now, talk about what you want to do, and lets just do it rather than after the fact assume that there is something wrong with the way it happened and he should step down and give up the position. That kind of language is not really helpful to the Board and helping us move on. In terms of the agenda items let me say this - in most governmental bodies on which I have served and as we can see in Congress right now, those agenda items are set by the Chair. We have a by- laws we can change. We can change the by-laws to mandate that the Chair accept any agenda item put forward by a member of the commissioners. We can amend the by-laws to do other

things. Let's talk about that rather than start attacking people for doing what is their present job and assigning them an ulterior bad motive. That is just my two cents but it was more like five. Sorry.

Chairperson Richards – appreciate it, thank you.

Commissioner Laufer – Thanks Maureen I am really appreciating your comments at this meeting. One point – is that it is really important that we acknowledge that there are Commissioners on this Board that are also residents and have insights and lived experience that I think maybe is not acknowledged or there is not a way to sort of understand there might be other insights or other sort of ways of us understanding what is actually happening. So when we say things like this is actually happening or there are things that are being “swept under the rug” it is because we are not seeing actions being done because we live here and we know that the actions are not being done. Marilyn you are doing a great job as Chair but as Chair to acknowledge who is this Commissioner, what is their lived experience, are they coming to me with valid concerns rather than feeling attacked or offended by the comments. It is really hard to live in public housing. I am just going to put that out there and as Commissioners and also residents we have a really thin line we are walking on in representing our neighbors, our friends and also being a Board member. It is tough abdicating for your neighbors and friends when you sort of have to walk a narrow line, so I think the diversity and equity training is absolutely necessary and we aren't just talking racial, we are talking socio economic status. We are faced with these types of issues in every single realm when we are living in Northampton whether it is in a grocery store or here on the Board. It is really important that you understand that there are deeper meaning to some of the concerns that are here on the agenda. Me personally the basements, there are moldy basements at Hampshire Heights, it is totally legit and it hasn't been addressed and it has been on the agenda before. These are things we are literally living with. Living with kids with asthma, we are living with all of these things on top of paying bills and living pay check to pay check. That is where I will leave it. I think when we say transparency that is part of it. Just understanding that there are people on this Board who live through and are affected by every decision that we make.

Chairperson Richards – thank you for your comments.

Commissioner Cancel – I want to clarify that I still stand by the points I raised in those emails but I definitely wished I had gone about it differently. This is basically what I wanted, us to have an honest conversation about how we conduct our business. Madam Chair I never did call you a racist I think Joella was using that as an example for something else. I just want to clarify that. I agree with Commissioner Carney in regards to just the way I went about bringing up some of those comments and I appreciate you guys listening and commenting and giving me feedback. I will take all the feedback I can get for sure. Thank you.

Chairperson Richards – I just want to clarify I said that you did not ever remember calling me a racist. I just want you to know that.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I never meant to say somebody shouldn't take the position they have or resign. I want to make that clear. I was just bringing it up as a reference that everyone else is dealing with DEI and that is one of the things that people are doing so I would think about that. Going through resident Board training it gave a list of people on the Board and it looked like there was some's term that expired on 8/8/21. I am not saying anything has to be done about it, I don't know what people are doing about that. Last week I was sworn in for a second term. I don't think everybody wanted that but I do want to make a commitment to the residents and the staff and to the Board members. I am just the resident, just like I would like the Chair not to just be Cara's right hand person, she is for everybody. I hear people say very nice things about you Marilyn from the things you have done in other communities & also on the Board. I was so excited and you didn't have to call me for a vote because I probably would have voted for you any way. You are on the Board because you have some experience. I would like to see you, and somebody is going to say that is my job, operations, be a part of all the places here, tenants too, because they have concerns, they need a voice. I would like to see you be for all NHA and the Attorney

too. We talked about the raise and it didn't get the votes and then at the very end like five minutes before, it's like according to blah blah, it passed. He didn't say whether there was a motion for reconsideration, if anybody wanted to change their vote. It gives the impression that it is for the ED. A lot of the stuff people are saying is because of some of the things that happened which people are not acknowledging but is problematic. Marilyn you did say I think it is a good idea we go to training, me too but it hasn't happened but I have, when is it going to happen? It is like people are saying you are going to get this, you are going to get the scaffolding cleaned, da, da, da and it doesn't happen. I grew up in an alcoholic family and they would promise you the world and it would never happen. So I'm kind of used to that – when?

Commissioner Carney – I think we just heard from Attorney O'Connor that we can't have a kind of retreat training. Anything that would happen outside of this forum we would have to have something like a noticed meeting open to the public. However, I think as long as we are prepared to do that maybe we can set aside some time and open it up to the public if that is the legal requirement and I think that should be well planned before it happened and not necessarily a meeting that allows for public input. This, in my mind just because there is so much that we have to deal with just internally as a Board, we just have to do it in the public eye.

Chairperson Richards – I appreciate that Commissioner Carney and I just want to say that I agree with that, I wish we could have more dialogue but we are restricted in many ways and people jump down me for that. I am trying my best to obey the open meeting law. If you have been reading the paper lately I think within the last month I have read about three different committees not necessarily of Northampton, that have open meeting law as an issue. I know how careful you have to be. Thank you to Commissioner Cancel for being very clear about the way it was handled and I want to say I think we are in agreement on many things. I would love to have lots of training. I have never been to a training where I haven't really walked away with something. I am more concerned right now on how do we come together, how to be more united within the law, respecting each other and acknowledging we are all here for the tenants, the people we serve. Any Commissioners have comments?

Commissioner Brooks – I really have no comments to make.

Commissioner Jones – I appreciate the comments from everyone tonight. I think in terms of tenant input and tenant accountability that's why I have always been a strong supporter of tenant organizations because it was a different type of checks upon the formal structure of the Housing Authority. As far as diversity, equity and inclusion that is what unions do and I am the union rep and that is very serious to me and I can always get better. I appreciate the comments that were made but we seem to have gone in ebbs and flows where we have decent tenant organizations and then they fall apart for whatever reason. People move on, or they disintegrate from within and you end up with one faction fighting another faction so called and the bottom line gets lost. I am still a believer in tenant organizations and I would like to see one in every single property that we run and I always have. I am still hopeful that can be part of the solution going forward. I do think the basements at Hampshire Heights – that has been with us for a long, long time. That is something that is long overdue to figure out and put to bed. Those comments are 100% accurate and I will leave it at that.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – thank you Commissioner Jones I have seen you in your glory with the union and I am just so amazed. I think it would be a really great thing for tenants to get an organization together and as it says in one of the things I have read, the ED should be encouraging that and I would hope that would happen. You don't have to be a group to go to these trainings, there are free trainings on line. I do appreciate people who do find that is important and always working on yourself. I do appreciate that it is always open meeting law – you can do it without waiting. It is like a husband and wife and it's not working out, you both don't have to go to counseling, you go. Maybe you can use what you got and take it home. I remember Marilyn, you said that you went to one, I don't know if that dealt with racism or what. I want education from the cradle to the grave and just keep on doing it. I'm

sorry if this is going longer, maybe we need to table some of the other things because this is really important.

Chairperson Richards – I want to ask Attorney O'Connor – I think we have been mixing the agenda items up and I just want to check back with the Attorney and Commissioner Cancel. Tom, do I need to go down these one by one again?

Attorney O'Connor – some of them have been discussed already but it would probably be a good idea to go down them one by one or get input from the other commissioners. Maybe some of them get tabled to the next meeting, however you want to handle it, but I think you need to address them one by one and at the end of the day that is what Commissioner Cancel wanted. I think it would be a good idea to do that even though some of them have been touched on a little bit already.

Commissioner Carney – all of those items were also each enumerated meaning the item defined and the response by the Executive Director in the email chain that was read twice. We could read it a third time or we could refer back to the email chain and either ask what we want to do with that item, meaning table that particular item to the next meeting to a certain date or take up that particular item of the 9. We could do all items or determine which of those items that we want to defer to either a certain date – those are our options.

Chairperson Richards – I also want to make sure that Commissioner Cancel feels like he is getting the issues addressed, it is important to me.

Commissioner Cancel – thank you, actually I did get a lot of good information even after the email request by Cara's latest response and attachment of minutes and all that, so I do have a pretty clear picture along with the conversations we had today. I myself don't have any other comments about these points because I have said it all in the emails, but if there are other folks who want to discuss those items, particularly if it has to do with how to move forward as Commissioner Carney suggested that would be good. I don't necessarily feel like I need to go through each item for 15 minutes unless other Commissioners have comments or suggestions about how to move forward with them.

Chairperson Richards – I can ask if anybody has any final thoughts and then we can move on to our three motions.

Cara – Tom, correct me if I am wrong, is that if I say “discussion of public access to recordings” have we covered everything, is there any final comment – I think if we go down the list like that it covers it since it was on the agenda. Tom, do I have that accurate?

Attorney O'Connor – I think that would be best if you read it, ask if there is any further input – none, jump to the next one. I do know that the Hampshire Heights basements seem to get a lot of interest so maybe some people want to hear from Cara about that, but I leave that to you Madam Chair. I would just read one by one and see if there is any further input, that way we are very clear that we have addressed them.

DISCUSSION

Public Access to Recordings

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – in the interest of transparency I would like public access as I said earlier, I don't know if I need a motion that we get Northampton Cable TV to tape these meetings so it can be available.

Cara – Commissioner Tarbutton this is access to the current audio recordings - that is all we can talk about. Currently the public does have access to that, it is handled as a public records request.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – do you charge them for it?

Cara – not if we can send it electronically.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I think that is great.

Commissioner Cancel – in regards to the meetings I just want to second that it would be good to have it on the Northampton local access channel.

Cara – Attorney O'Connor does that need to go on another Board meeting since it is not about the zoom recordings, it is about going on TV?

Attorney O'Connor – yes, we should probably put it on the next agenda, I can't imagine it will take that long, just a general discussion about it, make a decision about what the Board wants to do.

DISCUSSION

Board Member Positions

Chairperson Richards – we do have an election coming up in 7 months as Cara said. I am anxious to hear from people interested in taking more of a role.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I would like to make a motion that no one is to call each other trying to get assurances or tally for vote. I think it kind of defies the spirit. I would like to put it as a motion.

Chairperson Richards – I think this is for discussion, not motions is that correct?

Commissioner Carney – it could be put as an agenda item but it would have to be an agenda item the public knows about so it would have to be at the next meeting. It sounds like the motion would be that Commissioners not be allowed to make phone calls to each other that would in any way request support for an elected position. Am I correct, is that what you said?

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – yes, I would like that.

Attorney O'Connor – you could put it on like Commissioner Carney suggested at the next meeting but I would point out that people have the first amendment right to make a phone call. I don't necessarily think that a motion of that nature would dovetail well with one's first amendment right to call someone and say hey I am looking for your support. On the other hand the person who is getting that phone call can say I don't appreciate your phone call and hang up on them. I think it is best just left that way, we all know Commissioner Tarbutton's position right now and with all the commissioners knowing it, I can't imagine anyone would than call Commissioner Tarbutton.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – let me just revise that a little bit. Let the ED who is not a Board member telephone asking for assured votes for folks. You are right it is all our right but that is in poor taste, that was just to me, I can't imagine these phone calls that went probably beforehand but I would really think we not do that.

Attorney O'Connor – if I could just point out we are not being responsive right now to Commissioner Cancel's agenda item, this is an unrelated discussion so we can put it on the next agenda, but we really shouldn't be having much more of this discussion right now.

Chairperson Richards – put it on. I think the reference was around one person holding 2 offices.

DICUSSION

Basements at Hampshire and Florence heights

Chairperson Richards – are we in agreement to put that on the agenda for discussion and more information for next time?

Commissioner Carney – having represented that area for so many years and having Commissioners live there now and have lived there - so you know when you go down the hill the water – all of Barrett Street as well, suffers horrible water floods not just related to the marsh but also just the geology there. It might be helpful for us even though it would still require intensive mitigation, that most residents who live down there haven't been able to attain to have, if the DPW would agree, an engineer that specifically can help explain for our purposes maybe help us better understand why that continues after decades to be a really difficult area for water.

Cara – I can tell the Board members that Hampshire Heights is built on clay so when it rains there is no place for the water to go. That is part of the problem specific to Hampshire Heights. It is in the capital plan, it remains in the capital plan. We met on Monday April 11, 2022 about it with the resident advisory

board. We sent an email on June 22nd asking for an update from DHCD about it. We have allocated more than a million dollars because the road and basement mitigations have to happen at the same time according to DHCD. We received a response back on that same day saying it is in the CAP hub and they are waiting for the design fee proposal. That was from William Koetteritz from DHCD. They hold the purse strings on this. It is happening, it is in the process but we are kind of being held by them. So that is where it is for us in regards to the basement for Florence and Hampshire Heights.

Chairperson Richards – so what do people want to do – put it on the agenda for next time?

Commissioner Laufer – I would like to put it on the agenda for next time. There are other affects to flooding in the basement like mold and chronic asthma, things like that, that are affecting the residents. I would like to discuss it more in terms of the general health of the community and how we can move forward in advocating for ways to improve those situations.

Chairperson Richards – we will put that on the agenda for next time.

DISCUSSION

Unanswered Tenant Comments and/or Complaints

Commissioner Cancel – I got Cara’s latest answer so I am ok with this item.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I hear a lot from people that they don’t get their answer. I know in the meeting we say that this is not the place to answer, but more than one from several different properties. It would be kind of nice to say when this will be answered. I read the memo, it just seems like yes we do when somebody says no you don’t kind of thing.

Cara – again, Commissioner Tarbutton I welcome you to make an appointment any time you like to come and review the complaints and corresponding responses as I said in my email.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – yes, sure but I wasn’t finished I am just saying it just seems as if it would be you know when this will be responded or if we got a copy of it when you did respond to it. I think it would be helpful, disclosure and talking about it. It is not on the agenda I prefer the question and answer sessions you had, I think that stuff is good.

Commissioner Cancel – what is the process of handling a complaint and how do you document how you address their concerns?

Cara – Commissioner Cancel are you speaking about items that come up at the Board meetings or normal complaints that come in on a day to day basis?

Commissioner Cancel – day to day basis.

Cara – I took the unanswered tenant complaints as stuff that people are bringing to the Board, bringing to you at a Board meeting and then saying they aren’t getting responses but even regular complaints. I take extensive notes during the Board meeting and I send out teams messages or emails to address items that come up at the Board meeting. I typically spend the next 24 to 48 hours dealing with resident issues that have been brought up at the Board meeting. For example, we had a resident issue brought up at a Board meeting a few months back where a resident said a woman in the building was being mandated by the City by Animal Control, to have a muzzle on her dog at all times. She wasn’t following it, our staff wasn’t doing anything about it. I spent many hours dealing with that. I spoke to Animal Control, I emailed Animal Control, there was no such order in place, that was not true. I took it upon myself to have the resident muzzle her dog and have it be a Housing Authority guideline that she needed to follow so that the other residents could feel safe. The woman is elderly, she couldn’t get the dog to get into the muzzle. I personally went over there on four different occasions and showed her and trained her how to muzzle the dog. I took the dog out on several walks on my own without the resident to see if he was aggressive around other animals or residents. Many, many things happen with each different thing. If it is a complaint that comes in that is not during a Board meeting we ask that all complaints are put on a concern form. We then address it with an acknowledgement of receipt of the concern form so the resident knows that we actually got it. Then if we are not able to follow up, if one resident is complaining

about another we can't give that resident information "oh yeah well we sent out a warning to this resident". It is a violation of their confidentiality but we do give them an acknowledgement of their concern so they know that we got it. If the person meets with the property manager and they don't get what they need, they can go to the next step, they can follow the chain of command. If they still don't get their stuff resolved they can also follow the grievance process. There is a lot of checks and balances in place Commissioner Cancel to be able to address resident comments and/or complaints. There was a lot there to cover so I don't know if I got it all or not.

Commissioner Cancel – yes, you did thank you. It makes sense. Thank you.

Cara – I want you all to know I take it seriously, I take customer service very seriously but unfortunately I can't always give residents the answers they want. In the dog muzzling issue the resident who stated that they are in fear of that dog, Animal Control in the City has said that as long as the woman's dog is muzzled she is within her rights even if the dog is loud and barking and obnoxious or whatever. But the resident that is complaining doesn't find that to be comforting so she is not happy. Understandable, but there is a fine line there if you can see that now what I am talking about. So I am not always able to give everybody the answer they want to hear, unfortunately.

Commissioner Carney – I guess a way to better understand this issue and It's really helpful to know now both ways how that process unfolds whether it is complaints brought to your office or complaints that are brought up by residents at the meeting here and even those mentioned by commissioners. We know that there is a process yet there persists an understanding not only among the Board but even in some of the housing places themselves that resident issues aren't being addressed. It would be really helpful for us as commissioners to know from an individual that might make a complaint what this process is and to what extent they emailed and whether or not they did receive a response as has been suggested here. We don't often hear about all the issues that have been resolved, people don't often send thanks or come to the meeting and say thanks for fixing that for me, but we do hear a lot about unresolved issues and it seems to not jive with what we have just heard tonight and given what seems like should be a pretty well oiled process.

Cara – Thank you Commissioner Carney and that is why I did invite Board members that if you wanted, to come see the responses for yourself. Maybe I could develop a report- this complaint, this complaint, X number of emails, maybe a brief description on how I resolved it. I would have to talk to Attorney O'Connor to see what details I can put in there but I am certain I can come up with something. Anytime any of you want to come take a look at the records I am happy to do that for you.

Chairperson Richards – I think addressed and resolved are two different endings and I guess I am wondering if residents understand. Cara, I don't want to put any more work on you because I know how busy you are and I know customer service is important but I just wonder if number of issues and how many were dealt with and even how many are unresolved would be enough.

Cara – I think I might be able to add something to the ED report on any of the items that came up during a Board meeting. I do have the managers keep a tally of how many complaints and concerns we get that kind of thing too. I will take a look at it and talk to Attorney O'Connor.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I have mentioned a couple of times if it was possible to have a G drive that only Board members can get into if you could have that there, other than going to the office. I don't know the hours or if you work from home. I would feel more comfortable being able to view it but I don't think that was ever looked into.

Chairperson Richards – I would have to check with the Attorney on that for privacy issues.

Cara – Attorney O'Connor what Commissioner Tarbutton is asking about is having a drive that we put all these things on that they have access to anytime they want and Madam Chairperson has indicated that she is not sure if there is a confidentiality issue there.

Attorney O'Connor – I am with the Chairwoman on that one, I would have to look into it further but my initial reaction is that there are some confidentiality potential problems there.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – can I ask that you look into it, Cara, can I ask that you look into it or have him look into it? I don't know how you go about that because there are so many other organizations.

Chairperson Richards – Attorney O'Connor said he will do that so I will put that on for next month.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – ok, I would appreciate it.

DISCUSSION

Grievance Committee

Chairperson Richards – I think that was kind of a need for clarification, is that correct Commissioner Cancel?

Commissioner Cancel – I just brought that up as a way of having a discussion about maybe having new members on that Committee.

Cara – there are two grievance committees – there is a personnel grievance committee and tenant and applicant grievance committee currently.

Commissioner Cancel – I confused you all when I brought up that item because I put personnel but I meant for tenant grievance process for tenants.

Cara – currently that is Emily Laufer, Jim Brooks and Dr. Jessica Bossie.

Commissioner Carney – how is it determined?

Cara – DHCD has released some regulations about that on how those people are selected and Tom and I are currently in the process of reviewing those regulations to ensure that our Board is in compliance. I don't know that they are but I must say that they were chosen by the Chair and someone in the public was presented to the Board for years and years and years. Tom and I have discovered we don't think that is the proper process the way it stands right now, that is how they were elected. They were appointed by the Board members in the past. I think it needs to be done a different way - we are trying to decipher what that different way is.

Chairperson Richards – so we can move that forward as you guys are learning more can you please share it with us.

Cara – yes. Did I give you everything you wanted Commissioner Cancel on the grievance committee?

Commissioner Cancel – yes, who is Dr. Bossie?

Cara – Dr. Jessica Bossie is a Doctor out of Northampton that works with homeless and soon to be homeless people. She works a lot with providing free services to residents as well.

Chairperson Richards – it is my understanding that it was part of the regulations that it was someone from the outside. Is that correct?

Cara – yes, that has always been someone from the outside. It was a woman named Sydney MacKay.

When we potentially were going to have one, I have been here for 8 years and I think we have had 2 in the whole time I have been here, in preparation for a potential grievance I had reached out to Mc.

MacKay and she no longer wanted to do it. I needed to find someone else that could step in if we needed to have a hearing. Dr. Bossie is a genuinely well rounded person in Northampton that has been there for a long time who helps low income people. I thought she would be a good person to step in until we could get to the bottom of who really needs to be on that committee and what the regulations say.

Chairperson Richards – We will hear more about that as you move on.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I was a little confused with this because when I saw it on the agenda I thought it was the grievance committee. According to our bylaws that I have and the one you sent me here, it says that we are to have 3 standing committees – grievance, finance and Ad Hoc. I don't know why we as a Board don't have that because we are directed to the grievance panel because it is in the lease and stuff so I was wondering why were they dissolved? Maybe it should be on the next agenda because I am just not understanding why they were dissolved. I think if this was a committee we would

know about it. I think it says it has two Board members or something like that so that was the part that wasn't very clear and I know it was there before.

Cara – the grievance committee is still in place, Commissioner Tarbutton. The only committee that is still in place is the grievance committee and the personnel sub-committee, there is two.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – On the Board.

Cara – yes, I tried to explain that in my email to you. The grievance committee is required by DHCD, it is part of the lease. It is for applicants and residents and if we do not resolve their issues there is a process that they have to go through.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – is that the grievance panel or committee?

Cara – those are one in the same. Grievance panel for applicants and residents and there is a grievance sub-committee.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – you also have a Finance and Ad Hoc committee.

Cara – No, the Board decided to stop having those committees because it required hosting of meetings and minutes. It required more administrative stuff than they could handle so they stopped having those little committees.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I didn't see it in the amendment.

Chairperson Richards – to make it more specific as the result of the training we went to that it was better practice to solve our stuff through the public through our Board meetings particularly when there was only five of us, don't forget that. We decided we put everything on the Board to deal with.

Commissioner Cancel – that was my recollection, get rid of those committees as Marilyn mentioned but also there weren't meetings, they weren't really doing anything so there was no point in having them.

Chairperson Richards – then if there was it had to be handled very differently, because of open meeting law.

Commissioner Carney – and Ad Hoc meeting is just that, as needed. So I am assuming that the only committee that we seem to be not having is the Finance committee because Ad Hoc committees only meet if there is a particular subject determined by the Chair to assign to a committee to do. It just gives the Chair the option to assign an Ad Hoc committee but it sounds like you folks have already decided based on a training I didn't attend.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I would like to revisit because I wasn't a part of that and I think they are very needed.

Commissioner Carney – sounds like it still exists. If we didn't amend the bylaws they still exist.

Chairperson Richards – it has been in discussion that we need to do that. We should do that sometime way before our annual meeting so we can be in compliance with ourselves.

Commissioner Cancel – it also doesn't mean that we can't create an Ad Hoc committee if we were to need one.

Chairperson Richards – we have done that.

Commissioner Cancel – it doesn't exclude us from doing that if we need one, just to clarify that.

DISCUSSION

Racism, Diversity & Cultural Sensitivity Training

Chairperson Richards – I for one would love to see that happen as well as training on the role of the Board.

Cara – I reached out to Attorney Pender for the racism, diversity and cultural sensitivity training and he is looking into it. I did find one but it cost about \$4,000.00. The Mel King, although they will give scholarships, they may not give scholarships to everyone. So that we can have one that the Board has and to provide it to staff as well, I am trying to find one that kind of is all inclusive. The other training – the trainer from Mass NAHRO had to have emergency knee surgery so I am just waiting for him to come back to schedule that. I am working on that. If you have any suggestions on good trainers for the racism,

diversity and sensitivity training that you have experienced, not just heard of, if you could email me it would really help me a lot.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield - I asked and Mel King said they would have scholarships for all Board, Staff, Maintenance, everyone because they are in partnership with other different people, NAHRO as well. So they are all part of that and it is free. They will give you scholarships. I will forward the email to you Chair, it is out there.

Cara – if you can forward it to me I will take a look at it. I did go on their website Wednesday to take a look at what they had but if you want to send me what you have I will be happy to look at it.

Commissioner Cancel – I just want to mention and clarify that these may be separate trainings - for instance racism, that is a training in itself; diversity, inclusion, equity, that is a training and then cultural sensitivity training, that is like a whole other thing. I just want to reiterate what Joella suggested earlier which is what I have been doing too, we may not be able to get together for some kind of training for a while. It is great if you can do it on your own, find the training and let other folks know that on such a date there is going to be a specific training then you can participate individually as well. I have been looking for stuff that is why I mentioned it. If I hear of anything I will definitely forward it to you, Cara.

Cara – the Chairperson and I met with the Mayor so we can talk about our needs. There are two people's terms coming up at the end of June 2023 and we asked her also if she had any suggestions on people to train for some of these type of things and she gave us a couple of names. I reached out to them this week as well to see what they offer, etc.

Chairperson Richards – that should go on the agenda for next time, an update on that. Please, if anybody has any suggestions get it to Cara and she will let us know.

DISCUSSION

HAMPSHIRE HEIGHTS INDIVIDUAL GARDENS

No comment.

Chairperson Richards – I think we are kind of squared away on what we want to continue on with and what we feel ok about.

MOTION

One Year Extension of Current Collective Bargaining Agreement

Cara read the motion to the Board.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – why did the collective bargaining, why wasn't there an agreement earlier?

Cara – they are already under a contract for one year, they just want to extend the term of the contract for another year because of the pandemic rather than to bargain something else. This will be effective 7/1/22- 6/30/23.

Chairperson Richards put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Jones.

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Richards; Vice Chairperson Brooks; Commissioner Carney; Commissioner Cancel; Commissioner Jones, Commissioner Laufer & Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

MOTION

Approve Revised Capital Fund 5 Year Plan to Include Emergency Boiler Replacement for McDonald House

Cara read the motion to the Board which included \$59,160.00 for boiler replacement.

Chairperson Richards put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Vice-Chair Brooks.

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Richards; Vice Chairperson Brooks; Commissioner Carney; Commissioner Cancel; Commissioner Jones & Commissioner Laufer.

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Tarbuttom-Springfield.

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

MOTION

Authorize the Executive Director to Execute and Submit ARPA Formula Funding Request to DHCD.

Cara read the motion to the Board – the total award is \$617,209.00.

Commissioner Cancel – I know there was a meeting last week at Florence Heights asking residents how they would like to see those funds being spent.

Cara – the City also got ARPA funds. This is our ARPA formula funding. It is the same but different. The Federal government gave a pool of it. Some was given to Northampton, some to Housing Authorities, some is given to State and Federal agencies. That meeting you were talking about was for the City's portion of that money. Because we have a Capital Improvement Plan, what this allows us to do is move things further out on the list, more than 5 years, up a little bit sooner because it gives us more money.

Commissioner Cancel – I understand that, what I also thought I understood was that regardless of where the funding is going whether it is the City or the Housing Authority, doesn't DHCD require that we consult with the residents in terms of what their ideas might be on how to use the funds?

Cara – we consult with the residents with the Capital Improvement Plan and we did so with the resident advisory Board on 4/11/22 at 11:00 a.m.

Commissioner Cancel – and who is on the resident advisory Board?

Cara – every year since I have been here we have held a meeting and invited all residents to participate at a certain date and time. It is advertised because it is HUD money so HUD requires that the NHA as a public housing agency submit an Annual Plan and a 5 Year Plan. So as part of that process we have to meet with residents to see what they would like to see happen on the properties for the 5 year plan and the Capital Plan. So it is run in the newspaper, we meet with residents, it is a very, very long and arduous process.

Commissioner Cancel – I understand that, I am talking about the extra ARPA funds.

Cara- the meetings that we have with them that determine this 5 Year Plan, the ARPA funds only allow our 5 Year Plan to accelerate a little bit. So residents have put in what the 5 Year Plan is. So now some of the things that will be done a lot later will be done sooner.

Commissioner Cancel – In regards to the ARPA fund regardless whether we have had resident input for the Capital Plan I thought there was a stipulation there with receiving new ARPA funds that the residents would have an opportunity to talk about how they would like for those funds to be utilized or is that on the City funds?

Cara – it is my understanding that for us, because the residents participate in the Capital Improvement Plan, also please note this is only for the Federal money, it is for Hampshire Heights. I said federal properties – Hampshire heights is the only project it affects because we are utilizing the money for Hampshire Heights for their windows. It is my understanding that because residents participate in the Capital Improvement Plan that is why they just move the items up. Jack and Sharon do you have any other input on that besides what I have already stated?

Sharon – our Capital Improvement Plan funds with the state even though this is federal funding for the pandemic, which is involved with our Capital Improvement for the 5 year plan.

Cara – you may have missed the question Sharon. Commissioner Cancel is saying with the City they are required to ask for resident input for specific ARPA funds. I had thought that because the residents put in their comments for the 5 Year Plan that that is why we weren't required to do it with the ARPA funds but can you correct me if I am wrong please?

Sharon – no, that is correct because we already have the plan in place and we have got the money that has been approved. We are able to take that amount of money and bring a project that is out years that really, the money isn't there, it is formula funding, it is promised paper money, but it is so far down the line. But now they are saying we have got the money but you need to take it from your plan that has already been approved that needs work. So we decided to bring this one out because it is a big one, a lot of money.

Does that make sense?

Chairperson Richards – does that answer your question Commissioner Cancel?

Commissioner Cancel – yes it does and I would just like to state for the record I don't disagree on how those funds will be moved. As you know I am an advocate for making Hampshire Heights structurally better as much as possible.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I know you said you advertised it, it seems like you were pretty generous in the advertising. I am just curious - how many tenants actually attended to discuss questions about improvement?

Cara- I don't know how many were there exactly because Jack held the meeting. I could get back to you.

Commissioner Brooks – there were only 4 of us.

Cara – 4 people. We advertised in the paper, advertised at all properties that it affected. Was there only 4 Jim I know you were there?

Commissioner Brooks- yes, there were only 4.

Cara – yes, 4 residents, so there you go Commissioner Tarbutton.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I just want to say advertising is good but when you came here for the question and answer meeting you put it on everybody's door and they showed up so I wonder if that effort was put into the Capital Improvement Plan. I didn't see anything under my door, I don't remember people talking about it. I just wish that they knew this was something that is really important that they should partake in and that kind of makes me feel a little uncomfortable voting for it.

Chairperson Richards – do you have anything more to say on that Cara?

Cara – I don't.

Chairperson Richards put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Vice-Chair Brooks.

VOTING YAY: Chairperson Richards; Vice Chairperson Brooks; Commissioner Carney; Commissioner Cancel; Commissioner Jones & Commissioner Laufer.

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.

Therefore, Chairperson Richards approved the Motion.

Chairperson Richards – I just want to say I appreciate today's discussion. I hope we have made some progress. I am really open to feedback and I hope this brings us one step closer to finding a way that we can work together successfully for our residents.

Chairperson Richards put forth the motion to adjourn the June meeting at 8:03 P.M., seconded by Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.