

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE TOWN OF GREENWICH
Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
March 23, 2016
Minutes of the Meeting

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Greenwich was held on Wednesday, March 23, 2016 at the Armstrong Court Community Room. The Chairman, Sam Romeo, called the meeting to order in public session at 5:40 p.m.

The Chairman declared that a quorum was present and directed the Assistant Secretary, Lisette E. Contreras, to act as secretary for the meeting.

Commissioners Present: Sam Romeo, Cathy Landy, Angelo Pucci, Robert Simms Jr and George Yankowich

Commissioners Absent: Abelardo Curdumi and James Boutelle

Staff Present: Anthony Johnson, Terry Mardula, Derrick Bryant, Penny Lore, Lisette Contreras, John Yankowich, Ruth Young, Laura Murphy, Sardis Solano, Meaghan Maloney and Winston Robinson

Legal: Lou Pittocco

Public: State Representative Mike Bocchino, State Representative Fred Camillo, Joan Yankowski, Neumecio Villagomez, Jamsy Lagout, Lily Alvarez, Tiffany Bailey, Maria Roqueta Serdena, Kenia Olivero, Maria Rivas, Martha Valdovinos, Glenda Rivas, Nelida Martinez, Arlene Robinson, Lisa Jones, Maria Rivera, Deidra Jones, Estrella Dizon

The Chairman welcomed the public and asked for any comments from residents. He reminded the public that this is a public meeting not a public hearing and that he will invite any non-residents to speak.

Ms. Joan Yankowski thanked the Board and staff for the pizza that was provided for the residents of Quarry Knoll during the blackout.

The Chairman asked for approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board on February 24, 2015. On a motion duly made and seconded, the Minutes, with revisions were approved.

The Chairman stated that the Armstrong Court Resident Council has asked to be acknowledged by the Board. Ms. Tiffany Bailey, President of the Resident Council, stated that the council was formed last year and has done many events for the residents, such as a mother's day event, a Christmas party and, just recently, an Easter event. During the Easter event, they have started a fundraiser in order to build some revenue to plan more events. Commissioner Yankowich mentioned that the government wants housing authorities to fund any resident council events and HATG has a fund for that. Commissioner Landy asked if the Resident Council has held any public meetings. Ms. Bailey responded that there have not been any public meetings because they were looking for acknowledgment from the Board first. The resident council board has met in order to

plan events and get their by-laws approved. Ms. Bailey informed the Board that she is the President, Jenny Lujan is the Vice-President, Lisa Jones is the Secretary and Lily Alvarez is the Treasurer. The Chairman clarified that board members and staff of HATG are unable to attend resident council meetings unless they are specifically invited. The Executive Director asked Ms. Bailey if she can elaborate about the events they have held. Ms. Bailey stated that fourteen women attended the Mother's Day event in which they had food, cake, flowers, certificates were given out and a t-shirt contest. During the Christmas event, Toys-For-Tots donated presents for the children, they had food and a cookie decorating contest and other games. For the Easter event, there were about 25 children and the council charged tenants \$5 per child. Ms. Bailey added that they are planning a potluck dinner for Mother's day this year. The Chairman strongly encouraged Ms. Bailey to attend board meetings. Commissioner Landy asked if all of the resident council board members have been included in the meetings they have had. Ms. Bailey responded that Lili Alvarez is the only one that has not been present because she does not respond to the emails/texts that are sent out. Commissioner Landy asked Ms. Alvarez if there is a better time for her to be available for the meetings. Ms. Alvarez responded that she will be more involved and make herself more available. Commissioner Yankowich motioned to certify the Armstrong Court Resident Council, Commissioner Pucci seconded the motion and all the votes were in favor.

The Chairman informed the public that State Representative Mike Bocchino representing the 150th district was invited in order for tenants to meet with him and voice any concerns. Mr. Bocchino introduced himself stating that he is the representative for Armstrong Court as well as Quarry Knoll. He added that anyone can reach out to him with any issues and left his business card on the table for tenants.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee did not meet due to the absence of Commissioner Curdumi and Commissioner Boutelle. However the financial statements were completed. Commissioner Yankowich inquired about the accrument of the Greenwich Close management fee. The Executive Director replied that previously, the account did not have cash but now that it does HATG will start charging it.

Development Committee

The Development Committee met on March 18, 2016. In attendance were the Chairman, Commissioner Yankowich, Executive Director, Maintenance Director and the Planning and Development Manager.

The Planning and Development Manager reported that the inspections for the McKinney Terrace II elevator are being planned out and the project is expected to close out in April.

The Planning and Development Manager stated that the new unit build at Adams Garden broke ground. Aquarion was hired for the water main design; however, there was an issue with the length of the line. This issue has been resolved.

The Planning and Development Manager stated that work for one of the Adams Garden playgrounds has commenced and should be completed by next month.

The Planning and Development Manager reported that he is waiting on the revised proposal for the Quarry Knoll II community room renovation.

The Executive Director informed the Board that HATG is still waiting to hear about the grant approvals for the Armstrong Court new units. He added that HATG has started to work on the next application for phase II, the rehabilitation part of the project.

The Executive Director stated that he met with the engineer on the Armstrong Court boiler issues regarding not having heat or hot water. The system that was installed is a brand new system which has had to have the settings raised in order for every apartment to receive enough heat and hot water. The Executive Director believes that the issue has been solved. Ms. Lisa Jones stated that the heat and hot water are working fine now, in fact, some residents are complaining that now it's too hot. The Executive Director explained that the replacement of the boiler system is a 3 phase project: phase I was the replacement of the boilers, phase II consists of replacing the pipes and phase II involves replacing the vertical risers. He added that phase II will start in the summer, once the heat is turned off.

The Executive Director clarified the fire code violation issue at Armstrong Court regarding the installation of a fire alarm system. Installation has been held off because HATG is waiting to hear from the State on the grant approvals. If a fire alarm system, which consists of pull boxes in the hallways and stairways, is installed, it will have to be removed when the rehabilitation work begins. The Chairman explained that there has not been a fire alarm system in 60 years because the building is not combustible, however the fire code changed about 4 years ago and the Fire Marshall did not notify HATG when the work in the stairways was being done. If it had been, the work could have been completed at a lower cost than now by combining the two projects. Ms. Jones asked how HATG will prevent the teenagers from playing with the pull boxes. The Executive Director replied that false alarms will become an issue. Pull boxes were recently installed at Wilbur Peck Court and there has not been a problem, however, there are camera systems in place there.

The Chairman discussed the issue of contamination at Armstrong Court that has been written about by bloggers. HATG has completed a lot of testing, much more than needed, and there is no contamination on the site. The bloggers that have written about this issue have no proof of what they are writing and are just instilling fear in residents. The Executive Director stated that two bloggers went to CHFA and HUD about the issue with lead at Armstrong Court. He added that there have not been any lead cases reported from any of the tenants. Ms. Jones stated that she took her kids to get tested for lead when she saw the article and the tests were negative. Ms. Jones also thanked HATG staff for the efforts to alleviate the parking situation. The Chairman stated that he has asked the police department to patrol the parking lot regularly and he will be patrolling as well. The Executive Director informed the public that a third party inspector was hired, due to the allegations from a blogger in regards the living conditions at Armstrong Court and Wilbur Peck Court, which will enter units in April to assess them. The Executive Director added that HATG did their own inspections and found some units that are very well kept. The Chairman states that he takes any attacks on the HATG personally and wants to address them. Ms. Bailey asked if the laundry rooms can be kept open later in the day because they currently close at 6pm and some people get home later than that. The Executive Director replied that a new person was hired to clean and open/close the laundry rooms who stated that she was willing to close the laundry rooms later. Ms. Deidre Rose asked why the laundry rooms have to close. The Executive Director replied that there are late night issues with keeping the laundry rooms open, such as teens smoking and misbehaving. Ms. Bailey inquired about fobs being incorporated for the laundry rooms with the renovations. The Executive Director responded that he would like to incorporate a fob system now. Mr. Neumecio Villagomez requested for a sink to be installed in the second laundry room as was in the first laundry room. The Chairman suggested he should bring his request to the resident council. Commissioner Yankowich stated that there will be an extra laundry room with the renovations. He

added that Armstrong Court was designed in 1950 for the way that people lived at that time. Amenities are being added that bring it up to how people live today such as a second bathroom in the three bedroom units and a real community room. The Chairman stated that the renovation would increase the value of the area.

State Representative Fred Camillo, serving the 151st district, introduced himself, stating that Armstrong Court is special to him as he spent many nights there during his childhood.

The Planning and Development Manager stated that he will be meeting with an engineer regarding the porch and ramp project.

Administrative Committee

The Administrative Committee met on March 22, 2015. In attendance were Commissioner Pucci, Commissioner Simms, the Executive Director and Deputy Director.

Commissioner Pucci stated that evaluations for senior management staff were discussed and would like to discuss their increase during Executive Session.

Commissioner Pucci reported that the dissolution of the union was also discussed during the meeting.

Commissioner Pucci informed the Board that he would like to discuss the Hollowood legal issue during Executive Session as well.

Other Residences Committee

The Other Residences Committee met on March 22, 2016. In attendance were Commissioner Landy, the Executive Director, the Parsonage Cottage Administrator, the Greenwich Close Asset Manager and the Planning and Development Manager.

The Executive Director stated that a new security system will be installed in Greenwich Close as part of the capital plan. The Planning and Development Manager added that the system was redesigned today.

The Executive Director stated that Greenwich Close is 99% occupied, there is a vacancy expected in April.

The Executive Director announced that Meaghan Maloney will be covering for the Executive Assistant on a part time basis while she is on leave.

The Executive Director stated that all major projects are complete for Greenwich Close and HATG received the last of the escrow funding for them. There are \$28,000 left in the reserve for work that needs to be completed in units that are currently occupied. The work will be done on a turnover basis.

The Executive Director informed the Board that drainage work was performed to alleviate the seepage of water into the garage at Greenwich Close.

The Parsonage Cottage Administrator stated that she is waiting on the site plan from D'Andrea for the ramp and porch renovation at Parsonage Cottage.

The Parsonage Cottage Administrator mentioned that she placed an ad in the Senior to go guide.

The Parsonage Cottage Administrator informed the Board that the Planning and Development Manager met with Marchetti in regards to the boiler at Parsonage Cottage and she is waiting on a proposal.

The Parsonage Cottage Administrator stated that Parsonage Cottage needs a new commercial oven, which costs about \$7,000 and will be part of the capital plan. Commissioner Pucci agreed to take a look at the current oven and give a quote on a new oven.

The Parsonage Cottage Administrator reported that she has had many residents leave Parsonage Cottage that need a higher level of care and is trying to build a census.

Executive Director Report

The Executive Director stated that the bidding process will commence on the Wilbur Peck Court bathroom renovations. Work will commence in the Summer.

The Executive Director informed the Board that he met with Greenwich Time's Editor, Tom Mellana along with the Deputy Director. He challenged Mr. Mellana on the information of a particular story and showed him all the good news pertaining to the housing authority that never got published. Mr. Mellana had no idea of the good news that was overlooked by the Greenwich Time. It was agreed that any news in the future should be sent to him directly. The Deputy Director stated that Mr. Mellana's perspective changed after seeing pictures of all the projects and nice apartments. The Executive Director added that going forward, before and after pictures will be taken of the units during turnovers.

Staff Reports

The Deputy Director stated that during the inspections at Armstrong Court he noticed that many apartments are very nice and well kept. He mentioned that all the carbon monoxide detectors were installed.

The Deputy Director reported that the Section 8 waiting list will re-open for a very short time around the end of the month.

The Deputy Director mentioned that the maintenance personnel voted to decertify the Union on February 19th but the dues didn't end until March 3rd. The Deputy Director stated that a reason for why the Maintenance personnel might have voted to dissolve the Union is because of the expensive dues, which run about \$15 per week. Another reason is that HATG's health insurance plans are superior to the Union's.

Other/New Business

The Executive Director asked for approval of \$15,000 worth of scholarships for 2016. HATG gives out eight \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors that live in HATG and seven \$1,000 scholarships to current college students living in HATG. Commissioner Yankowich motioned the approval of \$15,000 worth of scholarships for 2016, Commissioner Pucci seconded and all votes were in favor. The Deputy Director mentioned that while other organizations have been declining the amount of their scholarships, HATG has been continuously increasing the amount of scholarships awarded. The Deputy Director informed the Board that the high school scholarships are distributed through the Greenwich Scholarship Association. The scholarships for current college students are distributed by HATG. Commissioner Simms suggested increasing the amount of

scholarships distributed to current college students to eight, making the total amount towards the scholarship fund \$16,000. Commissioner Simms made a motion to that effect, Commissioner Pucci seconded and all votes were in favor.

Motion to go into Executive Session at 6:55 p.m.

Motion to come out of Executive Session at 7:55 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 7:56p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lisette E. Contreras