

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE TOWN OF GREENWICH
Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
March 25, 2015
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 25, 2015 at the Armstrong Court Community Room. The Chairman, Sam Romeo, called the meeting to order in public session at 5:38 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, Abelardo Curdumi, James Boutelle, Cathy Landy, Angelo Pucci, Robert Simms Jr and George Yankowich

Staff Present: Anthony Johnson, Terry Mardula, Lisette Contreras, Penny Lore, John Yankowich, Sardis Solano, Teryl Elliott and Winston Robinson

Legal: Lou Pittocco

Public: Joan Yankowski, Leslie Yager, Neumecio Villagomez, Dawn Fortunato, Ken Desormes, Nelida Martinez, Edith Lewis, Claudette Young, Chris von Keyserling

The Chairman welcomed the public and asked for any comments. Mr. Neumecio Villagomez stated that he has been a resident at Armstrong Court since 1991 and has been gardening since then. Last year the fee for the garden was \$16 per bed with Armstrong Court residents being allowed to pay 50% of that fee. This year the Community Garden Director is charging \$17 per bed and Armstrong Court residents are required to pay the full amount. Commissioner Yankowich asked if HATG has a contract with them or if the property is leased. The Executive Director replied that, based on his knowledge, they did not. The fee that the Community Garden Organization collects is used for plants, fresh soil, any new amenities, such as the pizza oven, parties and the expertise of the director. Commissioner Yankowich asked what the financial benefits were of being a part of the community garden. The Executive Director responded that the cost of soil and plants surpasses the fee and all the residents that used to plant there before the community garden were grandfathered in and did not have to pay the fee. The Deputy Director believes residents should have a discounted rate. The Executive Director asked the Board if he could solve the issue on his own with the residents and the Community Garden leadership.

Ms. Joan Yankowski stated that the resident council meeting minutes were sent and has not heard back on concerns that were brought up. The Deputy Director replied that he did receive it on Friday and will respond to the concerns. He added that the resident council should not attempt to manage the property.

The Chairman asked for approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board on February 25, 2015. On a motion duly made and seconded, the Minutes, with revisions, were approved.

Commissioner Boutelle inquired about reviewing employee evaluations mentioned in the Executive Director's report. The Executive Director stated that all employee evaluations were reviewed and the report was referring to executive staff evaluations only.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee did not meet this month. Commissioner Curdumi stated his concern over not having financial statements. The Executive Director stated that the SEMAP submission was due which consists of reconciling all accounts. He added that the FASS submission was due as well which is the pre-audit for all the HUD properties. If the FASS is not submitted, housing authorities get classified as "troubled". The Executive Director mentioned that the regular audit for Quarry Knoll II, Greenwich Close and Town Hall Annex are under way as well. He confirmed that the financials with any adjustments will be ready for the next meeting. Commissioner Curdumi stated that the financials are the main piece of information for the Board to know how the housing authority is operating. The Executive Director replied that substantial adjustments had to be made to the year-end financials to properly present the statements. Additionally we continue to operate without a CFO and this work load is carried by the staff.

The Chairman inquired about the audit for the Parsonage Cottage Loan Forgiveness. The Executive Director replied that he has not received an official letter regarding the audit that the BET wants to conduct. The Executive Director went on to explain the situation with the Loan Forgiveness request. Attorney Pittocco stated that he has not received notification of this either.

Development Committee

The Development Committee met on February 20, 2015. In attendance were Commissioner Romeo, the Executive Director and the Director of Maintenance.

The Chairman stated that projects in progress are the McKinney elevator and the kitchens at Adams Garden. The boilers at Armstrong Court are complete.

The Executive Director stated that HATG has requested permits with the Town for all the kitchens at Adams Garden. All the cabinets have been ordered. The Chairman will request the First Selectman to speak with Town Hall Building Official, Bill Marr, regarding waiving the permit fee on the cabinets.

The Executive Director reported that he has received additional financing offers for the expansion at Adams Garden. He will discuss them with the Finance Committee. Commissioner Yankowich inquired about the conditions of the offers. Attorney Pittocco responded that the land has to be used for affordable housing in the future. The Executive Director added that this condition does not prevent the creation of an LLC. Once the offer is accepted, financing will close very quickly and we can start this project.

The Executive Director stated that Tony D'Andrea should get the permits for the Strickland Road cottage within 2 weeks providing that the building department completes its review.

The Executive Director mentioned that he is planning on new projects including new kitchens at Wilbur Peck Court as well as upgrading the camera system. At Town Hall Annex the Executive Director is looking into installing new kitchens, new roof, updating the elevator, replace the doors and install a security camera system.

The Executive Director reported that the Armstrong Court Resident Council meeting was a success. The plans were shown to all the tenants in attendance; they were happy with the direction of the project.

Administrative Committee

The Administrative Committee met on February 24, 2015. In attendance were Commissioner Pucci, Commissioner Boutelle, Commissioner Simms, the Executive Director and the Deputy Director.

Commissioner Pucci stated that a personnel matter was discussed as well as salary increases for senior management. The Higbie lawsuit will be discussed during executive session.

Other Residences Committee

The Other Residences Committee did not meet this month.

The Executive Director stated that he is waiting for the next drawdown for Greenwich Close which will be about \$700,000. Minor remediation work is the only item left to be completed. The environmental inspector believes the building standards have changed, if that is the case, most of the item related to lead in the bathtubs and tile will be eliminated.

Executive Director Report

The Executive Director informed the Board that the application for Armstrong Court is continuing. The design has gone very well. Approvals from Planning and Zoning were granted on a tentative basis. The contamination tests were completed; nine holes were tested in total. Commissioner Boutelle asked who performed the tests. The Executive Director replied Tony D'Andrea. Commissioner Yankowich added that Mr. D'Andrea performed limit tests, not chemical tests. Commissioner Boutelle inquired about the environmental tests that Planning and Zoning department heads directed HATG to perform. The Executive Director stated that he met with Town Hall and those tests will not be performed at this time and the cost is substantial. Commissioner Yankowich added that HATG spent \$3,000 per test hole in the previous tests without any guidance on where to test; it's not logical to spend money on tests without guidance. Commissioner Romeo stated that Fuss & O'Neill will do an assessment of the facility, which is required for financing. The Executive Director stated that the same analysis and reporting process was performed when Greenwich Close was refinanced.

The Executive Director informed the Board that the Governor is proposing to cut PILOT payments from his budget. The Executive Director explained that if the Governor doesn't reinstate the program, rents could increase for tenants. Until this year, the rents have not been increased in many years. Commissioner Curdumi suggested asking Town Hall to waive the PILOT due to non-funding.

Staff Reports

Commissioner Curdumi asked how many Section 8 vouchers will be issued. The Deputy Director stated there are currently 321 participants on the program and that there are two to three families

coming off the program for violating the regulations. In total, HATG will be issuing twelve to fifteen new vouchers; the goal is to get close to 330 vouchers.

Commissioner Yankowich inquired about the PILOT payments. The Executive Director responded that he met with the Tax Assessor regarding the PILOT. The Town doesn't know how DECD calculates the PILOT; they take whatever DECD sends them. The Executive Director added that with the tax credit deal, taxes will be assessed based on affordable rates and the PILOT will be eliminated.

Commissioner Boutelle asked about the inspections for Quarry Knoll I on the staff report; it shows that no inspections have been completed. The Deputy Director replied that all inspections are complete; it's a mistake on the report.

Commissioner Boutelle noticed that a letter regarding smoke free housing was drafted. He inquired if the Board has approved on the policy. The Deputy Director replied that the Board instructed him to adopt a smoke free policy in October 2014. The Deputy Director will be working on lease addendums, which residents have to sign. A letter will be sent to residents giving them a 30 day notice for the lease addendum. Commissioner Boutelle asked about succession programs to the residents. The Deputy Director replied that HATG will only offer information on succession. Commissioner Boutelle asked the Deputy Director if he knows the percentage of smoking residents. The Deputy Director responded that he does not. A survey can be done if the Board chooses, however, it will not change the fact the policy will be implemented. Commissioner Boutelle stated that knowing that information could help predicting how many residents will potentially be evicted. The Deputy Director stated that he would deal with every case individually and that most cases work out without going to court.

Commissioner Yankowich asked if electric bills have decreased with the insulation. The Deputy Director replied that the new windows and the insulation helped lower the bills somewhat because seniors like it really warm.

Commissioner Pucci inquired about the cycle painting program. The Deputy Director stated that this is being proposed only in Agnes Morley because there are currently no capital improvements. This might be proposed at Quarry Knoll I as well. Units are only painted when there is a vacancy. The Executive Director added that HATG does provide paint for residents after a few years to paint the unit themselves. However, some do a poor painting job; for example, getting paint on the sprinkler heads causes negative points on our HUD REAC inspections. The Deputy Director stated that tenants need permission to paint. Due to the poor painting in the past, HATG will inspect the unit before and after a tenant paints their unit.

Other/New Business

The Deputy Director asked the Board for approval of granting a total of \$15,000 in scholarships. Commissioner Yankowich moved to add Scholarships to the agenda and all were in favor. Commissioner Yankowich motioned to give (8) \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors and (8) \$1,000 to current college students. Commissioner Pucci seconded and all were in favor.

Commissioner Boutelle asked how many years the funding grant HATG received is for. The Executive Director replied that it's a three year grant. Commissioner Boutelle requested that Neighbor to Neighbor, DSS and TAG be listed as partnering organizations. The Executive Director congratulated our Social Worker, Andee March, on receiving the grant.

Motion to go into Executive Session at 6:45 p.m.

Motion to come out of Executive Session at 7:50 p.m.

Commissioner Pucci motioned to approve a pay increase for senior management retroactive to January 1, 2015. Commissioner Yankowich seconded and all votes were in favor.

There being no further business to come before the Board, upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lisette E. Contreras