

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE TOWN OF GREENWICH
Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
May 27, 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, May 27, 2015 at the Quarry Knoll I Community Room. The Chairman, Sam Romeo, called the meeting to order in public session at 5:35 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, Derrick Bryant, Penny Lore, Lisette Contreras, Ruth Young, John Yankowich, Laura Murphy and Winston Robinson

Legal: Lou Pittocco

Public: Joan Yankowski, Darlene Miles, Alan Ritch, Cheryl Enish, Elizabeth Jackman, Margaret Sandor, Valerie Grassi, Dan Fiore, Leslie Yager and Dawn Fortunato

The Chairman welcomed the public and asked for any comments from residents. Ms. Margaret Sandor stated that there was no notice of the board meeting posted. Ms. Sandor claimed that there is no legal resident council at Quarry Knoll. She stated that a notice was sent out on January 2012 regarding the expiration of the Resident Council members' terms. Ms. Sandor stated that there has not been an election since then and terms expire every two years. The Chairman asked what HATG's role with the resident council elections is. The Deputy Director replied that HATG has no role in the resident council elections; the League of Women Voters has conducted them in the past. Ms. Sandor claimed that notices are being sent out to residents on what can and can't be done on the property. Ms. Joan Yankowski stated that she is the president on the resident council and she never send out such notices. Ms. Sandor expressed that the residents do not need an active council. Commissioner Yankowich affirmed that having an active resident council is a directive from HUD and that it is a good thing for residents to be able to voice their concerns. The Chairman asked who posts the notices of the board meetings. The Executive Director replied that the managers are responsible for that and they will be reminded. Ms. Sandor also mentioned that notices are being taken off the bulletin board. The Chairman responded that is she has any other concerns; she can give him a call.

Ms. Darlene Miles stated that someone goes into her unit without authorization when she is not there and that it's been going on for years. She would like to know what can be done about it. Ms. Miles claims that someone takes her mail and opens it.

Mr. Alan Ritch stated that he has called many times regarding the parking situation. There are some residents that have more than one car and when he comes home at night, there is no parking

available. Mr. Ritch pointed out a white Toyota that has not moved in months and believes it should be towed. The Deputy Director responded that he is working with the owner's attorney about the car. He added that there are 12 handicapped parking spaces, which is more than what is required under law. Commissioner Boutelle suggested doing a survey on how many tenants require a handicapped space. The Executive Director replied that most tenants can qualify for a handicapped permit. He added that he does know who the tenants are that have more than one car. Mr. Ritch stated that there are cars parked where there isn't a parking space or cars without a parking sticker in the resident spaces. The Executive Director advised Mr. Ritch to call the police when this happens. Ms. Dawn Fortunato said that there are no "no parking" signs so the cops can't ticket a car parked in a non-parking area. The Chairman told Ms. Fortunato that she does not have the right to speak. Ms. Fortunato stated that she can speak because this is a public meeting. The Deputy Director claimed that if a car does not have a parking sticker, the police can issue a ticket; however, some cars can be from visitors. He added that HATG is looking into opening designated visitor parking spaces. Mr. Ritch went on to say that there is a window in his unit that leaks and he has called about four times and it's still not fixed. The maintenance personnel have looked at it but they say that it's the contractor's problem. The Executive Director stated that he will look into it the issue. Mr. Ritch also asked if the bush by his window can be trimmed because having the bush so high it poses a safety hazard.

Mr. Daniel Fiore stated that residents received a letter stating that residents are not allowed to use leaf blowers. The Deputy Director clarified that only gas powered leaf blowers are banned. Mr. Fiore stated that the electric blowers are louder than the gas powered ones and a tenant uses it every day around 11pm just to bother the neighboring residents. The Chairman advised him to call the police. Commissioner Yankowich stated that there is a Town ordinance against using leaf blowers at night. Mr. Fiore stated that residents are not interested in the resident council because nothing gets done. He mentioned that when the fire department was here and residents wanted a suggestion for a second egress in Quarry Knoll II their response was to get a rope ladder. The Chairman reiterated that the building is up to code. The Executive Director replied that the fire department addressed to residents' concerns in order to alleviate their fears. HATG spent \$1.5 million rehabbing the building and actually won the NAHRO Merit Award for the work that was done. Commissioner Yankowich stated that the stairways are fire rated. If the unit doors are closed, a fire would not spread into the units. In the old building, the stairways were not fire rated. Mr. Fiore complimented the maintenance personnel for keeping the roads clean from the snow this winter.

Ms. Joan Yankowski asked if there is no legal resident council, why she has spent so much time going to the board meetings in order to inform the residents. The Chairman replied that there is an active resident council and that Ms. Yankowski is the president.

Ms. Dawn Fortunato stated that she would like to speak. She would like some transparency. She claims that her neighbors are dying of cancer and would like to know what is going on with Armstrong Court. The Chairman responded that she is not allowed to speak during this meeting and she can bring up her concerns at the RTM meeting. The Chairman has repeatedly asked Ms. Fortunato not to speak at previous meetings because the board meetings are public meetings for the residents, not public hearings. He added that Ms. Fortunato is well aware of the rules of FOI and he explained them to her. Ms. Fortunato refused to be quiet. The Chairman reiterated that Ms. Fortunato is welcomed to be quietly present at the meeting and reiterated that if she did not calm down he would adjourn the meeting. The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 6:12pm while Ms. Fortunato calmed down. Ms. Fortunato continued to interrupt the meeting. The Chairman told Ms.

Fortunato that if she did not leave, he would have her removed by calling the police. Finally, Ms. Fortunato left the meeting. The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:15pm.

The Chairman asked for approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board on April 22, 2015. On a motion duly made and seconded, the Minutes were approved.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met Tuesday, May 26, 2015. In attendance were Commissioner Curdumi, Commissioner Boutelle, the Executive Director, Deputy Director and Finance Director.

Commissioner Curdumi reported that the financial statements were reviewed and Agnes Morley Heights still shows a deficit due to an electric bill of \$104,000. Commissioner Curdumi stated that HUD has changed the way they calculate the Section 8 utilization on the SEMAP. The Deputy Director explained that before HUD would give a good score if the housing authority either spends all their funds or has 95% of vouchers in use. Now, HUD wants housing authorities to meet both criteria. The Deputy Director clarified that in the long run HATG might have to lower the amount that is being paid to the landlords or lower the amount of vouchers that are allowed. Commissioner Yankowich asked where the funds are coming from. The Deputy Director replied that they are coming out of reserves. Commissioner Boutelle stated that at the moment HATG pays out 110% of FMR rates. Is there a potential that it will be lowered to 100%? The Deputy Director replied that the problem with lowering the amount paid to landlords is that it limits what tenants can find. The Executive Director stated that any change will only affect new lease ups. He added that HUD changes the FMR every year. The Deputy Director stated that if a tenant's income decreases HATG has to increase their HAP.

Commissioner Curdumi indicated that the unaudited financial statements were submitted to HUD and they were approved.

Development Committee

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

The Planning and Development Manager reported that the kitchens at Adams Garden were progressing and might be complete by mid-July. Commissioner Yankowich asked if the project was now fully funded. The Executive Director replied that CDBG funded 50% of the project, which is close to the original projection. There were before and after pictures taken which look great.

The Planning and Development Manager stated that the boiler at Armstrong Court will be closing out.

The Planning and Development Manager mentioned that he is working on the RFQ for the Adams Garden expansion.

The Planning and Development Manager reported that the dining room doors at Parsonage Cottage have been installed and we are looking into upgrading the deck. Commissioner Yankowich stated that the new doors look great.

The Planning and Development Manager mentioned that he met with the Rinnai systems representative for Town Hall Annex.

The Planning and Development Manager claimed that he is waiting on one more bid for the playgrounds at Adams Garden.

The Chairman stated that the final permit for the Strickland Road cottage was filed. The Executive Director added that the adjoining property letters have been sent.

The Chairman inquired about the lead abatement at Greenwich Close. The Executive Director replied that it's not abatement; it's cleaning of possible lead dust with special chemicals. Three sinks in the laundry rooms and the garage has to be professionally cleaned as part of this cleaning. There are 28 units that need to have the floor replaced but it will be done whenever they are vacated; they are all currently occupied. Commissioner Boutelle asked if that will affect the closing of the escrow. The Executive Director explained that it would not; Greystone will allow HATG to close out the project because they recognize the issue.

Commissioner Yankowich complemented the garden at Town Hall Annex. He has received many good comments about it, as did Ms. Yankowski.

Administrative Committee

The Administrative Committee met on May 21, 2015. In attendance were Commissioner Pucci, Commissioner Boutelle, Commissioner Simms, Commissioner Curdumi, the Executive Director and the Deputy Director.

Commissioner Pucci stated that he would like to discuss the topics of the committee meeting during Executive Session.

Other Residences Committee

The Other Residences Committee did not meet this month.

The Parsonage Cottage Administrator stated that she submitted a CDBG application for the boiler at Parsonage Cottage. The Executive Director added that HATG also submitted two applications for McKinney Terrace I and II. Commissioner Yankowich reminded the Board about the fundraising event that will be held at Parsonage Cottage the following week.

Executive Director Report

The Executive Director informed the Board that he met with Kim Ploszaj from the State Department of Health regarding the lead at Armstrong Court. The Chairman stated that the maintenance personnel are licensed in dealing with lead. The Executive Director added that they will get more training so they can update their procedures. Commissioner Boutelle suggested receiving something in writing from Ms. Ploszaj in case allegations arise. Commissioner Yankowich clarified that the rehabilitation project includes cleaning up the lead. The Chairman stated that DEP, the State Health Department and Town Health Department have gone to Armstrong Court and have not found any alarming conditions. Commissioner Pucci asked if any of these departments have documented that nothing was found. The Executive Director explained that if nothing is found, nothing more is done. He added that the building was built in 1950; there is definitely lead paint. The Chairman stated that it only has to be remediated when the paint is flaking. The Executive Director clarified that the paint in the units that were identified in the report

was all encapsulated. Concerning the paint on the top soil, clean seeded top soil was placed in those areas.

The Executive Director reported that he met with the Deputy Fire Marshal regarding the fire alarm system at Armstrong Court and they came to an agreement on how to proceed.

Staff Reports

Commissioner Yankowich inquired about the scholarships. The Deputy Director replied that the scholarship essay question for current college students will be sent out this week.

The Deputy Director will have a survey sent to Quarry Knoll I residents to establish how many residents are interested in the cycle painting program. Ms. Yankowski asked who will move the furniture. The Deputy Director responded that the painters will move all furniture and that the tenants would have to assist by boxing up small items.

Commissioner Curdumi stated that the housing manager should be present at the board meetings.

The Deputy Director informed the Board that the petition to have an election for the resident commissioner will be going out tomorrow. The Executive Director explained that if HATG receives 75 signed petition to hold an election, a third party will be hired to hold the election. If there aren't enough petitions returned, the Selectman will appoint someone.

Commissioner Landy inquired about the Armstrong Court resident council elections. The Executive Assistant stated that Lisa Jones and Kim McLoughlin from the State are taking care of that.

Other/New Business

Commissioner Yankowich requested to add an item to the agenda to be discussed during Executive Session regarding a potential conflict of interest. All were in favor of adding the item to the agenda.

The Chairman requested to add an item to the agenda to be discussed during Executive Session regarding an article published in the Greenwich Free Press. The Chairman would like to discuss this article with Attorney Pittocco. All were in favor of adding the item to the agenda.

Motion to go into Executive Session at 6:58 p.m.

Motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:29 p.m.

A conflict of interest regarding a board member was discussed. It was decided that no conflict of interest existed with six votes in favor and one abstention.

There being no further business to come before the Board, upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lisette E. Contreras