

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE TOWN OF GREENWICH
Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
September 30, 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, September 30, 2015 at the Adams Garden 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, Teryl Elliott, Sardis Solano, Ruth Young and Winston Robinson

Legal: Lou Pittocco

Public: Joan Yankowski, Angelica Arenas, Rocio Valdovinos, Sherline Georges, Luz Rincon, Silvia Hermoza, Cristina Mejia, and Blanca Tabora

The Chairman welcomed the public and asked for any comments from residents. Commissioner Yankowich asked if a discussion regarding the article from Brian Harrod be added to the agenda. After a motion duly made and seconded, the item was added to the agenda under Call to Order. The Chairman stated that he has received numerous emails regarding this article that is circulating. The Chairman added that he has spoken to the Executive Director on a possible course of action. The Chairman directed the Assistant Secretary to read the article to the public. Commissioner Yankowich stated that he has been on the Board for thirteen years and has volunteered thousands of hours of his time as well as the rest of the commissioners. Commissioner Yankowich would like to refer this article to a counsel stating the Mr. Harrod should be made aware of the HATG's feelings and that he should collect facts before slandering an organization. Ms. Angelica Arenas pointed out the numerous projects the HATG have completed to improve their units, such as, adding insulation, painting, the gardens at Armstrong Court, the security upgrades at Wilbur Peck Court. The Chairman stated that attorneys have already been notified and he will pursue this action as far as he can. The Chairman also tried to reach out to Mr. Harrod to no avail. Ms. Arenas stated she felt offended by the fact that the article conveys a message where HATG tenants are voiceless victims, which is not the case. The Chairman believes this article is politically motivated due to the upcoming Selectmen elections.

The Chairman opened the meeting to the public reminding them that this is a public meeting not a public hearing and welcomed any comments. Ms. Arenas thanked the Board for the new kitchens stating that they look wonderful. The Chairman stated that there are some minor adjustments that need to be completed to the cabinets in some units. Ms. Rocio Valdovinos exclaimed that now she loves to cook in her new kitchen.

Ms. Arenas reported that the gutters should be cleaned because the water flows over the gutters. The Executive Director replied that he will address that concern. The Chairman asked Ms. Arenas if the water leak was corrected. Ms. Arenas replied that Maintenance Personnel fixed the problem; it was the toilet above the kitchen that was leaking.

Ms. Arenas thanked HATG for the new smoke detectors. The Chairman inquired if the letters have been sent out regarding the non-smoking policy. The Deputy Director explained that he is currently working on the addendum that will be added to the lease in which all adult household members will have to sign. The addendum explains that smoking will not be allowed inside the units or within 25 feet from the building. The Chairman added that this change is being implemented for health and safety purposes.

The Chairman mentioned the importance of purchasing renters insurance. Ms. Valdovinos inquired about if the renters insurance also covers accidents in the household. Commissioner Curdumi explained that the insurance covers liabilities, which is harm to someone else, and damage to personal property due to an accident. The Executive Director stated that before all the big storms HATG had a cheap deductible of \$2500, now the deductible is \$100,000 which means if there is a fire and the repairs cost \$50,000, the tenant is now responsible for that money. The Deputy Director stated that tenants should first contact their current auto insurance for a quote. Ms. Joan Yankowski asked if the insurance would also cover flooding. The Deputy Director replied that it would cover flooding in regards to leaking pipes but not due to natural disasters.

Ms. Yankowski stated that grills continue to be used next to the buildings. The Deputy Director responded that if it continues to be a problem the grills might have to be banned. Ms. Yankowski thanked HATG for the fall festival stating that tenants had a great time.

Ms. Valdovinos inquired about the start of construction for the new buildings. The Executive Director informed the public that tonight the Board will authorize the loan. The units will be modular units and work will commence in the early spring. Ms. Arenas inquired about the playgrounds. The Executive Director replied that construction for the playgrounds will start right away. HATG is currently waiting on CDBG to have the contracts ready because work cannot start until then. However, the playgrounds will be complete before work for the new units begin. Ms. Valdovinos asked if current Adams Garden residents apply for the new units. The Executive Director responded that the new units rent will be based on the Section 8 rent, as opposed to having the rent be based on a household's income, so it will be higher than what current residents pay. Commissioner Yankowich stated that the units will be 3bedroom units with 2 bathrooms. Ms. Arenas asked if they will have a washer/dryer. The Executive Director replied that the units will not have a laundry inside but a laundry room will be built for them.

Ms. Valdovinos stated that when the community room is reserved, residents are told that parties can't go past 7pm. The Deputy Director replied that he is not aware of this and will look into it.

The Chairman stated that he helped create a resident council in Adams Garden many years ago, which fell apart but he would like to see it be reinstated. Ms. Arenas asked for the guidelines and the Chairman directed her to see Commissioner Landy for information.

The Chairman congratulated Commissioner Landy on her election win for Resident Commissioner. He added that the Registrars of Voters did a good job during the voting; it was all very professional. The Executive Director will be submitting the voting process model to NAHRO.

Ms. Arenas commented on the landscaping company saying that the workers only blow the leaves and stash them behind the bushes or the dumpster; they never pick them up. When it rains or if it's very windy, the leaves go all over the place. The Chairman stated that the maintenance personnel should monitor them. The Executive Director will send the company a letter. Ms. Yankowski also complained about the landscapers. Commissioner Landy asked if the contract can be terminated due to inadequate services. The Deputy Director responded that it can be terminated, but they just need some supervision.

The Chairman inquired Ms. Arenas about a bee problem her father had in his unit. Ms. Arenas stated that he saw three more bees a couple of days ago, but the problem is solved.

The Chairman asked for approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board on August 26, 2015. On a motion duly made and seconded, the Minutes, with revisions were approved (Commissioners Boutelle, Pucci and Yankowich abstained due to absence).

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met Wednesday, September 30, 2015. In attendance were Commissioner Curdumi, Commissioner Boutelle, the Executive Director, Deputy Director and Finance Director.

Commissioner Curdumi reported that Agnes Morley continues to reduce the deficit that was caused by expensive utility bills at the beginning of the year.

Commissioner Curdumi informed the Board that the committee met with the auditors to review the draft of the audit. The audit had no findings or recommendations. The committee accepted the audit and the auditors submitted it to HUD this morning. Commissioner Curdumi commended the Executive Director and the rest of the staff for a fantastic job with the financial aspect of HATG especially after the previous Finance Director's untimely passing. Commissioner Yankowich directed the Finance Director to submit the drafted audit to the BET before their October meeting.

Development Committee

The Development Committee met on Wednesday, September 16, 2015. In attendance were the Chairman, Commissioner Yankowich, The Executive Director and the Planning and Development Manager.

The Executive Director stated that he is hoping to close the loan for Adams Gardens II.

The Executive Director stated that HATG has received credits by the State of Connecticut for the 18 new units at Armstrong Court and CNG is willing to buy them. The requirement is that the money needs to be held in a bank until the development is complete. The Chairman explained that the State didn't fully understand the application that was submitted and therefore dismissed it. In light of this, HATG met with CHFA and DOH and they agreed to reconsider the application. The Chairman spoke to Governor Malloy asking him to interfere, a letter was also sent to him and he will discuss it with Commissioner Klein from DOH. Commissioner Landy asked if this would affect the revitalization. The Chairman replied that when the new units get approved he will discuss the revitalization with the Governor.

Commissioner Boutelle requested to discuss the approval of the resolutions now because he had to leave the meeting.

A call for discussion on Resolution #413 was made. Following discussion, Commissioner Curdumi motioned to approve Resolution #413. Commissioner Boutelle seconded, and all votes were in favor.

A call for discussion on Resolution #414 was made. Following discussion, Commissioner Boutelle motioned to approve Resolution #414 as amended. Commissioner Curdumi seconded, and all votes were in favor.

A call for discussion on Resolution #415 was made. Following discussion, Commissioner Boutelle motioned to approve Resolution #415 as amended. Commissioner Curdumi seconded, and all votes were in favor.

The Executive Director noticed that the Resolutions should read that HATG guarantees completion of the project, not guaranteeing the loan. Attorney Lou Pittocco stated that he will correct the Resolutions and will send them to the Chairman for signature.

Administrative Committee

The Administrative Committee did not meet this month

Other Residences Committee

The Other Residences Committee did not meet this month.

Executive Director Report

No discussion was held on the Executive Director's report.

Staff Reports

The Deputy Director stated that both duplex units at Strickland Road are leased. The tenants that moved out, one bought a house and the other moved the Greenwich Close. One of the units was rented to a section 8 tenant. The Executive Director stated that the Planning and Zoning Board inquired about the Strickland Units in regards to Section 8 tenants. He replied that the units are not guaranteed to Section 8 tenants but they are available to them. The Executive Director mentioned that the problem with the units is that the utility costs are too high. In fact, a relative of the previous tenant, who is a contractor, wrote a letter about how high utilities are. Therefore, HATG will convert the heat from electric to gas.

The Deputy Director reported that an apartment at Greenwich Close was rented as well as a vacant apartment on Edgewood.

The Deputy Director informed the Board that the number of Section 8 vouchers issued is currently up to 336.

The Deputy Director mentioned that the parking policy will go in effect in October.

Other/New Business

The Chairman discussed a letter he received in regards to quorum standards. Commissioner Yankowich responded that the letter doesn't affect HATG because quorums are defined in the by-laws.

Motion to go into Executive Session at 7:30 p.m.

Motion to come out of Executive Session at 7:45 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lisette E. Contreras

RESOLUTION #413

RESOLVED that the Public Housing Authority Agency Plan for the Authority for the fiscal year commencing January 1, 2016 be, and it hereby is, approved and that the Chairman, Executive and Deputy Directors, or either of them, execute and file the Plan together with HUD Form 50075 and the PHA Certificate of Compliance with HUD in accordance with its instructions and regulations.