



NORTHAMPTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

APRIL MINUTES
APRIL 8, 2024
Approved on May 20, 2024

Members of the Northampton Housing Authority met via “Zoom” on Monday, April 8, 2024 at 2:09 P.M.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 2:09 P.M.
Upon Roll Call, those present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT: Chairperson Carney; Vice-Chairperson Richards; Commissioner Cancel; Commissioner Brooks & Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield.
Commissioner Jones joined the meeting at 2:11 p.m.

ALSO PRESENT: Cara Leiper; Sharon Kimble; Jack Redman; Attorney Tom O'Connor; Keith Walsh; Danielle McColgan; Jose Cruz; Aime Matos; Deb Walker & Heather Maxwell

TENANT COMMENT

Jo-Ella Tarbutton – I haven’t received from the Board or administration what is going on with the bed bugs – I saw the people here last month but I haven’t heard it is here, it is done, we won’t be back, I hope that happens so residents in particular aren’t anxious, aren’t saying what they think and getting a little hyper. I would like for us to be open and honest, also to acknowledge what seemingly, from what I know, is a quick response to that. I am being awakened by loud voices at night by our neighbor, but most recently a couple is living in their car in the parking lot and they are not happy with each other at times. Police were called and reported to the property manager, it is really uncomfortable so I am hoping this can be dealt with.

STAFF COMMENTS

NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT

NONE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

Cara read the report with updates.

APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 2024 MINUTES

Commissioner Brooks put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Cancel.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I appreciate the pages numerated but I had some remarks about what I said.

Chairperson Carney – would you be willing to offer to make a correction to what was listed?

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – I do appreciate that but not right now for a variety of reasons. We could postpone it until I can get that to you.

Chairperson Carney – would you please offer a motion to postpone.

MOTION

POSTPONE THE APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 2024 MEETING MINUTES UNTIL THE NEXT MONTH'S MEETING

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield put forth the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Cancel.

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

VOTING NAY: NONE

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the motion.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 2024-03 Approval of FY2025 Federal Annual Plan, Capital Fund and Certifications.

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

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

VOTING NAY: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Cancel.

Therefore, Chairperson Carney approved the Resolution.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – Federal Annual Plan correct?

Chairperson Carney – it has been clarified between the Federal and State Annual Plan.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – question on McDonald House page 3 pavement.

Cara – that belongs to Florence Heights, not McDonald House.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – but it is under Joseph McDonald is it not?

Cara – so the federal program lumps all the federal numbers under Joseph McDonald House, they never separated them out and it is MA 026000001 as Joseph McDonald House – it includes McDonald House and Florence Heights.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – it is a little confusing when it talked about pavement repairs, the reason why I am saying that is because there were residents at McDonald who have wheelchairs, saying the bumps and whatever were hurting their kidneys. I hope that is being adjusted for that. My question is if that is for Florence, really good, but I had hoped that it was happening at McDonald as well.

Cara explained to Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield showing her the document with the letterhead and showing what is being done and the year. \$64,000.00 is being utilized to the fixing of the ramps at McDonald House.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – would some of that money be used on the pavement not ramps?

Cara – sidewalks and driveways, we have not allocated any funding for that.

Commissioner Cancel – the documents in the packet, there is one from the Resident Advisory Board – is that something we are voting on or is this something that was shared with us just for information?

Chairperson Carney – what the federal regulations call for in terms of a Resident Advisory Board just means either the local tenant organization if it exists and is represented at either of these two properties, McDonald or Florence Heights or those number of residents who did show up at those sites. If you read in the federal regulation it refers to the Resident Advisory Board, who is actually any of the group of

residents that show up to make comment. Director Leiper can you clarify again the number of residents that did provide comments at those two locations and that will help clarify that the group of residents in total in terms of the federal regulations are the Resident Advisory Board and that is how it is worded in the regulation.

Cara – we held meetings at McDonald House – 16 residents and Florence Heights – 3 residents for a total of 19 residents which made up the Resident Advisory Board. There is an LTO at McDonald officially recognized but the officers have either resigned or passed away. There is one officer still present and I have been working with them to get it up and going again. We invited them but not enough for them to sign off on anything so to speak. We did what we were required to do and then some as far as posting and meetings because we heard what the Board said about wanting as much input from residents as we could get so that is what consisted of the Resident Advisory Board.

Chairperson Carney – what percentage of our portfolio is federal and then we can more easily see how we rate up in terms of the resident part in the federal plan versus the state plan.

Cara – 18% of units are federal. We have 618 physical units, 110 are federal, one is used as a community room, so really only 109 receiving rents.

Chairperson Carney – 109 out of 600 which is basically 1/6. How many comments for the State Plan?

Cara – 70 participated, 4 or 5 comments at the hearing.

Chairperson Carney – 75 people for the State and 20 for federal for ease of math, so it sounds like we had a much higher percentage of resident comments from the Federal Plan than the State Plan.

Commissioner Cancel – I am just wondering if it is possible to make a motion to discuss the Resident Advisory Board further in a future meeting. I am just unclear about how that board operates and I would like to see it a bit more formal.

Chairperson Carney explained that the LTO's supersedes the Resident Advisory Board and there is no official Board, it is just a term.

Commissioner Cancel – I am asking for a discussion about possibly restructuring that so we actually have a Resident Advisory Board which presents another opportunity to take part.

Chairperson Carney – if there is an LTO, the LTO supersedes, we don't fall back on a Resident Advisory Board. In the instance of no LTO there is no allowance for the creation of any other board. The only creation of boards we have that are allowed are LTA's and LTO's. Let's do a presentation followed by discussion at the next meeting.

Cara – the Resident Advisory Board would allow for Section 8 participants to join as well, that is a lot of people.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – when you said LTO is that LTO recognized by the Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants? During training it said there was a distinction with an LTO to be with recognition of Mass Union Public Housing. Let's get some clarification with this stuff because it seems muddy. Thank goodness for the training, I am glad I got the transcript, so I would like to bring that to be better prepared to answer some of these questions.

MOTION

ACCEPT LOW BIDDER SUPREME EARTHWORX FOR EOHLC # 360092 HILLSIDE
SIDEWALK REPLACEMENT FOR \$57, 500.00.

Commissioner Cancel put for the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Brooks.

VOTING YAY: NONE

VOTING NAY: Chairperson Carney; Commissioner Cancel; Commissioner Brooks & Commissioner Jones.

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield

ABSENT: Vice Chairperson Richards.

Therefore, Chairperson Carney stated the Motion was not approved.

Cara – the takeover process of the HCRHA is midway and if we accept that process it is just going to take longer. The State has asked us to wait on that particular part of this process so that it doesn't create them having a more difficult time in switching those properties over to us. We need you to reject the bid. Chairperson Carney asked Director Leiper to explain the bid and request from the State to actually vote no.

Cara explained the bids and motion of FISH # 360092. Two bids were received and the low bid was over budget by \$49,000.00. EOHLC recommends we reject the bid and go out to bid after the HCRHA is transferred to Northampton Housing which is set to occur in early May.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – it is confusing to me – we are acquiring property and there is no visual interactive thing of this place so I can get an idea what you are talking about. I don't know who the bids are from, who the people are, what we are talking about. I am going to object, I would like to see if we can have an agenda to put these properties that we are acquiring so we can get an idea of what we are talking about, where, how far?

Chairperson Carney – Director Leiper have you noted the concerns by Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield so that we may better address those when it does come before us seeking for an acceptance of the low bid?

Cara – yes, the package has all the information with who the bidders were.

Chairperson Carney – we will explain that next time. So in the meantime can we try to better educate Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield on the particular concerns?

Cara – yes, I am happy to meet with her at any time.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – why don't we put all this stuff in one thing and when you hand deliver it is all there. I ask if there is an interactive thing where we can see these different properties so we will know what we are talking about. So let's educate all of us if you don't mind, please.

Commissioner Cancel – I am still a little bit confused by the issue of EOHLC – is there a person that we spoke to in particular – how do we prevent this in the future?

Cara – we have a specific construction manager, we have processes and procedures that we have to follow when it is a State property. This is a State property, it is part of the Hampshire County Regional Housing Authority which as you know the legislation was put through to bring that into the Northampton Housing Authority group of properties. Because that is transitioning, and because it came in over bid, usually they would adjust the budget, because it is their money. Because it is coming in under us and it would cause them a headache, they recommend to reject the low bid so that it could go more smoothly and go out to bid again. If you reject the low bidder, that essentially sends us out to re-bid the whole project. The State has asked us to wait on this until they get that part done so they don't have to deal with this at this moment.

Chairperson Carney – why wouldn't a motion to table this satisfy that?

Cara – the vendor can come back and say we did not accept the low bid and the bid is only good for a certain number of days. We would then be required to sign something and it would create a lot of problems to postpone rather than to reject the low bidder.

Commissioner Cancel – my confusion was around why it was on the agenda and then we were voting differently on it but it was because we got a last minute call – that was my confusion.

Cara – it was Friday around 4:30 p.m. when we got the call from them and the item was already on the agenda.

Commissioner Cancel – it was a construction supervisor?

Cara – it is called a construction manager at EOHLC – Linda Katsudas.

Commissioner Cancel – I have a question for Attorney O'Connor – Is it ok for me to vote no even though I put a motion forward to approve the resolution?

Attorney O'Connor – absolutely, there has been an explanation that can reasonably cause you to change your mind.

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield – did we lose Commissioner Richards?

Commissioner Tarbutton-Springfield put forth the motion to adjourn the April meeting at 3:11 P.M., seconded by Commissioner Brooks. All were in favor.