

Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission

Minutes of March 13, 2009

The meeting was called to order by Susan Baxter, Chair at 9:40 am

Commissioners & Designees Attending

Baxter, Susan – Chair

Aaronson, Roberta Hazen

Barge, Denise

Bodington, Susan

Cola, Jeanne

DeLuca, William

Evora, Michael

Flynn, Kevin

Grenon, Paul

Hajian, Kaveh

Hammarström, David

Hannifan, Chris

Kiesel, Marilyn

Kravitz, Tom

McGunagle, Joanne

Ryczek, Jim

Sekeres, Bonnie

Tierney, Terence

Van Noppen, Mark

Walsh, Peter

Staff:

Coleman, Marcy

Costa, Maria

DeLos Santos, Doris

Kue, Simon

Neirinckx, Ray

Shawcross, Noreen

Tondra, Michael

Guests

Nellie Gorbea

Rhode Island Housing Staff

Brenda Clement

Et Al.

The meeting was immediately preceded by a program and reception to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Housing Resources

Commission. It was held at the “Meadows” in North Smithfield, RI. Many community leaders and former commissioners were present in the group of approximately 60 people who attended. Secretary of State Ralph Mollis attended and brought a citation. Lt. Governor Roberts and the Governor also provided citations. Rep. Brian Newberry, who represents the host community, North Smithfield, was present. Susan Baxter was recognized for 10 years of service as the first and only chair. Susan Bodington was recognized for her work in developing the operations of the Commission which has led to its success.

Approval of January 16, 2009 Minutes

Jim Ryczek moved acceptance. Denise Barge seconded. Minutes approved.

Report of Chair

- Susan Baxter noted the ground breaking at Sweetbriar in Barrington.**
- We will keep the Commissioners informed about housing resources related to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).**
- We have sent a letter to the Governor requesting appointments to the Commission.**
- Our budget for FY 2010 is level funded at \$2,170,000 and the BHRI bond is funded at \$12,500,000. The Neighborhood Opportunities**

Program is not in the budget.

Budget 2010

Noreen noted level funding is positive in the current environment. It means that we can continue to assist non-profits and operate our current programs. She hopes that the ARRA program will enable us to hire a new staff to handle the homelessness prevention funds. At \$3.3 million, this will be more than our annual HRC program budget.

Resolution to Approve for Filing with the Secretary of State: Expedited Permit Regulations

Noreen Shawcross had sent an electronic copy to Commissioners that included all changes voted upon at the January 16, 2009 meeting. At a public hearing, only Amy Rainone spoke and suggested one line of clarification regarding criteria adding the words “notwithstanding the above” in reference to emergency situations that we have the discretion to address. Brenda Clement suggested reference to using this related to the ARRA which was added.

Joanne McGunagle moved acceptance. Peter Walsh seconded.

Kaveh Hajian asked that we provided a copy with changes tracked in the future so that Commissioners could review these.

The motion passed. Kaveh Hajian abstained.

Public Comment Period

Susan Bodington noted that the publicity with regard to housing

funds was a concern as it could jeopardize state funds. It is not a “windfall.” There is no new funding to build housing, just to fill gaps and catch up on needed repairs. Much of the funding is going to the Public Housing Authorities for this purpose. Rhode Island Housing is getting help to move its tax credit projects forward. If we are speaking to legislators, we should emphasize that we need BHRI funds as matching funds.

Jim Ryczek said that there is a huge amount of funding going to homeless prevention. When we see the regulations, there may be some diversion and rapid re-housing funds. There is a concern that people can’t go into market rate housing. Where will they go?

Jim announced a Housing Rally on April 2, 2009 and passed out flyers. The Coalition’s annual luncheon is on March 30, 2009.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 am. The next meeting is May 15, 2009.