



**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING: September 28, 2006**

PHA Conference Room

100 Broad Street

Providence, RI 02903

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Low called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The Executive Director called the roll:

Present

Theodore Low
Paul Waldman
Dolores Cascella
Dorothy Waters
Rita Williams
Barbara Fields

Absent

Raymond Murphy (Excused)
Jaime Castillo (Excused)
Hillary Silver (Excused)
Balbina Young

Six members were present, constituting a quorum.

RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

Antonio Ferrera, President, and Maribel Pomales, Vice President of the Dexter Manor Tenant Association as well as JT Taylor, President of the Hartford Park Tenant Association were in attendance. However, no comments were made.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (August 24, 2006)

Chairman Low called for approval of the August 24th meeting minutes. Commissioner Waldman motioned for approval of the minutes. Commissioner Waters seconded the motion. A vote was taken. There being no opposition, Chairman Low declared the minutes approved.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

General Remarks

Chairman Low stated that due to his total commitment to the Army, he has elected to resign his position as Chairman of the Housing Authority effective November 9, 2006. He stated he has enjoyed serving on this board for the past nineteen years and watching this agency rise from a troubled agency to the top in its field due mainly to the excellent work of the Commissioners, staff and Executive Director. He is sorry to leave the board but feels it is time.

Executive Director's Performance Evaluation

Forms to evaluate the performance of the Executive Director were distributed to each Commissioner. Some have been returned; however, many remain outstanding. Chairman Low asked that each Commissioner complete the evaluation forms and return them to his attention by the end of next week (October 6, 2006).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

▪ **Budget, Finance & Audit Committee**

The Housing Authority is currently working to convert to project based accounting/management. A presentation will be made to the board at the next meeting.

- Asset Management/Capital Improvements Committee
The committee did not meet. A staff report is available, however.
- Resident Services Committee
Commissioner Waldman stated the committee met with Maria Gianfrancesco and were briefed on the status of tenant association budgets and meetings as well as some services provided to residents. (See attached summary report)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Resignation of Chairman Low

The Executive Director expressed regret at Chairman Low's decision to resign from the board. He praised the chairman for his many years of service, always being available and his concern for the residents of the PHA. He further stated that the PHA would, in addition to conducting our annual meeting, will also celebrate his long service to the PHA.

New Commissioner Fields

The Executive Director stated he had attended a surprise luncheon honoring our new board member, Barbara Fields. Commissioner Fields was honored by the Local Initiatives Support Coalition, of which she is the Director, for fifteen years of service and her many accomplishments since arriving in Providence.

Monthly Management Report Highlights

Monthly Management Reports were distributed and Commissioners were invited to review it in detail, forwarding any questions to the Executive Director's office. The Executive Director did mention that occupancy remains high and collections are adequate.

Certificates of Commendation

The Executive Director introduced three members of the Housing Authority's Security Team: Security Monitors Regina Perreault, Elizabeth Perreault and James Lynch. These individuals were being recognized for their efforts in assisting the Providence Police Department in the apprehension of robbery suspects of a local credit union on June 24, 2006. These individuals spent several hours reviewing security tapes and were able to provide the police department with images of persons they felt fit the description of the suspects. Because of their timely response, the police were able to identify and arrest the suspects.

The Executive Director then introduced PHA Security Officer Daphne Buzzell, and former Security Officer Lissette Rivera. These two individuals are being recognized for their assistance helping a seriously stricken resident. On the night of May 21, 2006, Ms. Buzzell and Ms. Rivera came upon a barely conscious resident lying in front of his apartment. They were able to move the tenant into the apartment and summon a rescue. As a result of their quick action, the resident was transported to the hospital for treatment avoiding a more serious situation.

Commissioner Fields asked if the Police Department had been notified of the good work these staff members had accomplished. John Costa, Security Operation Manager for the Housing Authority, will contact the Providence Police Department and recommend Citizen Commendations for each of these individuals.

Chairman Low and various Commissioners presented each of the recipients with their Certificates of Commendation and offered thanks on behalf of the Board of Commissioners and PHA staff members.

Board Packet Information

Each month one or more articles related to public housing will be included in each commissioner's packet in order to provide Commissioners with information on housing issues. This month's article, *Mainstreaming Public Housing* by Peter Marcuse, talks about the history of the public housing program in America and how it always had to be "piggybacked" with other programs for it to gain widespread acceptance.

Presentation: Development near Dominica Manor and its Impact

A developer has approached the City of Providence and the Housing Authority about plans to construct a high-rise development contiguous to our Dominica Manor development. Dominica Manor consists of 204 units of "elderly-only" housing at the beginning of the Federal Hill neighborhood. The proposed development's "footprints" requires that a portion of the parking area at Dominica Manor be transferred to the developer for construction. The completed building would include a parking facility, which would partially be on our property. In return for the disposition of the property, the developer will provide free, covered parking in the garage equal to the number of spaces acquired, including a connected, covered walkway to the parking garage for our residents. The developer will provide temporary parking during construction on the existing lawn, which will be restored upon completion. A resolution is before the board asking for conditional approval, based on further negotiations with the developer over parking rights and some sort of financial compensation for the land, to prepare and send to HUD a Request for Disposition. More detailed information about this development project, named Vista Della Torre, has been included in each Commissioners packet.

Feedback:

Commissioner Fields asked if a price had been determined for the land they are hoping to acquire. The Executive Director explained that at this time they are only offering to replace lost parking spaces. However, it is early in the negotiations and the PHA will attempt to get the most out of the arrangement.

Commissioner Fields also asked if any of the units will be designated affordable. The Executive Director explained that at this time, the units the developer is proposing are estimated to cost in the half a million dollar range. He did not know if any have been designated affordable. He further stated that the city sometimes requires developers of high-end housing to set-aside a percentage of units as affordable, or contribute to an Affordable Housing trust Fund. However, they do need to go before the zoning board so nothing has been decided.

Commissioner Cascella, a resident of Dominica Manor, expressed concern for the seniors living there with increased traffic issues and parking guarantees.

Chairman Low stated the resolution only authorizes the Executive Director to begin negotiations and submit a proposal to HUD's Special Application Office. The disposition process is a lengthy one and has many requirements, including comments from residents.

Memo from City Solicitor Concerning "Rolling Quorums"

Attorney General Patrick Lynch recently issued an advisory opinion concerning "walking" or "rolling" quorums which violate the Open Meetings Act. A rolling quorum is described as:

- A series of email communications among members regarding matters over which they have supervision, control, jurisdiction or advisory power;
- A series of telephone conversations among members regarding matters over which they have supervision, control, jurisdiction or advisory power;
- A series of on-on-one conversations between fellow members held in the presence of the general public, with multiple conversations occurring simultaneously, regarding matter over which they have supervision, control, jurisdiction or advisory power.

The RI League of Cities and Towns have requested that all City boards and commissions be advised that the above described communications violate the Open Meetings Act and ask that board members be provided with a copy of the Memorandum.

Commissioner Waldman stated that he had raised this issue several times in the past. The executive director stated there may be a need to review the board's by-laws to ensure compliance with the directive.

Board Training & Development

Due to difficulties coming to a mutually agreeable date and with the change to asset based management, the annual board training and development is being postponed until after the New Year and a restructuring plan can be presented to the board.

Development Status:

Williams-Woods Place – Construction of this development is almost complete. The first leases will be signed for November 1st with the balance ready for the first of January. Our development partner, Winn Development, has already advertised for applicants. They received over 1,300 applications, 600 of which were returned. Of this amount, approximately 150 were denied because of ineligibility. A celebration will be held upon final completion. Executive Director O'Rourke stated the buildings look terrific and the 65 applicants selected are lucky to live in such a beautiful development.

RESOLUTION(S)

Resolution #4144:

Resolution #4144 asked the Board of Commissioners to authorize the Executive Director to prepare and send to HUD a Request for Disposition for a portion of the Dominica Manor property. Commissioner Waldman motioned for approval with Commissioner Williams seconding the motion. After some discussion, a vote was taken. There was no opposition by members present. Chairman Low declared the resolution passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Cascella, chair of the Nomination Committee, will have nomination recommendations for the Annual Meeting on November 9th.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Low accepted a motion to adjourn from Commissioner Waters which was seconded by Commissioner Fields to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Kimberly Dawley
Recording Secretary

Stephen J. O'Rourke
Executive Director