

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY
700 COUNTY ROAD
SECAUCUS, NEW JERSEY

May 22, 2014

This is a condensed transcription of the taped minutes as taken on Thursday, May 22, 2014 at The Elms, 777Fifth Street, Secaucus, New Jersey.

Chairman Michael Harper welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Chairman Michael Harper
Vice-Chairman Michael Schlemm
Commissioner Roger Adriaenssens
Commissioner Richard Fairman
Commissioner Michael Grecco

Also Present: Executive Director Christopher Marra
James Burke, Esq., Counsel to the Authority
Kenny Koch, Mayor's Liaison

Absent: Deputy Executive Director Jake Naszimento
Commissioner Arlene Kroll

Mr. Marra read the Open Public Meetings Act.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

“Adequate notice of this meeting, as required by the Open Public Meetings Act, has been provided by the filing of a Regular Meeting Notice with the Municipal Clerk, the posting of said notice on the official bulletin board in the Municipal Government Center, and delivery of same to the Jersey Journal and Secaucus Homes News on December 26, 2013. This body wishes to advise you that, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 26:3D(1), et seq. (Smoking in Public Buildings), smoking is prohibited while this body is in open or closed session.”

housing authority for one bedroom and studio apartments based on the market that exists in the Secaucus rental market. The highest rent a person can pay is \$852 for one-bedroom or \$709 for a studio. Previously, the formula was quite convoluted. HUD has made it easier to figure out – taking 80 percent of what is called “the fair market rate”. Mr. Marra, in the packet given to the Commissioners, explained if a fair market rate for one bedroom in our area is \$1,089 and for an efficiency \$990, in short what HUD is telling you to do is take 80 percent of that number. SHA will pass a resolution adopting a flat rent in either June or July and then every year after that, SHA will readopt a new resolution for flat rent. In The Elms, in the next 60-90 days, the residents will go through their recertification process. Kroll Heights has already been done. The new rent here is October 1, 2014. The flat rent can be held until 2015, because he can't have people in The Elms paying a new flat rent different from Kroll Heights, however, what will happen is: when Kroll Heights is done next year and June 1, 2015 comes along, there will be a new flat rent for one bedroom and a studio. However, if someone was to move into the building after the resolution is passed, who qualifies for a flat rent, than they will pay the new flat rent, no matter what building you live in.

Residents know this, but most don't actually realize it, at the end of your recertification, it says, you can pay a flat rent of \$852 or your 30 percent of your income. Which are you going to pick? You will pick the lesser figure of course. Some who live here, their 30 percent of their income is \$1,050; So do they have a choice of paying \$852 or \$1,050. They will pick the \$852.

ED Marra said he took a class online from NARHO to describe it, and when you could install it. A rough calculation is that for a one bedroom it will probably go to \$872, which is about a \$20 increase. The studio is different and could go up significantly, and the regulations let you bring it up over the course of 1-3 years, if it's too high.

Vice-Chairman Schlemm asked if it was strictly the tenant's choice of whether to use the flat rent or 30 percent of income. ED Marra said you would almost always default to what's in your best interest. A member of the public asked for a better explanation. ED Marra said of the 275 people who live, only about 20-22 people should be paying \$1,050 or they could pay; \$1,050 is 30 percent of their income, but the most they pay is \$852.

Buildings & Grounds

Resolution #2014-20 – AWARD OF TWO YEAR CONTRACT FOR ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Mr. Marra explained ThyssenKrupp Elevator bid \$14,644, their annual maintenance fee or \$1,222 a month – just for them to come in monthly to do maintenance on the elevators. This rate is \$5,000 less than they bid three years ago. Their mechanical and helper rate has also decreased. Last time they were the 4th bidder on the list, but the first bidder was fired after six months on the job. Numbers 2 and 3 did not have good records, so No. 4 was selected. Commissioner Adriaenssens asked if they were the incumbent now. The contract goes into effect July 1st and would last for two years.

RESOLUTION 2014-20

Award of Two Year Elevator Maintenance Contract

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus has need of an elevator maintenance company in order to maintain its equipment; and

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority publicly bid the elevator maintenance contract in accordance with the requirement of the New Jersey local Public Contract Law and the Authority's procurement policy; and

WHEREAS, bids were received on May 1 and three (3) bids were received in response to its duly published Request for Bids that were reviewed by the Executive Director; and

WHEREAS, it has been determined that the bid submitted by ThyssenKrupp Elevator of Cranford, NJ is the lowest responsible bidder and should be awarded the contract;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus that a contract for elevator maintenance be hereby awarded to the lowest responsible bidder:

ThyssenKrupp Elevator:
Year 1: \$14,644
Year 2: \$14,644

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that funds for this contract have been made available through the Housing Authority' operating fund.

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Adriaenssens; seconded by Commissioner Grecco.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Kroll

Mr. Marra gave an update on the electronic security upgrade. Mr. Marra asked the audience if their pass is working to get into the building. Yes, they said. All the cameras have been installed in all the locations, including all elevators. Kroll

Heights' elevator will be worked on tomorrow, and final touches on the access control system will be done also. Next week will be a final walk-through with TSG Solutions, then TSG signs off on it. They are paid and that's the end of the project. Vice-Chairman Schlemm asked what the training on this was. ED Marra said Joe, Ronnie, Harry, Jake and himself were trained on the camera system alone and then the training for the office staff on the Access Control System, generating a new card, putting someone into the system, removing someone from the system – that type of training to work that system, printing out reports to see who has access to it. No one knew this, but everyone had access to the office, so that had to be corrected.

Update on The Elms air handler replacement – Mr. Marra sent an email last week and gave the new schedule, which is finishing up around June 9th. The item was installed on the roof, there were rain delays. Now there is a mechanical lift to run the gas lines up the side of the building, and also to run the exhaust up the side of the building. It was difficult getting PSE&G to come out on a certain day. Mr. Marra received a note of May 15th, they'd be here on Monday to start the gas piping on the external wall. On Monday, they set the hydraulic lift up, they go up, Harry goes outside and sees one of the cylinders is leaking on the lift. It could have been a dangerous situation. They came down off the lift, and it's being swapped out. It should be finished by the end of June.

Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program

ED Marra gave the report: for May 2014, SHA had been allotted 250 vouchers. There were 206 active vouchers, for May that was \$166,020, about \$12,000 less than what was anticipated. Jake and ED Marra are working on June. There are a lot of people signing up for rent effective June 1st, people who are living in Secaucus and out-of-towners. They will keep issuing vouchers until the number is up. By June it should be \$174,000. In May, the information for SEMAP was submitted (Section 8 Management Assessment Program). The results are usually received in July.

INFORMATIONAL – Chairman Harper said that on May 1st a memorial dinner was held for Commissioner Nicholas Costantino and money was raised for Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. It was a wonderful, successful evening. Chairman Harper thanked his fellow Commissioners for all their support, Mr. Marra and the employees of SHA who put it together. (Applause.) Mr. Marra handed out a letter this evening that he received from the organization thanking them for the \$2,000 raised that evening.

OTHER – Kenny Koch said they'd had a meeting at the Towers with 20 of the tenants due to excessive fire calls from unattended cooking. This is not a problem at The Elms or Kroll Heights. Mr. Marra has decided to purchase a switch that will go on the stove and when the stove heats up to "unattended cooking", it will shut the stove down. As soon as it cools down to a certain

degree, you can put the stove back on again. "Kitchen fires occur every eight minutes in North America. Unattended cooking is responsible for 70 percent of these fires. Cooking accounts for 42 percent of all apartment fires. Seniors are most vulnerable to fires and the highest risk group. Ignition temperature for cooking oil is 370 degrees. A burner on high, unattended cooking, can reach up to 700 degrees." Now, when the flame reaches 350, it automatically shuts the stove off and lets it cool down to approximately 320; then they can turn the stove back on again.

ED Marra said Kenny was reading the Celsius number. It gets to 600 degrees on the stove and then shuts off. The Elms has had less than six fire calls every year for the past few years; Kroll Heights doesn't have that issue. In the Towers, perhaps due to the height of the building, the hard wired smoke detector is in the people's apartments. If you get a smoke in your apartment, it will go off, then it goes in the hallway and sets the entire thing off. If someone is cooking in The Towers and it gets too smoky, the fire alarm goes off. There were 54 fire calls in 2012; 45 fire calls last year in The Towers. Many days there are two fire calls; one day there was three. The firemen do not like us. This year there's been 11 through the end of April. The items are being installed in 25 apartments, yes, they are the people that cause cooking fires. ED Marra met with them today. He'd like to get back to 2010 numbers – less than a dozen fire calls. In 2012 the sensitivity of the fire alarm may have been adjusted incorrectly by the company, and ED Marra has talked to them about readjusting it back.

Vice-Chairman Schlemm asked what the cost is. ED Marra said installed is \$195, going into 25 apartments. If 100 new stoves are ever purchased for The Towers, these items are already installed on it.

Mr. Marra said since he handed out the meeting packet last week, a woman asked about back in December, a meeting was held about the Rental Assistance Demonstration Program, and is this was going to help tenants. Mr. Marra explained, that HUD was only authorized for 60,000 units of this demonstration program of some 250,000 units submitted applications. SHA was in the 275,000 of that. There are 190,000 units in line – SHA has a long wait until there is legislation that allows more units. However, Mr. Marra received an email from HUD, the RAD team, and on the back of the email Mr. Marra handed out, there is a response from Mr. Snyder.

Bathrooms – in Apartment 319 in this building, a "model" bathroom is being installed, using Bath Fitter. Next Friday before the person moves in, Mr. Marra is going to call tenants on the loud speaker and everyone is going to get a chance to walk through #319 to see the bathroom. It's not a stall, but he needs tenants to see the flooring, walling and to get some feedback from people about what SHA is going to do. SHA has some money that they have gotten through Capital Grants and through the operating this year, the Board has committed to taking this year's Capital Money, which SHA already has, and next

year's Capital Money, which would be received in February, and committing it to renovating the 100 bathrooms in The Elms. It is a different project from what was described last year, for example, last year there were incidental items that were going to be fixed – linen closet and door on bathroom. They are not involved any more, but new walls, new floors, new toilet, new vanity, new plumbing to prevent leaks and at the present time stalls are not being considered. Lots of people wanted the stall, but it isn't totally dead. The Town of Secaucus submitted an application to Hudson County's Community Development Block Program for \$180,000, which SHA will know in June as to whether or not SHA has been approved for it. Usually, it's an all or nothing – you get the \$180,000 or you get zero. If SHA receives the \$180,000, they then have enough money to do all 100 bathrooms. If the \$180,000 is not received, then perhaps 50 will get done one year, and 50 the next year.

Someone asked about the stall, and said many people can't get into the bath tub. Mr. Marra understands that and that's why the feedback is important. There was discussion with the woman about wheelchair accessibility and the size of the doors in the building because the building was built in 1975. There are six apartments that are defined as "handicapped apartments", meaning the apartment is configured differently, but not necessarily that a handicapped person lives there. A woman asked about the walk-in tubs seen on television. Mr. Marra said they'd explore all possibilities.

Summer Intern

There will be a summer intern in the office this summer. A grant was received to pay part of her salary for eight weeks – she is Ashlee Amancha, a junior at the College of New Jersey this fall.

Fair at Kroll Heights

Mr. Marra reminded SHA has its annual health fair over in Kroll Heights from 10-12 noon. Chairman Harper asked if it was certain people running it. Mr. Marra said this is the health fair that the Housing Authority runs – hospitals are there; Lutheran Senior Life; blood pressure is taken; if someone has an issue, they can speak with people; the County Office on Aging. It is a good event to come and speak with people if you need a supplemental program.

Miscellaneous

There is information about PHADA in the Commissioner's folders, one of the two housing organizations that SHA joins – Public Housing Authority Director's Association; the other is NAHRO – National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials.

Remarks of Citizens

Someone asked if the windows could be washed. Mr. Marra said none of the windows on any of the buildings have been washed. There are leaks in the bathrooms also.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Grecco; seconded by Vice-Chairman Schlemm.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Kroll

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez, Transcriber