

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

September 26, 2019

This is a condensed transcription of the taped minutes as taken on Thursday, September 26, 2019 at Kroll Heights, 700 County Road, Secaucus, New Jersey.

Chairman Michael Schlemm called the meeting to order.

**ROLL CALL**

Present:

Chairman Michael Schlemm  
Vice-Chairman Michael Harper  
Commissioner Patricia Mondadori  
Commissioner Carmen Rivera

Also Present:

Executive Director Christopher Marra  
Charles D'Amico, Esq., Counsel to the Authority

Absent:

Commissioner Richard Fairman  
Commissioner Antonio Suarez

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 on December 19, 2018. 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."**

**FLAG SALUTE - Pledge of Allegiance recited by all present.)**

**SWEARING IN OF COMMISSIONER MICHAEL HARPER**

ED Marra announced Michael Harper is being sworn in for 5<sup>th</sup> term as Commissioner of Secaucus Housing Authority, having been a part of SHA for 22

years. Mr. D'Amico swore in Michael Harper prior to the beginning of the meeting. (Applause.)

Commissioner Harper requested moment of silence in remembrance of Mrs. Bill Kroll, and mother of former SHA Commissioner Arlene Kroll. The building is named after Mr. Kroll.

### **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES – July 25, 2019 & Special Meeting of August 28, 2019**

ED Marra noted minutes for Special Meeting of 8/28/19 are not available at this time.

Motion to accept minutes made by Commissioner Harper; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Rivera.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (3)                      Abstain: Mondadori  
Absent: Fairman/Suarez

### **PAYMENT OF CLAIMS – AUGUST & SEPTEMBER**

Motion to approve bill list for August & September 2019 made by Commissioner Harper; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Rivera.

Commissioner Mondadori questioned \$700 step for the tub. ED Marra said it is cutting into the bath tub – easy step.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)                      Absent: Fairman/Suarez

### **REMARKS OF CITIZENS**

BARBARA - #1208 – Asked where notices of Commissioners' meetings are posted? Can they be put in lobby? ED Marra stated at beginning of year schedule is in lobby at Kroll Heights, 2 bulletin boards in the glass; bulletin board in laundry room here and at Towers. It is put on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bulletin board also, but someone removes it after a few months. She is unaware of when unless someone tells her. Best way may be to put on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bulletin board. Authority has 10 meetings a year on 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of every month except August & November. Meeting in December on 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday – always at The Elms - 3 times/year; Towers – 3 times/year; Kroll – 4 times. Meeting dates are also on Town Calendar.

CAROL STUART - #216 – People feel there is no security when you get on the elevator; people coming in/out and don't know who they are. Frank goes around every night, closes all windows – mail room, laundry, check stairs. She made suggestion previously that Frank be hired to sit in lobby and check ID of

people. Carol did inform those people to go to office and put it in writing or come to meetings.

People are bringing their laundry to Kroll Heights or monopolize machines making it difficult for tenants here. One man from Towers uses 3 machines weekly at night. Would it be possible to have a rule, wash clothes in your own building and visitors cannot use the machines. ED Marra said visitors are not allowed to use these machines; many on weekends because office is closed.

Mr. Marra had people come down, speaking about security, which is also a topic of conversation at The Elms. In Kroll, there are 75 families; don't know everyone. Tenants have visitors at various times, weekends too. He has not had a report of a crime of any kind except for one incident – a person being verbally assaulted by a visitor at The Towers. At The Elms, there are 100 families and you don't know every visitor. Once in a while, a family member might come, they have problems – just because they have a problem doesn't mean they will commit a crime, assault you or say something.

In terms of laundry, Mr. Marra took 5-6 pieces of children's clothing in laundry room to his office. Eventually, someone will come looking for them; and he will say it shouldn't be because it's children's clothes. If you see it, you need to tell Mr. Marra; send him an email or text him and they will look at the camera, see the person, send them a letter that they're in violation of their lease AND if they continue, their next letter will come from SHA attorney.

In terms of security, many people come into buildings: aides, family, friends of family. It is a common thing since buildings opened; this is a residential apartment, showing their ID is not needed. Exchange requires you just say who you are visiting.

What is pet policy and how many animals are you allowed at one time? ED Marra stated you may have one dog/one cat, however, people now have service animal – 2 dogs/2 cats. SHA says as long as they have proper documentation, SHA has to accept that. Carol noted one person has other dogs visit. ED Marra said office needs to know that.

MATTY - #212 – She mentioned cleaning of lobby chairs: some time they are soiled. ED Marra requested come to office and tell Staff that. Man comes at 7:00 A.M. and cleans chairs. If later on in the day, chair is soiled, don't wait until next morning when man comes to clean chairs. Come to office, report and it will be cleaned right away. She has mentioned it to Ronnie; he looks at it and that's it. Mr. Marra added never ask maintenance man to do anything. Ask office to do it; maintenance man is assigned to do it and then there is accountability. Tell office as they keep track of calls.

Washing machines – aides come down with urine-smelling clothing. They are not being kept clean and stink. She sprays one she uses with Lysol first.

DEBORAH - #902 – Towers – There are only 3 workable washing machines; old one doesn't work properly and clothes are wet when you take them out.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Commissioners have report of monthly balances @ banks. There is no longer a CD at Santander Bank, but have a bank account earning 1.95%, maybe lower. When CD became mature in early August, Santander did not offer SHA a 12-month CD – rate offered was below what Bogota was offering on SHA big accounts. CDs are not getting 2.4% any more, but now it's at 1.95%.

NJSEM email regarding billing/savings where there was another mistake by South Jersey Energy. SHA should get some refund for period last year. This expires in May of 2020 and not sure if SHA will continue with NJSEM or not. Commissioner Fairman is still unhappy with NJSEM.

At October, results of annual audit will be reviewed. It took place at the end of July; no findings in audit and report will be given by Mr. Ketchen.

## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, PERSONNEL OR POLICY COMMITTEES – nothing now**

In October probably every committee will meet one time, other than B&G meeting in 2019, there will be relative short telephone calls (35-40 minutes) and agenda will be provided. Few items need to be discussed before continuing in this fiscal year.

## **BUILDING & GROUNDS**

Every Commissioner tonight received a proposal from Lee Mestres; Resolution #2019-23 attached. It is to hire Habitech to do work at The Elms in preparation for PSE&G project. Proposal is for \$7,500; architectural engineering services to replace 100 breaker boxes or inside of breaker boxes at The Elms. If awarded tonight, Lee will begin and underway by beginning of January.

### **RESOLUTION #2019-23 (Award of Contract for A/E Services for Replacement of Breaker Boxes in 100 units at The Elms)**

WHEREAS, the Secaucus Housing Authority (hereinafter referred to as SHA) has need for A/E services for Replacement of breaker boxes in 100 units at The Elms, 777 Fifth Street; and

WHEREAS, SHA is permitted to contract for such services, pursuant to both the New Jersey Redevelopment and Housing Law and the New Jersey Public Contracts Law; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to SHA's Procurement Policy Guidelines, the SHA solicited a professional service companies for proposals; and

WHEREAS, SHA received a proposal from one A/E firm, and

WHEREAS, the highest rated proposal was submitted by the firm of:

Habitech Architecture  
12 Pinecrest Drive  
Medford, NJ 08055-9774

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus that a contract for A/E services for Roof Replacement be awarded to:

Habitech Architecture  
12 Pinecrest Drive  
Medford, NJ 08055-9774

in the amount of \$7,500.00 and

BE IT, FURTHER, RESOLVED that a copy of the proposals are on file in the office of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus and funds for this contract have been made available through a loan from Bogota Savings Bank arranged through the SHA's participation in Rental Assistance Demonstration Program

<b>Commissioners</b>	<b>Ayes</b>	<b>Nays</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Chairman Schlemm			
Vice Chairman Harper			
Commissioner Fairman			
Commissioner Grecco			
Commissioner Mondadori			
Commissioner Rivera			
Commissioner Suarez			

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Harper; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Mondadori.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)                      Absent: Fairman/Suarez

REPORT ON PSE&G MULTI-FAMILY PROGRAMS

September 12 SHA met with MaGrann Associates, the electrician and representative from Mitsubishi at The Elms on the roof and in an empty apartment looking at site to see how this will lay out. Some discussion about movement of main power also, including discussion about potentially costing more than \$25,000 that Rachel had estimated in her memo. Doug MaGrann said he'd go back to PSE&G and see whether or not they could help with the

cost. No real number was given though. Mr. Marra hasn't heard from MaGrann or Rachel since day after meeting of August 28<sup>th</sup>, when he sent her signed agreement.

SHA moving along on replacement of fire pump at The Elms. June 5<sup>th</sup> there was a pressure test. It should be underway in October with the replacement of that piece of equipment.

16 fireproof apartment doors were delivered to 600 County Road, which need to be stained. SHA is hiring JG Painting to stain them to look similar to other doors, then Door Jockey will install them; presently stored in Community Room. Over next five years, front doors will be replaced for every apartment two floors at a time there.

**The Elms** – Mike Malpere came and gave Mr. Marra proposal for both The Elms and 600 County, but both cannot be done in same fiscal year. Probably The Elms first.

There is issue at The Elms parking lot – Centre Avenue – a “sink hole”. It will be fixed in October before winter sets in.

## **HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM**

As an aside, Jake Naszimento had a bike accident yesterday in Secaucus biking to/from work; in hospital this morning, is fine but suffered a concussion and will be back Monday to work.

RESOLUTION #2019-22 – Each year HUD issues Fair Market Rate for HCV Program; telling what fair market rate is for an apartment. You are allowed to use that figure when you tell people who have HCV how much they can rent a 1-bedroom/2-bedroom/3-bedroom for. SHA is allowed to have that Fair Market Rate be at 110% or 100% or 90%, but because they make it so high, SHA goes through process to have it at 90%. Resolution states what parameters are to be for 2019 small market area Fair Market Rent for 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms.

### **RESOLUTION #2019-22 ESTABLISHING THE PAYMENT STANDARDS FOR THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM**

**WHEREAS**, on November 16, 2016 HUD published its final rule in the Federal Register establishing Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMR) parameters and naming 24 metropolitan areas that met the selection criteria, for which the Town of Secaucus, specifically zip code 07094 was included and were designated for mandatory use of SAFMRs commencing on October 1, 2017; and

**WHEREAS**, on August 10, 2017 HUD exercised its authority under 24 CFR 888.113(c)(4)(iii) to suspend SAFMR designation for 23 of the 24 designated areas that would have gone into effect on October 1, 2017 until October 1, 2019; and

**WHEREAS**, On December 23, 2017 the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia entered a preliminary injunction, voiding that suspension, thereby giving Public Housing Authorities until April 1, 2018 to implement these new rates; and

**WHEREAS**, a Public Housing Authority (PHA) uses the published SAFMR as a guide to establish Payment Standards per bedroom size for the Housing Choice Voucher Program; and

**WHEREAS**, a PHA may establish Payment Standards anywhere between 90 to 110 percent of the published FMR without obtaining HUD approval; and

**WHEREAS**, the Payment Standards are used to calculate the housing assistance payment (HAP) that the PHA pays to the owner on behalf of the family leasing the unit; and

**WHEREAS**, the Payment Standard set by the PHA directly effects the amount of subsidy a family will receive and the amount of rent that will be paid by the tenant; and

**WHEREAS**, a PHA must also determine that its annual budget authority for the Housing Choice Voucher Program will support the established Payment Standards; and

**WHEREAS**, a PHA must also ensure that the program participants will be able to find safe, decent and affordable units within the PHA's jurisdiction within the standards established; and

**WHEREAS**, applicants/participants have experienced cost related obstacles to leasing safe, decent and affordable units within the SHA jurisdiction, and;

**WHEREAS**, on August 30, 2019 HUD has released its 2020 SAFMR for all bedroom sizes in zip code 07094; and

**WHEREAS**, the Secaucus Housing Authority has determined the Payment Standard shall be set at 90% of the 2019 SAFMR for the 0 bedroom, 1, 2, 3, and 4 bedroom units, the payment standard per bedroom size will be:

**2019 Secaucus Housing Authority Payment Standard**

Bedroom Size	SAFMR
0	\$1,512
1	\$1,683
2	\$1,980
3	\$2,466
4	\$2,682

**WHEREAS**, the Payment Standards have been reviewed and approved by William Katchen , our accountant; and

**WHEREAS**, his review has confirmed that sustaining the payment standard for all bedroom sizes is within the best interest of the SHA and the clients they serve

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus that the payments standards as set forth above are to continue for the period commencing October 2, 2019 through September 30, 2020.

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Harper; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Rivera.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)

Absent: Fairman/Suarez

DED Naszimento's report for September and October -- \$186,000 spent in August; \$191,000 in September. SHA did not issue any new vouchers in September; some people out there who have vouchers looking for apartments; probably some vouchers will be issued in October. SHA did not issue vouchers because of another item coming up on the report.

In July after other meeting, SHA got their SEMAP score, which is Section 8 Management Assessment Programs score given out by HUD. This was for all the vouchers, not just Housing Choice Voucher, but for Project Based Vouchers. SHA score **again** was 100 – about 6<sup>th</sup> year in a row.

Last week for 3 days, 2 representatives of HUD were in attendance to conduct an onsite voucher management system validation. This required SHA to be in contact with Mr. Katchen's office for the 3 days. Short of it is: what HUD is doing is trying to validate not the numbers that they are given, but are validating each step along the way – the process from when Jake or SHA close a month and issue vouchers and issue a payment all the way to end of process. Quite the equivalent of if you were in grammar school, get the answer correct, but teacher asks you to show the work. If you can't show the work, that's a problem. Sometimes there was a hiccup in showing the work last week. SHA was given extra week to show work and we've been working on this week along with Sandra from Katchen's office. It is being submitted tomorrow. A email letter will be received from them, sent to Commissioners and Chairman Schlemm to read; probably with concerns outlined, but will be discussed more at a Finance Committee meeting about things SHA has to adjust going forward to make those hiccups go away. It was necessary to sit with them the entire time they were here each of the 3 days.

#### SUPERVISORY REVIEW OF HCV FILES

Mr. Marra explained he was involved in all of these to some degree or another – almost 100%. In many cases, SHA was trying to get people into apartments and Mr. Marra forgot to get some pieces of information, which he has now sent out letters to get that information; most have come in: a landlord's Social Security card; or when SHA didn't have original lease, because person leased in place and had already been living for 3-4 years there, so landlord didn't issue new lease.

In one particular case, specifically #1, which we knew about it going in, It can be discussed at a committee meeting.

## **TENANT SERVICES/ISSUES**

Letter not yet completed regarding meeting with tenants at The Elms held in August 2019.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Email from 8/27/19 about law suit; letter from Gary Jeffis (ph.) Town of Secaucus about smoke alarms and CCO requirements, specifically geared to Housing Choice Voucher Program – not for our buildings. Inquiry for Letter of Support from Solar Landscape – which will be discussed in a committee meeting and possibly meet with them; New Jersey MEL latest brochure.

## **ADJOURNMENT TO CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING**

Motion to adjourn to Closed Executive Session made by Commissioner Harper; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Rivera.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)                      Absent: Fairman/Suarez

## **PUBLIC MEETING OPENED & ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to reopen public meeting and adjourn public meeting made by Commissioner Harper; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Mondadori.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)                      Absent: Fairman/Suarez

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez  
Secretary/Transcriber