

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

JUNE 24, 2021

This is a condensed transcription of the taped minutes as taken on Thursday,  
At Imprevduto Towers, 600 County Road, Secaucus, New Jersey.

**Executive Director Christopher Marra announced this is first public meeting held since February 2020.**

Chairman Harper welcomed the audience and thanked them and everyone in the Office, Maintenance and ED Marra for handling such a difficult situation.

**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 12, 2020. 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.”**

Chairman Harper requested a moment of silence in remembrance of William Pine, husband of Fran Pine and father of three sons.

**FLAG SALUTE**

**ROLL CALL**

Present:

Chairman Michael Harper  
Vice-Chairman Michael Schlemm  
Commissioner Patricia Mondadori  
Commissioner Raj Pardasani  
Commissioner Carmen Rivera  
Commissioner Antonio Suarez\* - 7:06 P.M.

Also Present: Executive Director Christopher Marra  
Charles D'Amico, Esq., (Via Zoom)

Absent: Deputy Executive Director Jake Naszimento  
Commissioner Richard Fairman

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 27, 2021 – OPEN & CLOSED SESSION**

Motion to approve public portion and closed session of minutes made by Commissioner Mondadori; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Rivera.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)                      Absent: Fairman/Suarez\*  
Abstain: Schlemm

Mr. D'Amico asked ED Marra to remove closed minutes of May 27<sup>th</sup> meeting from public portion. ED Marra said yes, he will do that. They are approved, but will not be published.

### **PAYMENT OF CLAIMS FOR JUNE 2021**

Motion to approve payment of claims made by Commissioner Schlemm; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Pardasani.

Commissioner Pardasani asked about bed bug treatment. ED Marra there is a problem at The Elms on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floor in 2 apartments.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)                      Absent: Fairman/Suarez\*

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

ED Marra gave Commissioners copy of monthly account balances for bank; annual audit will take place August 11-12. He sent out email to people on Finance Committee, making sure they're available on August 12<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 P.M. for debriefing.

Notices are in packet regarding SHA ending 1-year experiment with EMEX and Constellation Energy for a reduced price on utilities. Right now SHA has not signed up with any company. ED Marra noted SHA did not do well on this contract with EMEX; SHA did better with NJSEMS. Explanation was what happened to energy market during pandemic. EMEX did explain it, but ED Marra was not pleased with that experience. SHA would have done better with PSE&G. Perhaps SHA will rejoin NJSEMS next year or have time to find a new 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractor.

(\*Commissioner Suarez arrived for meeting @ 7:06 P.M.)

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

1. RESOLUTION #2021-19 – AWARD OF A CONTRACT TO COPPA MONTALBANO FOR CONSTRUCTION AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES TO UPGRADE ELEVATOR AT 600 COUNTY AVENUE.

ED Marra put in information re: who else submitted bids. Chairman Harper added SHA has used this firm before and was architecture/engineering service when elevators at The Elms were upgraded.

**RESOLUTION #2021-19  
(Award of Contract for A/E Services for Upgrade and Replacement of  
Equipment for the Elevators at Impreveduto Towers)**

WHEREAS, the Secaucus Housing Authority (hereinafter referred to as SHA) has need for A/E services for the upgrade and replacement of equipment for the Elevators at Impreveduto Towers, 600 County Avenue; 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 above contract was advertised for proposals in the appropriate newspapers; and

WHEREAS, SHA received four (4) proposals from A/E firms, and

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

Coppa Montalbano Architects  
97 Lackawanna Avenue  
Totowa, NJ 07512

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 the upgrade and replacement of equipment for the Elevators at Impreveduto Towers, 600 County Avenue

Coppa Montalbano Architects  
97 Lackawanna Avenue  
Totowa, NJ 07512

in the amount of \$24,500.00 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

Motion to approve made by Vice-Chairman Schlemm; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Mondadori.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Fairman

ED Marra spoke about meeting in May where Lee Mestres and John Buckalew discussed façade improvement at The Elms – removing/replacing of panels, Buildings & Grounds Committee subsequently again met with Lee via Zoom and are suggesting that SHA move forward on this project. Lee submitted proposal to SHA to do the work, attached inside agenda, Resolution 2021-21 – Award of Contract to Habitat Architecture for exterior finish & window upgrades at The Elms.

Commissioner Suarez questioned amount proposed. ED Marra answered Lee has done previous work for SHA on this with no compensation; if you want to use as comparison, basically project for PSE&G was about \$1.5 or \$1.4 and their architectural engineering services were 90 (MaGrann) if you recall, which is what we might have to pay MaGrann. **Chairman Harper asked Commissioners if they want to vote on 2021-21 or table it for further discussion. Decision was to table it.**

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

**UPDATE ON COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT** - We are continuing to meet on that, no news to bring back to Board.

## **POLICY COMMITTEE**

Tonight's agenda is official introduction of By-Laws scheduled to be considered at the July 24<sup>th</sup> regular Board meeting. At last meeting we went over in detail, questions about By-Laws. Only thing changed in there were entering a few things having to do with adding title "Treasurer" to a few areas. Other than that, nothing was changed – still original By-Laws that Mr. D'Amico drafted in January. ED Marra asked Mr. D'Amico if vote was needed to introduce them; Mr. D'Amico said no, as long as SHA advertises that they are going to be voted at July 24<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **BUILDINGS & GROUNDS**

Awarding a 2-year contract to Elevator Maintenance Service to Elevator Maintenance Corporation, EMCO of Kearny. For most of past 10 years, SHA has used ThyssenKrupp. EMCO is smaller, having met President of company recently, long-time employee from sweeping floors to President of company. Based in Kearny, service Town of Secaucus and BOE and many other authorities and other governmental entities in N.J.

## **RESOLUTION 2021-22**

### *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 June 3 and two (2) 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 Elevator Maintenance Corporation of Kearny, 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:

Elevator Maintenance Corp.:

Year 1: \$21,600

Year 2: \$22,800

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

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Fairman

**RESOLUTION #2021-23 – CHANGE ORDER #1 FOR KROLL HEIGHTS BATHROOM RENOVATION PROJECT**

This is a \$36,000 Change Order – reason is vanity that was originally priced in project SHA is unable to obtain, not available, having to do with supply of lumber, could not obtain 75 vanities. SHA found company in South Jersey that will make the vanities and will have a stainless steel sink installed, which cost extra for each one. Vanities are all wood, not particle board.

## **RESOLUTION 2021-23**

### **(Resolution authorizing Change Order #1 of \$36,000 to La Rocca, Inc. for the Project Kroll Heights Bathroom Renovation)**

WHEREAS, on March 25, 2021 the Secaucus Housing Authority Board of Commissioners approved Resolution 2021-15 which awarded a \$381,500 contract to La Rocca,

Inc. (The Contractor) of Jersey City, NJ for the renovation of 75 bathrooms at Kroll Heights located at 700 County Avenue, Secaucus, NJ; and

WHEREAS, after performing initial work to investigate to procure all of the materials stated in the Project Manual, it was determined and documented that:

*Due to the lumber shortage/crisis existing during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2021, The Contractor was unable to procure the vanity and sink he used in his bid dated on March 16. That vanity & one piece top cost \$27,375 or \$365 per vanity ( $365 \times 75 = \$27,375$ ).*

*After vigorous attempts to identify similar product, by both the contractor and the project's architect, they were finally able to identify a vendor in southern New Jersey and secure 75 vanities with a sink. The replacement vanity and one piece top costs \$765 which is a \$30,000 difference plus 10% overhead and 10% profit. Thereby resulting in a \$36,000 change order.*

WHEREAS, this request has been reviewed by Lee Mesters of Habitech Architects and the SHA's Board attorney.

NOW, therefore, be it resolved by the Board of Commissioners of the Secaucus Housing Authority that Change Order #1 be approved

- 1) The Executive Director be and hereby is authorized, empowered and directed to execute and deliver agreements and expend the authorized funds
- 2) The Executive Director be and hereby is authorized, empowered and directed to take any and all such ancillary action necessary and appropriate to fulfill the intent of the foregoing;

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Fairman

## **HCV – HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER**

No report this evening from DED Naszimento. ED Marra is hoping to restructure report, but hasn't worked on it as yet. SHA over last several months has upped amount of people that are being assisted with this voucher. It's possible after July 1<sup>st</sup>; SHA will be servicing approximately 230 residents/families in Secaucus with a voucher. Mr. Marra said Secaucus has not been at 230 since he's been here. They are trying to move up to 250 as money will allow. Hopefully, he will have better report in July.

## TENANT SERVICE ISSUES

ED Marra would like Chairman Harper to take Q&A from audience as some of his report has to do with it. ED Marra gave Board a memo and example of meeting notice of meetings he held over the course of 3 weeks with residents in each building. There was a meeting in Spanish at 11:00 A.M.; meeting at 1:00 P.M. for everyone else – between 3 buildings, there were 105 attendees – 30 to 35 residents per building on average. Attendance was taken through a sign-in sheet. Purpose of meeting was to provide SHA with what topics most tenants were interested in talking about or any issues they had.

In this building (Towers) residents presented a petition as they were seeking to have cameras installed on each floor of building. This was also a common request in each building. Physical safety was not at top of list of concerns, there were issues related to missing packages and other items being taken from the floor and common area. In all 3 buildings, residents talked about condition of compactor rooms, especially on weekends and condition on containers located in these rooms. Perhaps we will have to clean these containers more often. They are used for recycling. Tenant puts garbage down a chute, can is in that room where you put plastic bottles and glass. In some buildings, there is container for newspapers. Here I don't think there is separate container for newspapers & papers.

In addition, some residents in almost all buildings still smelled cigarette smoke, depending on which floor you lived in. We've narrowed down smokers – not counting The Elms, where there's possibly as many as 12-14 smokers we've identified. There are 6 here/6 Kroll Heights. ED Marra stated that to objectively catch them smoking in their apartment is very difficult to do. At The Elms we spent money on tests to determine level of nicotine in people's apartments. We may have to do again in these buildings since number of smokers between Kroll and Rocco equal number of smokers just at The Elms.

The Elms spoke specifically about dogs doing their business and tenants identified to ED Marra. There are 4 dogs at The Elms; ED Marra sent all 4 tenants a letter; had another conversation with a resident after another email sent to ED Marra identifying her as letting her dog do business on concrete outside entrance way. Subsequently, even after that conversation, he got another email from a resident there. At Rocco Towers, there's been discussion about people who let their dogs go to bathroom near Kane Stadium near where the cat house is, but unclear whether that's SHA residents or residents who walk their dogs on Kane Stadium property. Dog-owner residents in this building will receive a letter from ED Marra reminding them that they have to clean up after their dog.

Imprevuduto Towers and The Elms both seeking common area flooring to replace existing carpeting that's down. Both Imprevuduto & Kroll Heights talked

about laundry room and some discussion about condition of machines; residents inability to clean lint out of machines. ED Marra had signs posted in laundry rooms (11x14) and now ordering signs 2'x3' BIG LETTERING – English & Spanish – hoping residents and home health aides will empty lint baskets.

Commissioner Pardasani asked how many signatures were on petition regarding leasing in comparison to number of tenants. ED Marra didn't know number, but can compare it. Chairman Harper said 310 residents and 105 live in this building. ED Marra thought about 50% or half of the residents signed petition. Commissioner Suarez asked about percentage of tenants that attended tenant meetings. ED Marra stated 105 residents attended between 3 buildings – there are about 305 tenants – so 1/3 attended meetings.

ED Marra added residents or their family members are beginning to put cameras in apartments – many people have Xfinity or Fios. The Elms people ask can they install a Ring doorbell on their door. Mr. Marra said yes, and repeated that at next two meetings – if you want to install Ring doorbell, he thinks you can do it without it being plugged in – a battery version; no violation of their lease by doing so.

One tenant said Amazon packages are stolen; holiday decorations are stolen. Tenants feel it is someone from the building, but want to know who it is. She has had 10 packages stolen in 6 months. Commissioner Suarez said Board is trying to measure cost benefit analysis; understand what problems are because of fact tenants are here more than Commissioners. Chairman Harper noted when SHA got first new cameras in years, someone stole flag from flagpole. Tenant answered packages are not delivered to tenant's door – dropped off in lobby or near mailbox.

ED Marra stated UPS “regular” men generally bring package up to apartment and leave there. Amazon people will not if too heavy, i.e. Fiji water, one tenant gets – leave in lobby between doors. Every lobby area where there's a mailbox, there is a camera – Kroll, Towers & The Elms. If something delivered there, office can go back, look at camera and identify a person, because 90% of time, it's person living in the building. When a package is taken, please email ED Marra: when taken, where it was taken from. If taken from in front of your door, super difficult to track that – and notify me within 60 minutes. If done in the lobby, we can track it. Woman was notified today by Amazon that package was in lobby and included a photo of it. Commissioner Suarez explained about cameras – yes, great deterrent, but precise information is needed when delivered; camera pointed in right direction; and someone needs to sit in front of camera and look at it. It is usually Mr. Marra, but sometimes maintenance.

Chairman Harper requested ED Marra get some prices for two cameras on each floor for July's meeting. ED Marra said company upgrading cameras now, he will have them price cameras and also get them to look for location of camera;

is more than 1 per floor necessary. ED Marra didn't realize how much people use stairwell in Towers, and yes, they need to be cleaned better. Commissioner Schlemm asked how many packages per day are delivered to this building; could building have an area where package puts into a locker and person comes to office to retrieve key to that locker, that way it would remove people moving around in apartments; centralize it. Would it require 20 stations or 10 stations? His daughter had packages disappear quickly in Baltimore, so now she uses Amazon Drop-Off/Pick-Up location. ED Marra didn't know number.

Mr. Marra said prior to pandemic Amazon contacted him once, wanting to know if on SHA property they could put these lockers. His reaction back then was no as it's not just for SHA. Amazon also wanted to create their own access key to building; now there would be a new swipe at bottom only for Amazon people – they don't have a key to the building. Amazon has a way that it works only when they get to building; when they leave, no longer working. Issue in using a locker: very conceivable to be done at Kroll & The Elms because of size of their lobby. Here could have outside, enclosed locker where there are grocery carts. Amazon has key to open, but different person everyday. The office does not want to become concierge desk. This would only work for Amazon, not UPS deliveries. ED Marra will go back through emails and contact man about an alternative for them. He will get cost number to see about properly surveilling floors.

From 1986 until middle of 2000's, there was a way for resident to watch who was coming in front door; cameras in each apartment; watch on your TV. When cameras upgraded in 2014, that went away. ED Marra will try and see how residents can have access to this – SHA upgrading cameras. There might be a way with Smart Phone that SHA could allow resident via Wi-Fi camera for front door. Company told ED Marra in 2014, residents would not be able to access any more. Camera not hooked up to the system.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

ED Marra spoke of Operating Reserve Offset Law Suit email; further extension of law suit in which SHA is attempting to get some money back – from 2 administrations ago. Email is self-explanatory.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

ED Marra was contacted by Carl Leppin, Town Building Inspector and Gary Jeffas, Town Administrator in regard to the Authority coordinating inspections for new Section 8 move-ins with the Town of Secaucus required inspections for any apartment turnovers. The Town of Secaucus through two ordinances obligates landlords to have the Town of Secaucus conduct two inspections when you turn over a unit: first the Fire Prevention Department inspects to make sure you have proper smoke detector/carbon monoxide detector. The second inspection is to

get a CCO – Continuing Certificate of Occupancy done through Building Department. This is a landlord obligation. Over the years SHA has reminded and encouraged landlords to get these two inspections. However our new letter now reads that landlords will not receive their first payment, until the Authority receives copies of both certificates from the Town of Secaucus stating that the apartment has passed inspection.

The Authority then drafted a letter which was mailed out Monday of this week to about 250 landlords, who had been part of program for the past five years. Between yesterday and today, ED Marra had spoken or emailed with 45 landlords so far, because most landlords were not aware of these Ordinances. Perhaps they are new to town as owning property; some ignored these ordinances, as I received calls from people living here all their lives, (landlords) who stated they didn't know these existed.

Emailed to Commissioners today; SHA received bids yesterday for milling and paving of 600 County Avenue's parking lot. Company submitting this was ADGM coming in with bid of \$51,800. Lee quickly wrote letter and a new Resolution 2021-24. 3 bids were \$51,800 from ADGM Contractors; \$60,225 from D&L Paving Contractors and \$82,400 from Four Clean-Up. This company was awarded contract for numerous streets and areas in Town of Secaucus. During week of July 5<sup>th</sup> are going to pave Kane Stadium parking lot, which has been a rock parking lot since Mr. Kane was Mayor – going to be paved and lined. Our parking lot will be done at the same time, which is why number was \$51,000 as Lee estimated at about \$65,000.

**RESOLUTION 2021-24**  
**(Resolution Awarding Contract to Mill & Pave the Parking Lot and Entrance**  
**Roadway to 600 County Avenue, Secaucus)**

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus (hereinafter referred to as SHA) has determined that it needs to procure services for the milling and paving of the roadway and parking lot related to 600 County Avenue (Improveduto Towers); and

WHEREAS, SHA has published in the newspaper an invitation to bid; and

WHEREAS, the SHA received bids from three (3) bids on June 23, 2021; and

WHEREAS, on the public opening of the bids A.J.M Contractors Inc. with a bid of \$51,800 was found to be the lowest responsible bidder pursuant to both N.J.S.A. 40A:11-2 and N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4;and

WHEREAS, the bid submitted by A.J.M. Contractors, Inc. has been reviewed by the Habitech Architecture who recommended the contract be awarded to A.J.M. Contractors, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, the bid submitted by A.J.M. Contractors, Inc. has been reviewed and deemed by the SHA to be both responsive and conforming with all requirements set forth by the New Jersey Public Contracts Law, the bid specifications and the invitation to bid,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of the SHA hereby finds that the contract for the above captioned work items as described in the bid specifications and drawings, be awarded to A.J.M. Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$51,800; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners hereby authorize and Direct the Executive Director of the SHA to execute said contract and take any and all necessary administrative actions to implement this Resolution.

Motion to approve Resolution #2021-24 made by Chairman Harper; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Vice-Chairman Schlemm.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Fairman

**ADJOURNMENT AT 7:50 P.M.**

Motion to adjourn made by Vice-Chairman Schlemm; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Mondadori.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Fairman

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez  
Secretary/Transcriber