

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

February 27, 2025

Condensed transcription of taped minutes - Thursday,
February 27, 2025 - The Elms, 777 Fifth Street, Secaucus, New Jersey
Commencing at 7:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL;

Present: Chairman Michael Harper
Commissioner Michael Schlemm
Commissioner Patricia Mondadori
Commissioner Raj Pardasani
Commissioner Richard Fairman
Commissioner John Bujnowski

Excused: Commissioner Vincent Bennett

Also Present: Executive Director Christopher Marra
Stephen J. Natoli, Esq.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

"Adequate notice of this meeting, as required by the Open Public Meetings Act, has been provided by the filing of an Annual 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 14, 2024.

FLAG SALUTE

REMARKS OF CITIZENS

VINCENT - #505 – Vincent showed photographs to Commissioners of how painters left his apartment (ED Marra having already seen them.) There were lamps on the bed, e.g. Painters took things off his bureau, put on bed, painted and left items on bed. Painters should have had more coordination with tenant at that time. They did in other apartments too, but haven't heard back from anyone. Vincent called ED Marra that evening when he got into his apartment. There is paint on his rug. Vincent was told, after maintenance staff tried to clean rug, but it didn't work and if he wanted to have it done, he'd have to pay for it himself. Vincent noted he's been called a troublemaker, but was a Building Manager before he retired. Chairman Harper told Vincent he's always welcome at meetings, to say his peace. Vincent did ask for a smaller apartment, was told that because of his disability, he wouldn't be suited for "that" apartment. ED Marra never said anything about his disability; secondly, you need to put in a request for transfer. SHA transfer policy does nothing to that unit; you get the unit in the condition that it's in. Vincent said he would have accepted that. Today's its being refurbished. ED Marra asked Vincent if he had an actual letter or email

2015 FEBRUARY 27

from Terry Weinbrecht or Angie Oliveros. Vincent has a carbon copy letter. ED MARRA: A transfer works: you have a letter in to SHA, even though there's no list; you say I only want to transfer to The Elms, you're supposed to get the first choice on that unit. However, you get the unit in the condition it is in. In the 2 units that are available, one person lived there a very short time, and one person lived there a very long time. Presumption being you wouldn't want the one who lived there for a very long time. Vincent: I want to stay on the 5th floor. I have both a walker and motorized wheelchair.

VINCENT: Someone took an Amazon Prime credit card out of my drawer and I was notified December 10th. ED MARRA: We didn't start painting at The Elms until after January 1st. That is not on the painter. The condition of your apartment is on the painter, paint on rug is on the painter, fact you weren't offered #516 is on me. VINCENT: I wish someone had come in and instead of saying I was responsible to get rug clean, something was done about it. Discussion about Adam bringing in extractor day after painters followed. CHAIRMAN HARPER: I apologize that was handled wrong; initially on the painter, then on us. If you called to let us know, I wish we helped you straightened that out. Replacing your rug is an administrative decision we have to make, but we'll discuss it. I do apologize that happened to you. I heard nothing but good about the painters before that.

FRAN - #506 – One of the dryers is making an awful noise. I've said something to Adam around Christmas; it's still working but it's going to explode. CHAIRMAN HARPER: Always call the Office, don't just tell Adam. ED MARRA: I've said this for 13 years; sent out email recently as there was an incident where somebody tried to change light in their bathroom and broke bathroom vanity. They stood up on it. Email said: **You don't make repairs on yourself and call into the Office when something is wrong.** This isn't on Adam; you can't ask the maintenance man, Hey, can you do this for me? He's going to forget! Whereas, if you send it to the Office, we have a system – it gets put in, they get sent a Work Order to fix whatever wherever, and then if that's still open 2 days later, we go back and say did you do this – maybe they forget to close it, sometimes they just haven't done it. We will make sure that Zebco is called and see if they can come Monday to look at dryer.

FRAN: My other thing is: this door (indicating door in Community Room leading to grassy area) – when you go out, you cannot get back in. It's bolted. ED MARRA: That was supposed to be fixed a month ago; it was fixed a month ago, so I don't know when that recently started. When did it get bolted you can't get out?

FRAN: New lights – south end is very well lit; north end isn't. ED MARRA: This is first time I've heard about this door. How long has it been bolted shut? FRAN: December. ED MARRA: Today is February 27th – 60 days have gone by, but no one has called the Office to tell them that that door is not able to be opened. Telling Adam isn't going to get it fixed.

FRAN: How long do the lights stay on in the stairwell? Because if you pass the sensor in the stairwell, does that go out before you get to the bottom? ED MARRA: It doesn't when I go up and down the stairs the past several weeks and it hasn't gone out. If you're going on the 5th floor and the lights go on as you're walking down, they stay on. I do not know the amount of time they go on. They're on for longer than 10 seconds. FRAN: I didn't want to try it.

ED MARRA: Some lights still need to be changed in the building. They put up a device, but it wasn't working correctly; 6 lights have to be changed – mostly ones in-between people's apartments where they're not light enough.

VINCENT - #505 – There is someone removing packages on 5th floor. They are using stairwell. I won't tell you who it is. I'll let you figure it out. ED MARRA: No, actually, if you know who it is, you're supposed to report it. VINCENT: Adam, the kid. ED MARRA: Okay.

ED MARRA: First question was about the lights, then the door. Second question was do lights stay on as you're walking down the stairwell. Third was the dryer. VINCENT: Lights in the bathroom – if they turned fixture upside down, they should be down the other way it would be easier for tenants to change those lights instead of having to pay \$9 each. ED MARRA: Those light fixtures have been that way 8 years. Eight years ago we renovated those bathrooms.

JOYCE - #206 – How are the smoke detectors working? ED MARRA: I do not know the answer to that yet; I assume you still smell smoke? Those items were put in everybody's apartment. I have had a few things detected, not a lot; certainly not where I thought I was going to find them. I am waiting to hear if people still smell smoke. My presumption is you've stopped calling me because you felt it was a waste of time to call me about smokers. I'm still assuming people are smoking, still assuming it hasn't picked it up yet. Mostly what I'm getting is – I've gotten maybe 5 where it says smoking is occurring. I won't do anything off of 1; it has to be a number of them in that unit. Those devices were specifically numbered for each unit. On one occasion it said there was smoking in a unit where both Adam and I knew nobody smoked there. We didn't think it was a visitor. It was checked as to whether that device had right number on it. As of right now, I have no report on it. My question is: do people still smell cigarette smoke? Several answered: YES. ED MARRA: I was informed the other day there are 500 cigarette butts in the rocks out front. Who is doing that? Container to put butts into is right there, and we clean it out. It's a never ending problem.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes of January meeting made by Commissioner Bujnowski; 2nd by Commissioner Mondadori.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Excused: Bennett

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS – JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2025

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Pardasani; 2nd by Commissioner Bujnowski.

COMMISSIONER FAIRMAN: Vanore Electric? ED MARRA: People who did electric work at The Elms.

COMMISSIONER PARDASANI: Variable Annuity Life in RAD management? ED MARRA: Variable annuity life is payment we made when people are contributing to 403B. That payment is not an expense; it is a payment that we're making based upon people's contribution to their 403B.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Excused: Bennett

FINANCE COMMITTEE

1. HUD sent a questionnaire; each year at beginning of fiscal year a memo is sent out stating how much we're contributing to "**Annual Deposit for Replacement Reserve**" –

Account 4110. This is where we're supposed to put money away for capital improvements. It is the IDRR Money Market account. At one point we were contributing small amounts, but over the years, especially last 3, we've contributed more -- \$150K was the highest, done on 4/1/2024 and Bill Ketchen and I agree we will contribute \$150K again. Sometimes we pay for capital improvements out of Operating Funds. A bigger expense this year might be when we replace 3 roofs at Rocco Towers; we'll pay for that out of IDRR account. Money put aside each year for capital improvements to SHA, need to build that up over 20 years so you can continue to make capital improvements.

2. Second is DCA sent us an email approving our 2025 budget.
3. Third, is monthly account balances. If you look at 131 – TD Bank - \$33,430 in account. If you look on the back, we have a TD account maturing in a month @ 5% with \$224,000, putting us over \$250,000 FDIC number. Next week I will renew 6-month CD, but probably not at 5%. I'll take money out of account with \$33,000, \$20K, and put it into the IDRR Money Market account so we go back below \$250K. We have CDs all maturing this year starting in March, April, March 26th and a few in July. We'll probably keep them in those banks, renew them, and see what TD's offering next week.

Regular TD account is where we deposit laundry money each month.

POLICY COMMITTEE

We are working on HOTMA and NSPIRE and working on a 5-year annual plan, having a public hearing May 22nd when we return to The Elms. I'm working with Nelrod, it's required by HUD to do this each year. You all have a calendar for that.

There is a fairly good chance there won't be any HOTMA or NSPIRE meaning that we'll continue to use what's called Housing Quality Standards to do inspections and that HOTMA regulation will not actually take place. Scott Turner is Secretary for HUD, and talking about cutting staff at HUD in half. Luckily, we are the bread and butter housing authority. Getting our HAP payments and our Admin payments each month. They are very unlikely to touch because there are many landlords receiving HAP payments, not just housing authority. These are private sector landlords. Typical for us in Hudson County is applied housing. SHA has voucher attached to the unit; paid money each month by HUD for those units – subsidizing people who live there. It is unlikely that those monies will be touched. Hopefully, we can continue under the radar. HUD has spent money on NSPIRE and not yet running; but they've already spent a lot of money.

There's been some discussion about what happens if you're an undocumented person in USA. You're not eligible for Section 8. You must be a permanent resident or a citizen. "A person with a Housing Choice Voucher Program or if they were to reside in any of the 3 properties owned by the Housing Authority must provide documentation that includes a birth certificate or a permanent resident card (previously called a Green Card). A permanent resident card which has an identification number on it has to get run through a Federal Government Program called SAVE. The SAVE is an online service for registered Federal, State and Territorial tribal and local government agencies to verify immigration status and naturalization acquired U.S. citizenship of applicants seeking benefits or licenses." This same rule applies if you are going for affordable housing. You have to have a permanent resident card or you have to have citizenship. There is an exception to this: we have families

specifically with a voucher in which mother is citizen – there is one where mother and father have work visas. A work visa has to be renewed every single year, yet they had 3 children in the USA, who are all American citizens. In their case, they get subsidized at 60% of subsidy. One was a scholarship winner through New Jersey NARUC and went to Penn State. HUD refers to it as a “mixed family”.

We have a few other families in which a spouse – one is a citizen, they have children who are all citizens, but other spouse is undocumented, possibly no documentation, maybe not even a work visa. They get subsidized – 4 people subsidized at 75% of subsidy. Answer to question: in Secaucus or anywhere, you cannot get a voucher if you come in as an undocumented person in USA.

The Elms lighting and interior painting – we walked through the property. One thing I can say is: this was a very dark place and much brighter now. Hopefully, in a year or so we will be able to change all flooring in this building from lobby to 6th floor. No longer have rugs of any shape, but it won't happen for at least 18 months or so; not including apartments at this point.

In March, we will go out to bid to change 3 roofs at Rocco Towers. One is under patio, same roof since 1986 and another roof right above patio, where the condenser unit is also from 1986, both leak horrendously. Big question is what to do with patio, most likely keep it out there. Just a matter of using same pavers or do something else. Lee Mestres will have meeting with me, Joe Junowitz, Stefan Torres – to tell us what he has planned. Hoping that project can be started by August. Depending upon how much that costs, we'll see how many more projects we can do during course of 2025.

At the end is Housing Choice Voucher Program – Where it stands as of right now, we're a few vouchers over what we're allotted, but we're working with some other housing authorities who are going to absorb some of our port-outs and we had a few people come off the program. I assume by April 1st, we'll be back to 254.

CHAIRMAN HARPER: Last month the Board regretfully accepted the resignation of Commissioner Suarez. He's been on our Board a number of years and has been appointed by the Mayor to the Planning Board, so resigned here to serve on that one. We swore in our new Commissioner, Commissioner Vincent Bennett. He already had something scheduled for this evening, but will meet him in May.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS – nothing at this time

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

DIANE - #502 – (Difficult to hear) She asked about cleaning light bulbs. ED MARRA: Only maintenance should change the bulbs. I'm not going to send men into 100 apartments to clean 4 bulbs. We'll figure out some way to clean them.

RESIDENT - #606 – Curious about how much money has been saved since new windows were installed? ED MARRA: I shared with Commissioners back in December the bill and will have it again in March. There has been a decrease, but I wanted to see March bill.

A woman mentioned a missing ceiling tile in kitchen of Community Room. ED Marra will check it out.

RESIDENT - #206 - Woman mentioned a bad draft somewhere (inaudible) but the cover she has does not fit.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Schlemm; 2nd by Commissioner Mondadori.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Excused: Bennett

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez
Secretary/Transcriber