

Stonington Housing Authority
Edythe K. Richmond Homes Community Building
Regular Meeting
February 14, 2019
Minutes

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Julie Savin called the regular meeting of the Stonington Housing Authority to order at 4:31 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Those in attendance were Chair Julie Savin, Vice Chair Kate Careb, Commissioner Beth Leamon, Resident Commissioner Megan Falcone, Executive Director Phylcia Adams, and Becky Champlin. Commissioner Kevin Beverly arrived at 4:40 p.m. Chair Savin exited the meeting at 5:31 p.m.

MINUTES:

A motion was made by Commissioner Leamon and seconded by Vice Chair Careb to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2019 regular meeting. Motion passed 4-0-0.

READING OF THE TREASURER'S REPORT:

Commissioner Leamon presented the Treasurer's report for January 31, 2019 showing a balance of \$37,188.75 in the Savings Institute checking account; \$3,471.27 in the Savings Institute Pet account; for a total in all Savings Institute accounts of \$40,660.02. A total of \$388,168.68 for savings and investments and \$134.41 in petty cash. The total of all savings and checking assets is \$428,963.11.

BILLS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Savings Institute CD matures on 2/27/2019: Chair Savin asked ED Adams what the plan is on this. ED Adams replied the plan is to roll over \$9,055.00 into another CD and to hold the other \$90,000.00 in our current money market account in case we need to use that money for our heat pump replacement project.
2. CT Fair Housing Center requested a copy of our affirmative fair marketing housing plan and tenant selection policy.

MAINTENANCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT REPORT:

1. One snow event, clearing and salting sidewalks, etc.
 2. LG cleaning schedule continued. 58 apartments completed. Two scheduled.
 3. Apartment 17-3 turnover completed.
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4. Upcoming projects for February: Turnover apartments 2-4, 3-1 & 7-3. Inspect and clean exterior lighting.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Operations:

1. Waitlist closed on January 14. We've received 35 applications. 27 people added to the waitlist. Total on waitlist is 34.
2. Two tenants vacated in January; two existing tenants transferred units; and 2 applicants move in this week.
3. Received proposal for Real Estate Development Consultant from TAG Associates.
4. Greater Stonington Realty Corporation's next board meeting is Thursday, March 14 at 5:30pm.
5. Annual tenant recertification in progress; about 1/3 have been completed. Due date for completion is 3/31/19.
6. The resident participation plan outlines how the Authority will communicate any change to the community to the residents. The resident participation plan was approved and adopted in 2014. There are no recommendations to make any changes.
7. The Tenant Selection Plan outlines how the Authority manages the waitlist and the approval and disapproval standards for admission. The updated draft includes specifics on criminal and credit history.

Financial:

1. Completed Housing Tax Credit Contribution grant application. Requested funds to replace mini split heat pumps, replace damaged concrete, and other energy efficiency measures including air sealing, light bulb replacement, and new lighting fixtures.
2. Applied for grant from Chamber of Commerce Eastern CT for funds to assist with hiring a part time Resident Service Coordinator. Will also apply for a grant from Pfizer to help with this program.
3. Budget approved by CHFA.

Maintenance:

1. Unit inspections will be completed later this year. Will hire a third-party to complete inspections.
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REPORT OF THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER:

Updates:

1. January was a rather quiet month. We had the resident birthdays on January 17th. We had a handful of residents and all had a nice time.
2. Valentine's Luncheon will be held on Friday, February 15th at 12 noon. We expect to have a really good turnout. There will be soups and residents will be able to make their own sandwiches.
3. Kate Rotella will be coming to the EKR community hall on Saturday, February 16th at 9:30 for coffee & donuts. A sign-up sheet is on the corkboard. Please sign up if you plan to attend.
4. Master Gardeners will be here on Tuesday, February 19th at 2:00pm to speak with residents about the raised garden beds for future planting.
5. February resident birthdays will be held on Thursday, February 21st, at 1:00pm.

January Events:

- 1/17/2019: Resident Birthdays 1:00

February Events:

- 2/15/2019: Valentine's Luncheon 12:00pm
- 2/16/2019: Coffee with Kate Rotella 9:30-10:30am
- 2/19/2019: Master Gardener 2:00pm
- 2/21/2019: Resident February Birthdays 1:00pm

OLD BUSINESS:

EKR Expansion Phase III: ED Adams stated we have hired an architect and engineer to come up with plans on how we can add more units to our existing site. She also stated we are also looking at ways we can improve on our existing units as well.

Housing Tax Credit Contribution Program Grant Application: As discussed during ED Adam's report.

NEW BUSINESS:

Development Consultant: As discussed in ED Adam's report.

Tenant Selection Plan: As discussed in ED Adam's report.

Resident Participation Plan: As discussed in ED Adam's report.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Resident Denise Parzych stated, "These are our neighbors who bought their houses for privacy."

Neighbor Elaine Smith, of 22 Connecticut Avenue commented on the issue of parking on their street. She stated some of EKR residents & their guests continually park on Connecticut Avenue and block mail boxes and have turned it into a one way street. She claimed if we add another street it is going to make it worse. She said since we changed EKR to a no smoking facility resident's stand on their street and smoke and this brings down the value of their property and would be a selling detriment if they should ever try to sell their home.

Elaine Smith also spoke about the pine trees on Connecticut Avenue and the fact that the pine needles collect at the bottom of the street and clog up the drains. They get flooding in the winter time and snow and ice due to these pine needles. She said the cul-de-sac becomes an ice rink. Chair Savin stated she was hearing about the parking issue on that street for the first time. Savin also stated we would be working in conjunction with the Town of Stonington regarding the pine trees. SHA only owns one tree on that street which is dead. The Town owns the rest of the trees and they are supposed to take those trees down as well according to Savin. SHA will pay to have our one tree taken down that is on that property and the Town will pay for the rest of the trees to come down.

Chair Savin stated the project includes more parking for additional residents and units.

Chair Savin stated she needs to speak to the Town to see if there are any restrictions in place regarding parking on Connecticut Avenue. If not, she'll find out what kind of restrictions can be put into place. Elaine Smith stated that one of our residents also parks their motorcycle on Connecticut Avenue and she did not feel that was safe and had spoken to that resident about it.

A neighbor stated that during one snow event, a resident of SHA who consistently parked in front of her mailbox was snowed in due to the plow truck having to make a wide berth around that person's vehicle. This neighbor called the police and they stated there was nothing they could do.

Chair Savin assured neighbors that SHA is discussing any concept they have with the fire marshal and Chief of Police so that they are addressing any kind of safety issue & access by emergency vehicles. She stated this is all in concert with Town officials.

Mike Spellman of 160 West Broad Street asked how many units SHA is looking to put in and how many stories. Chair Savin replied that one development is looking at 45 units with no more than 2 ½ stories high. Spellman asked Savin if she had looked into anything that would improve the quality of life for the people who already live at SHA. Savin assured him that SHA is constantly looking for ways to improve the community. She stated that some of the units with the flawed envelopes would come down & be replaced with the new building.

Resident Denise Parzych stated she was upset that neighbors hadn't even been informed yet about the project. Savin stated there was nothing to inform yet and that they are still in the feasibility stage and SHA doesn't even have financing for the project yet. She said when they do have something to propose, ED Adams had already spoken with Town and told them the plan is to hold a neighborhood meeting.

Spellman asked Savin if the project is in concert with the plan of conservation and development with the Town of Stonington. Savin replied yes. He asked where it says all of the affordable housing is to be clustered all within a ¼ mile radius in Pawcatuck. Savin stated all she could speak to is this project is for the elderly and disabled & that is their mission. Savin also stated that affordable housing development is included in the POCD. She said they are already working with a plan that the Fire Marshall is in support of. Spellman spoke of his concern about getting a fire truck in with this plan. Savin said until we have a plan in place, they have to secure the funding first and they will take at least 2 years. Savin stated they had looked at other pieces of property but there is enough room on the SHA property to provide more units and that we have 30 something people on our waitlist. She stated we lose residents because their mobility decreases & a building that has elevator service with a common area that they don't have to go outside into the elements & manage long walkways will keep them in their community longer. They're not quite ready for a nursing home or nursing care but want to stay with their friends and in the community that they're used to & it would be a very wonderful thing for us to be able to have an age in place concept where we can get people who can't manage sidewalks anymore, who potentially need a facility where they can use a wheelchair. Savin said this is about a year and a half away from even knowing if they can even get the funding in place. She said this something they have been pursuing for about 5 years openly on the Agenda and on the Minutes. She stated the Board has charged the current Executive Director to find a way where we can meet the needs of the folks who currently live here & the 30 something people who are on the wait list. Savin stated all units are habitable & a few of the units do have mold issues. SHA has spent a tremendous amount of money on mold remediation for those units to stay on top of it.

Savin stated ED Adams already held a resident meeting to inform residents of the project. She said once we have a plan in place we will also have several neighborhood meetings.

Susan Jones of 53 Palmer Street expressed concern because SHA owns Winthrop Avenue Extension and Fellow Street Extension and that the rumor is SHA will continue one of those roads into to West Broad Street near the fish market. Savin stated we have no desire to go out to Rte. 1 whatsoever. Jones asked if there would have to be an access road with more units to allow a fire truck to get in. Savin said an access road would be internally on SHA property and ED Adams stated it would go from Winthrop to Connecticut Avenue. Adams stated Connecticut Avenue will stay a dead end with a cul-de-sac.

Robert Wilcox of 18 Connecticut Avenue stated privacy was the reason he chose that location to build their house and was a spot where his children could play and didn't have to worry about traffic.

Susan Jones asked where exactly the new building would go. Savin & Adams explained on the backside of the property where the two 2 story buildings 11 & 12 are and then building 14. All of those buildings would be demolished. Jones asked if there was anything else being done on the other side of the property. Savin said there is potentially going to be an 8 unit building on the corner near the garage, looking at the garage to the right.

Jacob Orłowski of 17 Courtland Street stated he also bought his house for the private back yard and that his entire easement was take away when the Town paved the road on the side of his property. He expressed concern that now SHA may be cutting into the back of his property and taking away all

of the privacy of his back yard. He said his yard floods every time it rains since the Town paved due to the change in the grade of the property from paving. He stated adding another building with additional pavement and parking areas now will even increase the amount of flooding in his back yard and decrease the value of his home. He said this will also increase the load on the city sewer system. He stated there is supposed to be a 5 foot easement and said there would be legal issues to deal with if they are going to take part of his property away for this project. Savin said there is no way SHA is even contemplating taking away anyone's land nor is that in our power.

Susan Jones expressed concern regarding proper drainage because SHA was actually built on wetlands. A discussion ensued regarding a part of a road that the Town owned but required SHA to take. Savin asked resident Ruth Nolder if she had any knowledge on it. Nolder stated when she was on the Board at that time and SHA asked the Town to take back Fellows Street. She said the Town agreed to take it back but when the records were entered it was done wrong. She said the exchange was that SHA would own the parking lot and we were supposed to swap. Vice Chair Careb said SHA could look into the Town's records to see what happened and how it was recorded.

Denise Parzych brought up the mold issue in her apartment and Chair Savin stated that we cleaned up the mold issue and she was completely happy with the results. Savin stated there were several events that have happened over the last 12 months but was not inclined to speak about resident specific issues. Savin said we have habitable units and we are very proud of that. She said we have some that are dated and not up to our satisfaction and we would like to replace them with better technology and that's what we're going to do.

Susan Jones asked Savin why those who are on our waitlist can't be accommodated at another facility. Savin told Susan we open the waitlist and we take those that apply. Savin said if applicants ask for referrals we do refer them to other facilities. Susan asked if the Board could appreciate their stance on this project to also keep the neighbors happy and wanting to stay living in this neighborhood as well as SHA residents. Chair Savin stated that SHA is taking all of their names and addresses and that we were taking all of their comments and it was being recorded as well as being added to the Minutes. Savin stated we would take all of these comments into consideration for sure. Jones asked if SHA could hold the neighborhood meetings after 6:30pm for those who work. Savin replied yes we would accommodate.

Commissioner Leamon stated SHA should have some of the Board of Selectmen present at the neighborhood meetings to address questions and concerns by neighbors.

One neighbor commented as to whether the new project would include families. Chair Savin and Vice Chair Careb said no, that SHA was originally for the elderly then became elderly and disabled. The new project would continue to serve the same population.

Mike Spellman stated he shouldn't have had to hear about this project through hearsay at the firehouse when he asked what's been going on. He expressed his disappointment at certain Selectmen. He said that was not SHA's Board fault at all. He said he knows the Board is trying to do the right thing by the community. He said he feels the Board of Selectmen should get this information out to the public to keep people informed. Chair Savin replied to Spellman that we want

to hear his input and that we need to expand, to what degree we do and how we do it and that has to be in concert with you all and we have no problem with that. A further discussion ensued as to other properties in the Stonington, Mystic, Ledyard areas for possible housing development. Commissioner Leamon stated she does see a lot of housing going up in the Pawcatuck area and that surprises her. But she said this project is different because we do have the need. She stated she grew up here and if we can add some more units to take care of the demand then she wants to be able to do it. Leamon said it will take into account drainage, parking & fire safety and that it has to. She stated the Board has not yet voted on the plans from the architect and that it is really still in the planning stage and they do want more input from the residents and they will have more neighborhood meetings. She said we hear you and we want to be good neighbors.

Charles Watson of 25 Winthrop Extension asked if there had been a traffic study done because he lives on a dead end street. ED Adams replied yes there will be a traffic study.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Commissioner Leamon and seconded by Resident Commissioner Falcone to adjourn the meeting at 5:34 p.m. Motion passed 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Beverly', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kevin Beverly, Secretary