

Stonington Housing Authority  
Edythe K. Richmond Homes  
Community Building  
June 9, 2016  
Minutes

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Tom Hyland called the regular meeting of the Stonington Housing to order at 4:01 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

Those in attendance were Chairman Tom Hyland, Vice Chair Julie Savin, Commissioner Kate Careb, Commissioner Beth Leamon, Resident Commissioner Janice Bogue, Executive Director Elaine Schmidt, Becky Champlin, and Ron Normand.

**MINUTES:**

A motion was made by Chair Hyland and seconded by Commissioner Savin to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2016 meeting with amendments. Motion passed 5-0-0.

**READING OF THE TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Commissioner Leamon presented the Treasurer's report for May 31, 2016 showing a balance of \$2,977.50 in the Citizen's Pet account, a balance of \$20.00 in the Chelsea Groton Pet account, a restricted cash special deposit of \$500.00 and \$16,748.86 in the Citizen's checking accounts, with a total in all Citizens' of \$17,248.86 and Chelsea Groton's checking account of \$9,887.94 for a total of \$30,154.30 in all checking accounts. With regard to savings and investments; a total of \$475,700.52, \$114.36 in petty cash bring the grand total of all savings and checking assets to \$500,969.18.

**BILLS AND COMMUNICATIONS:** The following communications were received and read by Chair Thomas Hyland.

**DATE:** May 22, 2016

**TO:** Town of Stonington EKR Authority

**FROM:** Concerned Residents

**RE:** "No Dogs Allowed" policy

There has been a confusing set of rules as well as several incidents concerning dogs and agency regulations for them at the Town's Senior housing complex. Several of these incidents involve the town's manager at the facility.

Several months ago, the manager instituted a "No Dog Policy." Signs were posted and neighbors were notified that they would be required to keep their dogs away from the facility. Those notified believed that these rules and regulations were meant to specify that NO dogs would be allowed on the property, period.

Sometime later, the manager began bringing her own dog to work with her which seemed to violate the very policy she herself had instituted. To further complicate matters, the dog has not been properly handled while on the property and staff time has been used to walk it.

Additionally, there have been several incidents where the dog has been left alone and, as a result, urinated on the carpeting in the Community Room, deposited feces on the grounds and harassed residents' cats on their home turf. The cats are less than thrilled.

While each incident on its own is relatively minor, the cumulative effect has left several residents fearful. Some are nervous they could trip over the dog since he is so often unattended and, unfortunately, acts like a dog! Additionally, soiling the carpet and other areas is beginning to take a toll, resulting in unsanitary conditions in the common areas. This is one of the reasons why the "No Dogs Allowed" policy was originally put in place.

Concerned residents are therefore asking that the manager abide by the rules that were set for ALL to follow and cease bringing her dog to work. It is becoming a serious matter and should be taken care of immediately.

Names of those filing this request are being withheld as these residents are afraid that there will be retribution. If elderly and disabled residents are fearful while living in a facility that purports to serve them are an additional set of issues that may need addressed.

The "No Dogs Allowed" policy needs to be discussed and resolved by the Board. Time is of the essence.

In response to the letter referenced No Dogs Allowed Policy, Commissioner Savin stated that she has been on the Board the longest of all the Commissioners. She remembered a discussion at a previous meeting regarding having dogs visit. She said, "Residents were allowed to have dog visitors and there was never a problem."

Chairman Hyland talked about the issues regarding ED Schmidt's personal dog. The Board of Commissioners agreed that since ED Schmidt's dog is a service dog it can be on the property. Several residents at the meeting who have been walking the dog have agreed to continue doing so. Chairman Hyland also stated that the anonymous senders of the Communication should come forward so the Board of Commissioners can respond more appropriately to their concerns.

Another communication was received by Chair Hyland via telephone. A conversation was between an SHA neighbor, Tom Wholean, and Chair Hyland in regards to being able to walk on SHA property along with his dog and his child on his bicycle. Chair Hyland suggested Mr. Wholean come to the June 9<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting or to set up a meeting with him and ED Schmidt to resolve this matter.

#### REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

1. ED Schmidt reported she did get a letter of commitment from Eversource.
2. Larry Wagner dropped off the bid package on June 2<sup>nd</sup> for Ron and me to make a final review of the documents and specifications before the project goes out to bid. We are all getting very anxious to get the project out to bid. It seems like a very long process to move it along.
3. We held a Resident Meeting on May 24<sup>th</sup> after the Memorial Day picnic. We had 36 residents attend. Ron and I prepared a long agenda and covered areas including requesting volunteers for each of the apartment styles for the contractors to view at the pre-bid meeting, preparing for the construction, timeframe for each apartment and entire

- project timeframe, parking, cat temporary relocation and what we anticipate the process will be, the notice time, assistance with packing valuable items, storage in the garage that will be available, the work that will be done and there was a great dialog of questions and discussion. We spoke about the hours the residents would need to be out of their apartment while the contractors were working and SHA will provide breakfast and lunch for those whose apartments were being worked on. We will continue to hold meetings as we get more information so residents will be continually be informed. Ruth Nolder and Becky made copious notes that were then made available to residents who did not attend.
4. The auditors made their first site visit and met with Sharon Drago, Becky and myself. We provided several documents for their review. They are scheduling another visit by mid-June. They anticipate they will be complete before the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline but would not be ready for this meeting. Chair Hyland has recommended we request a one month extension so Maletta & Co, CPA can review the audit with the Board at the July meeting and then submit it to CHFA with any Board comments. The extension request has been approved by CHFA.
  5. I am working with staff at CHFA concerning the possible increase in rent for new residents. We will be sending notices out to our residents and qualified applicants on our waiting list of the possible rent increase. We have had a substantial decrease in rental income this past year due to changes in residents.
  6. Vice Chair Savin and I attended a workshop in Hartford on Asset Management. It was an excellent presentation and will be beneficial for our future development.
  7. I prepared and sent a response to CHFA on the April 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Site Observation for areas that they required follow up information on. Ron has been getting prices for the replacement of the brick patio areas that have sunken. All other work noted has been taken care of.
  8. We have been working with Chelsea Groton Bank to get the accounts turned over. We received our new Debit Card and Becky has been making all the deposits at Chelsea. Sharon reviewed the outstanding checks at Citizens and we will leave enough money to cover those plus some additional funds until we are sure all checks are cleared and then we will close out the account. Checks are being prepared for this meeting to move the Jumbo Money Market account and the majority of the balance in the checking along with the Pet Deposit account so we can deposit those funds on the 10<sup>th</sup> at Chelsea. After payroll was done this week I needed to transfer the payroll over to Chelsea along with our Netflix and GoDaddy accounts that are automatic. We are in the process of setting up the Greater Stonington Realty checking account also.
  9. We had an incredible Memorial Day celebration on May 24<sup>th</sup>. Several residents made some delicious salads and desserts and yes, I did baked beans again. There were an array of desserts and we provided the hot dogs, hamburgers and cheeseburgers. Ron was Chief Cook. Some residents gave a small financial contribution, in lieu of cooking, so the net cost to SHA was minimal for the party. We had 29 residents who attended. A few that signed up were not able to attend but it was a fun filled afternoon with lots of chatter. Joan Driscoll said grace and the 2 new residents were introduced by Ruth Nolder followed

by a sing-a-long of some patriotic songs. Ruth Nolder, Patty Piccolo and Paul Briggs led the group in song.

10. I went to Hunts Brook Farm on May 21<sup>st</sup> for their annual organic vegetable plant sale and purchased 9 tomato plants and 3 pepper plants for the community garden. Joan Driscoll, Vera Shaw, Megan Falcone and Ruth Nolder did the planning. We also got seeds for radishes, green beans and cucumbers. We have 4 male resident volunteers to water the gardens and Ruth Nolder has prepared a schedule and distributed copies to the volunteers and posted copies in the office and community room.
11. On May 11<sup>th</sup> Joan Driscoll, Megan Falcone, Vera Shaw, Ruth Nolder and myself planted the flower boxes. Ron set up saw horses and old interior doors as tables so we didn't have to bend over to fill the planters. It went very well and the flowers are doing beautifully. Many of the residents have complimented how lovely they look.
12. We had a great turnout for the monthly birthday party. Approximately 14 residents attended and celebrated in song and enjoyed the birthday cake.
13. I attended a meeting at Stonington Arms with several other local service providers. Through Human Services and the Rotary they are collecting items for seniors to make baskets that can be delivered to residents who have had an illness, loss or lonely to perk them up. There is no financial income requirement for the recipient, just a good will gesture. If you know of a senior who is in need of a basket, please contact either Carol Umphlett or Leanne Theodore. They are very discreet and have volunteers who will deliver. So far, 2 residents at SHA have received baskets.
14. Becky has prepared the June monthly calendar that has been delivered to all the residents and the wall calendar has been updated with the new and reoccurring events. During this past month there has been a lot of activity surrounding Bingo, Yahtzee, Adult Coloring, Scrabble, and Chair Exercise. The groups continue to increase. Several residents come in daily to read the newspaper. It's good to see the inclusion and comradery of the residents.
15. We have one vacant unit effective June 1<sup>st</sup> due to the tragic accident of one resident. Becky has contacted the next person on the waiting list who found another apartment. Becky is contacting the next person on the list.
16. As soon as the audit is complete Becky is going to begin to clean out the files that are overstuffed so we can put the older records into storage and have more current data available.
17. Fire Chief Kevin Burns notified me that the problems with Building 9 fire panel are reoccurring and asked that we provide funding soon so he can have the equipment changed.
18. Ron has provided the following information on the Maintenance status for mid-May to date:
  - Numerous work orders were handled during this period. Copies on file.
  - Arranged for Generac generator diagnostics and repair.
  - Repaired/installed numerous screens.

- Continuous grounds work, compost, flower beds, etc.
- Arranged for Community Room exterior door diagnostics and repair.
- Arranged for estimates and walk-throughs with contractors for replacement/repair of resident cement/brick pad entrances.
- Was head chef at the resident Memorial Day celebration.
- Presented info at the "Resident Meeting on Renovations" on a number of topics relating to the pending construction project.
- Fence line area immediately behind garage cleared of overgrowth at the request of private resident on Courtland Dr.
- Apt 12-3 under renovation.
- Grounds inspected daily and cleared of trash and debris.

Ongoing projects for summer 2016:

- Remove roof moss buildup on some of the buildings.
- Seal leaking gutters on all bldgs.
- Remove mold from buildings needing it.
- Repair broken fencing on outside storage enclosures.
- Install drainage system behind bldg. 2.
- Scrape and paint benches.
- Cleanout all paths leading to drainage outlets.
- Repaint all parking lot lines.

19. The following financial reports:
- Cash Balances
  - Variance Report
  - Year to Date Budget vs Actual
  - Bank Reconciliations
  - Capital Improvements

REPORT OF THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER:

Memorial Day Picnic: 5/24/2016: Thanks to the Board for the hamburgers, cheeseburgers and hot dogs. Thanks to all the staff and residents who brought food, donated money and helped set up the community room and cleaned up afterwards.

There is still enthusiasm for games being played weekly: Bingo, Yahtzee and Scrabble.

We had a celebration for Blanche Zimmerman's birthday at her home. We invited people who have known her for years. Thanks to Ruth Nolder for putting it together.

PEOPLE SPOTTED THIS MONTH: (Thank you for helping out)

Anne Nardone: Working with the library/books

Irene Moore: Watering indoor plants. Donated a new rocking chair seat cushion for the community room. It is even color coordinated with the walls!

Vera Shaw, Joan Driscoll, Megan Falcone & Ruth Nolder: Planted flower boxes and the vegetables in the raised garden beds (including seeds).

Kevin Pettinari: Has been trimming bushes & painted the retaining wall white

Bruce Pettinari & others: Watering vegetable garden and flowers

#### NEW BUSINESS:

- Possible base rent increase for new residents: CHFA approved an increase in the base rent for new residents. New residents in buildings 1-12 will pay a base rent of \$250.00. New residents in buildings 14-17 will pay a base rent of \$280.00. This increase will take effect September 1, 2016. Existing residents paying less than \$250.00 a month will experience a graduated increase over the two year period beginning May 1, 2017.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

- 2016 HTCCP Update: As noted in ED Schmidt's report
- 2015 CDBG Small Cities Grant: As noted in ED Schmidt's report
- Fellows Street Extension: Commissioner Leamon said, "The road has been subdivided. The owner of the property in question already has rights. He needs to talk to his lawyer and then come back to the Board of Commissioners."

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

- Ruth Nolder stated that in regards to the Communication about the dogs on the property she experienced a week ago an incident regarding a neighbor's dog. Ruth had driven to building 9 to pick up a resident. The neighbor's large dog ran to her car and attempted to get inside the car. Ruth stood still and waited for the neighbor to get control of his dog. She was concerned since she was picking up a frail elderly resident.
- Ruth Nolder also stated the following: On Thursday May 26, 2016, I was sitting outside with another resident having tea. A gentleman came running down the path from Buildings 11 & 12 with a jogging stroller. I stopped him and I politely said, "Sir, when you entered our property there was a sign that Private Property, No Trespassing." He said, "Really?" I responded, "Really, you're running through our back yards." He said, "It's only a baby." I said, "Thank you for respecting our privacy."

Ruth Nolder stated that we absolutely want to be good neighbors. But the safety of our elderly residents has to come first. We have 21 residents who use walkers, 5 residents who are over 90 years old, and 10 residents who have either partial or complete hearing loss. This isn't about being a good neighbor or not being a good neighbor. This is about safety. When neighbors drive in and dump their garbage, we don't write down their license plate number and call the police. Last summer, on several occasions, a black VW Jetta with young adults parked in our parking lot across from Building 15. They were drinking alcohol. We know the car belongs to a neighbor.

We didn't call the police. We aren't trying to cause our neighbors problems. Our neighbors act like, just because we're poor, we have no rights. We need to come to some type of understanding before one of our residents is seriously injured.

- Irene Moore spoke about observing a woman walking her 2 dogs and another neighbor walking his German Shepherd through our parking lot. They were doing a tug of war with each other trying to control the dogs. She told them that this was private property and the man's response was that he could walk there because tax payers paid for the road, so he had a right to be on the property. She also mentioned another incident about a young boy who was riding his bike through the parking lot in between the cars and almost running into a car.
- Rose Shortt, one of our more senior residents, talked about being accosted by a woman neighbor who was angry because Rose asked her son not to ride his bike on the property. This frightened Rose.
- Joan Driscoll thanked the Board and ED Schmidt for their wonderful support since they have taken over SHA. Things are so much better and more residents are coming to the Community Center. As a result she has made the decision to stay living here.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion made by Chair Hyland and Seconded by Commissioner Leamon at 5:09 p.m. The motion carried 4-0-0. Commissioner Savin had to leave prior to the adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kate Careb". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Kate Careb, Secretary