

Brookline Housing Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 9, 2009
90 Longwood Avenue
4:30 PM

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Trietsch at 4:35 PM. Those present included Ms. Dugan, Mr. Jacobs, and Ms. Berman.

Mr. Trietsch reported that the BHA Thanksgiving dinner for residents was a great event. Mr. Cloonan added that the number of attendees was down slightly from previous years. Approximately 50 sit down meals were served at 90 Longwood Avenue, about 40 meals were served at Sussman House and O'Shea House, and about 30 meals were delivered to residents who could not make it to the dinner.

Mr. Jacobs reported that he attended a Housing Advisory Board meeting last night. The Board will be focusing most of its energy on funding the single family program at the Fisher Hill development, using HOME and CDBG money. The developers will have 2 years to commit and 5 years to spend the HOME money. About \$460,000 is being reserved.

Mr. Jacobs said that in light of the money being lined up for Fisher Hill, the BHA should revisit the Trustman infill development idea, as funding opportunities now available from the Town may dry up. He suggested the BHA make a presentation to HAB. They are talking about using money to buy troubled mortgages. This is a good idea, but if put into place, it could quickly deplete available funds.

Mr. Cloonan said that the BHA could try to get on the HAB agenda in January.

Mr. Jacobs said that the BHA could make the case that development of new units at the Trustman Apartments would leverage outside funding and subsidies. Mr. Jacobs also noted that thus far there have been no meetings on the expansion plans for Hancock Village.

Mr. Trietsch said that he heard there would be a public meeting on the Gateway East proposal. Mr. Cloonan said that he would try to find out more information about this meeting. He explained that the Town surveyed the area in November. They said that they should have some ideas regarding the impact on the BHA within 60 to 90 days of the survey.

Mr. Cloonan said that the Brown Street Condominium units are under new management. The long time management company owned by Bruce Roberts was fired. Although the BHA did not support the Trustees' request to limit the number of rental units in the building, they still got over 80% of the owners to vote in favor of this initiative. The vote enabled the trustees to fire Mr. Roberts. Mr. Roberts was not on the best of terms with BHA staff.

Mr. Cloonan said that he received a draft copy of the 2009 BHA audit. Fortunately, there were no negative comments or findings.

Mr. Cloonan said that this coming year will mark the 10th anniversary of the Steps To Success program. They will be focusing efforts on consciousness raising and constituency building. They have added over 2,000 names to their mailing list by searching for owners with property value in excess of \$1 million. Their Fenway Park fundraising event will be held on March 31st.

Mr. Cloonan said that the BHA Board voted to close the offices at 2:00 PM on December 18th for the annual staff Holiday party. Unless there is any objection, staff would like to move the party to December 22, 2009 at 2:00. Some part time employees would otherwise not be able to attend.

Mr. Trietsch confirmed that there was no objection from the Board regarding the change of date for the BHA staff Holiday party.

Mr. Jacobs asked Mr. Cloonan to explain the designated housing plan waiver. Mr. Cloonan said that the BHA has a 5 year waiver from HUD, allowing the agency to maintain an 80% to 20% ratio of elderly households (62 years of age or older) to non-elderly disabled households (under 62 years of age) in BHA elderly/disabled developments (in all but the wheelchair accessible units). The waiver expires in May of 2010.

Mr. Cloonan thinks the designated housing plan waiver has worked out well. At one point in some elderly developments, about 35% of the residents were non-elderly. Those numbers are all around 20% now. Mr. Cloonan said that he is recommending that the BHA apply for a waiver extension.

It was the consensus of the Board that the BHA should go forward with a Designated Housing Plan waiver extension.

Mr. Trietsch said that he and Mr. Jacobs interviewed two candidates for the BHA Director of Planning position. This person will be working on project management related to the concept of additional units at the Trustman Apartments. Both candidates were impressive. One of the candidates was outstanding. Mr. Trietsch feels that she knows the programs, that she has good skills and that she possesses great sensitivity.

Mr. Cloonan said that he met with the top candidate for the Director of Planning position and thought she was excellent. They went on a walking tour of the Trustman Apartments and the Walnut Street Apartments. Mr. Cloonan discussed with her his preference to fill this job opening with a contract employee instead of a regular employee. She agreed that this option would allow her some scheduling flexibility which is desirable to her. Mr. Cloonan said that he still has to check her references.

Ms. Dugan asked about the Director of Planning job description. Mr. Cloonan said that he would send her a copy. The primary focus of this job will be on the development of new units at the Trustman Apartments. It could also evolve into work at the Walnut Street Apartments.

Mr. Trietsch asked if the cost of this position could be funded out of the HOME program. Mr. Cloonan said that he discussed this idea with Fran Price. In-house funding options include the Section 8 reserve account and the Central Office Cost Center. Mr. Trietsch suggested that Mr. Cloonan talk about this with Brookline Planning Director, Jeff Levine.

Town Wide Resident Association President Agnes Rogers reported that things are very quiet at the developments. She said that no one is complaining about anything.

Mr. Trietsch brought forward the consent agenda. Ms. Berman and Mr. Jacobs pointed out that they would have to abstain from the vote on the minutes of the November 19, 2009 special meeting as they were not present at the meeting. As this would leave the Board one vote shy of a quorum today, it was decided to defer approval of the November 19th minutes until the January meeting. **On a motion from Mr. Jacobs and a second from Ms. Berman, adoption of the minutes of the regular meeting held on November 10, 2009 was unanimously approved.**

Mr. Cloonan said that the BHA raised over \$1,000 more than it spent on the BHA annual Thanksgiving day dinner for residents. He recommends that the BHA use this money to supplement the Runkle School annual Holiday toy drive and to purchase supermarket gift cards. These Holiday gifts will benefit 50 to 60 needy BHA families, including some elderly households.

It was the consensus of the Board to spend the surplus Thanksgiving event money to purchase Holiday gifts for BHA families in need.

Mr. Trietsch welcomed some of the BHA Scholarship award winners to the meeting. He explained that the Board strongly believes that the BHA should be more than housing. The Board wants to support residents in their efforts to achieve their life goals.

Mr. Cloonan said that 25 students applied for scholarships and all of the essays submitted for consideration were extraordinary.

Ms. Berman presented the residents with their awards and invited them to say a few words.

BHA resident Melissa Ogungbadero explained that she started going to Bunker Hill Community College on a part time basis several years ago and is now a full time student. She is planning to major in nursing.

BHA resident Vena Priestly explained that she is in her first semester at Roxbury Community College after attending Pine Manor College for 3 years. She is a biology major with a minor in music.

BHA resident Simona Sparane explained that she is in her second year at Emanuel College. She is majoring in management.

Mr. Cloonan said that the Steps To Success program has just hired a part time college coordinator. He invited these BHA Scholarship award recipients to stay involved in Steps To Success throughout their college careers to help build and improve the program.

Mr. Cloonan explained that the federalization applications for the Col. Floyd Apartments and the Egmont Street Veterans Apartments were submitted to HUD by the November 23, 2009 deadline. HUD is now asking for follow up information. He said that he would be surprised if the BHA did not get an offer to federalize the Col. Floyd Apartments.

Mr. Cloonan believes the prospect for approval of the Egmont Street Veterans Apartments application, however, is doubtful. The physical inspection of this property did not go well. The major sticking point is the presence of lead paint in the common areas. Properties have to be in full compliance by the closing date, anticipated to be in mid to late January. The goal of testing and abating the lead by this deadline is virtually unachievable. The state is trying to offer some sort of "hold harmless" option to HUD with respect to the lead paint but this is unlikely to be accepted.

Mr. Trietsch asked if there is the possibility of a second round of federalization opportunities. Mr. Cloonan said that federalization is part of the special stimulus legislation and the required stimulus expenditures have to be obligated by March 18, 2009.

Mr. Trietsch asked if there is the possibility of an extension of the deadline. Mr. Cloonan said that there is no talk of an extension.

Mr. Jacobs asked where the lead paint is located. Mr. Cloonan said that the lead paint is located in the hallways. The BHA would have to hire a certified lead paint contractor to strip some of the surfaces to their base. It would involve handrails, stair stringers, window frames, etc. He pointed out that even if lead paint were not an issue, he doubts that HUD would accept the property. There is chipping and peeling paint in units and common areas. The basements are also in bad shape.

Mr. Trietsch said that this is disappointing. This leaves the prospect of giving HUD the BHA's best property, which would leave a state portfolio consisting of its most distressed properties operating with deficient subsidies.

Mr. Cloonan said that fortunately, where there is lead based paint, it has been found to be intact. He said that he is reluctant to continue to spend design, engineering, and legal

consultant fees in the federalization effort for Egmont Street Veterans without a financial commitment from the state.

Mr. Jacobs suggested that Mr. Cloonan follow up with Rep. Barney Frank about future options to federalize. Mr. Trietsch added that the BHA should assume for now that only Col. Floyd will go through.

Mr. Cloonan felt that the BHA should proceed with the lead paint abatement efforts in any event.

Mr. Cloonan said that there are presently 10 residents at the Col. Floyd Apartments who would feel a negative impact from federalization through the loss of the roughly \$8,000 earned income exemption allowed by the state. This would translate to an increase in rent of up to \$200 per month for these individuals. Two others would need to be transferred to a state development because of HUD citizenship requirements. One resident would lose a very sizable veterans disability income exemption.

Mr. Jacobs asked if part of the development could be federalized. Mr. Cloonan said that there have been discussions with the state about continuing some units in federalized buildings under the MRVP program. Mr. Cloonan explained that some of the negatively affected residents could be offered one bedroom units in other state developments. He said that citizenship issues can be addressed under relocation regulations, however these regulations do not cover economic impact.

Mr. Trietsch asked about a cooperation agreement with the Town with respect to a federalized development. Mr. Cloonan said that the Town would have to approve a cooperation agreement and a new PILOT agreement.

Mr. Jacobs said that he would like to see the full financial impact of federalization on BHA residents versus the new income for the agency.

Mr. Jacobs wondered if residents could be grandfathered into the federal program. Mr. Cloonan said that he has been conferring with the state on this issue but so far the state has not figured out a way to do this.

Ms. Dugan said that she believes that residents of the Col. Floyd Apartments won't want to relocate to another development.

Mr. Jacobs said that he thought the BHA should make a proposal to DHCD concerning these issues. Mr. Trietsch agreed, saying that the federalization of the Col. Floyd Apartments should not be automatic unless these issues are resolved.

Mr. Cloonan said that he has not started on the 2011 annual because of the time demands of the federalization effort. He pointed out that the state consolidated budgets will make approximately \$40,000 but this does not take into consideration the required \$42,000

budget cut. Another \$42,000 cut will have to be incorporated starting April 1, 2010. The MRVP program will be making approximately \$15,000.

Mr. Cloonan explained that the federal budgets are funded at 89%, which represents a \$240,000 cut. However, the BHA should end up with about \$50,000 of profit. The Section 8 program stands to lose about \$5,000.

Mr. Trietsch pointed out that HOME money from the Town could help with expenses. Mr. Cloonan added that the Trustman Apartments modernization project, which is back on the funding schedule, will also provide some help with construction administration money.

Mr. Trietsch confirmed that the next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 12, 2009 at 4:30 PM at the Morse Apartments.

On a motion from Mr. Jacobs and a second from Ms. Dugan, the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 PM.