

Brookline Housing Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
April 16, 2019
90 Longwood Avenue
4:30 PM

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Jacobs at 4:30 PM. Those present included Ms. Dugan, Ms. Katz, Ms. Sullivan, and Ms. Cohen.

Board Reports

Ms. Sullivan reminded residents that May 7, 2019 is an election day in Brookline. She urged residents to remember to vote.

Executive Director Report

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- Staff will make efforts in the future to print in two-sided format the monthly Board package materials and to make such materials available electronically.
- The courtyard and exterior stairs improvements project at High Street Veterans Apartments is expected to commence next week.
- Residents concerns expressed at last month's Board meeting have been addressed: one resident's apartment work orders have been completed; and lock cores have been replaced at building entrances at O'Shea House. Staff is looking into the possibility of moving the fob lock system work item to the beginning of the O'Shea House renovation work schedule.
- BHA Director of Maintenance, David Perry, and BHA Assistant Executive Director, Matthew Baronas, have had some recent success achieving some budget cost savings: Mr. Perry negotiated with Eversource a \$15,000 reimbursement of expenses related to the 22 High Street power outage last summer; and Mr. Baronas corrected a laundry vendor underpayment of \$8,000.
- BHA Resident Services Coordinator, Megan Smith, is organizing an exhibit of art from several very talented residents of 22 High Street.
- Staff members are relatively confident that the RAD redevelopment construction at 61 Park Street will commence this summer. Cross-departmental staff training has begun relevant to RAD program compliance.

Healthy Lives Program

Mr. Baronas explained that the BHA is very excited about the launch of the Brookline Center for Community Mental Health's (BCCMH) Healthy Lives Program, which will benefit up to 25 at-risk BHA households. The program is a dedicated team effort to help individuals and families who have complex physical and mental healthcare needs. The unique aspect of this program is the incorporation of direct medical services into personalized care plans dedicated to BHA residents. Healthy Lives has previously only partnered with medical centers. The program is state funded and is offered at no cost to the BHA.

Mr. Jacobs asked if Healthy Lives requires a participant to affiliate with a medical center. Mr. Dober explained that participants can continue using their own health care providers; thus, alleviating an impediment associated with other accountable care programs.

Mr. Jacobs asked if this care model could be positioned in a certain BHA building or a section of a BHA building. Mr. Baronas said that this is the first residential-based rollout of the program and that it will be a work in progress.

Ms. Katz asked about referrals into the program. Mr. Baronas said that the BHA Property Management team is currently consulting with the Healthy Lives team regarding referrals. Springwell is being brought into the referral process as well.

Ms. Dugan expects that the need for these services will quickly exceed the participant limit of 25.

Ms. Sullivan said that she appreciates the close collaboration of the BHA's trusted social service partners in this rollout. She asked if the success of the program will be gauged. Mr. Dober pointed out that the program is tracking such statistics currently.

Deborah Brown asked about program criteria and how the BHA plans to avoid implicit bias when making referrals. Mr. Baronas said that the criteria is to help those most at-risk of eviction due to their struggles with complex mental health and medical health issues. The referral process will involve a diverse group of BHA staff and advocates.

Designated Housing Plan

Mr. Baronas reported the following:

- HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) has approved the request for a two-year extension to the BHA's Designated Housing Plan (DHP) for federally-funded elderly/disabled developments.
- In a DHP, a PHA is permitted to establish a preference for a specific percentage of residents aged 62 or older living in elderly/disabled housing. The BHA's plan was first approved by HUD in 1995 and has been set at a ratio of 80% for those residents 62 and older and 20% for younger residents with disabilities.
- To receive approval, the BHA had to demonstrate that it is providing young disabled applicants with an appropriate level of housing resources. Such BHA resources include 48 Section 8 Vouchers dedicated to young disabled applicants.
- When Col. Floyd Apartments was federalized several years ago, the BHA was granted a new five-year DHP which folded Col. Floyd Apartments into the existing federal development DHP formula. This five-year approval expired at the end of January 2019.
- Two-year extensions are now being examined with more scrutiny by FHEO than in the past; therefore, the BHA is pleased to have been granted approval.

Mr. Dober said that providing opportunities for disabled individuals of all ages is a big part of what the BHA does.

Ms. Cohen said that the Cambridge Housing Authority has an 86.5% 62 and older/13.5% young disabled ratio for their federal developments. The premise of granting Designated Housing Plan waivers is that PHAs will provide equivalent opportunities for young disabled individuals. Often, these opportunities are in settings that young disabled applicants prefer.

Resident Association Report

Ms. Katz noted the lack of activity from the Brookline Housing Town Wide Tenant Association (BHTWTA). She said that Sean and Misty Jaynes are examples of how residents can invigorate a tenant

association, although they accomplished this on the individual development level – not the town-wide level.

Mr. Jacobs asked about the criteria for BHTWTA elections. Mr. Baronas said that elections should take place every three years and that it has been more than three years since the last election.

Mr. Dober said that resident associations are designed to be independent from a PHA. The BHA offers technical support and encouragement. Many residents are active and engaged in their community and the BHA outside of resident associations; participating in and holding leadership positions in programs such as Steps To Success, Women Thriving, and Tech Goes Home.

BHA resident, Elizabeth Warshaw, said that an active resident association can help communication within the resident community. Mr. Dober pointed out that Ms. Warshaw is an example of an effective community leader acting as such outside of a formal resident association.

Ms. Cohen said that significant undertakings such as RAD conversions promote resident engagement and empowerment which can in turn help strengthen resident associations.

Ms. Dugan said that she has seen a great deal of resident participation in the RAD redevelopment process at O’Shea House. She feels that this is very healthy. She agrees that many BHA families and individuals are more involved in Steps To Success and other activities than with resident associations.

Mr. Dober said that he and Mr. Baronas are always attempting to identify resident leaders.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Cohen asked that consideration of consent agenda item “A” be deferred until later in the meeting.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Katz, the consent agenda was unanimously approved and authorized the following: the BHA’s HUD Capital Funds Program Plan for Federal properties for the five-year period FY 2019-2013; and the BHA’s request to DHCD for an extension of the waiver from the requirement to participate in a Regional Capital Assistance Team.

RAD and 61 Park Street Update

BHA Director of Redevelopment, Maria Maffei, reported the following:

Preparing for RAD on an operational level.

- Staff trainings are ongoing, including: Edgemere Consulting (BHA Section 8 Administrative Plan); Beacon Residential (RAD/tax credits/Section 8); and Jonathan Klein (tax credit overview).
- Weekly RAD interdepartmental BHA meetings are being held.
- HQS inspections for Section 8 project-based vouchers are being scheduled.
- The provision of Section 8 vouchers, and transfer opportunities for existing residents are being coordinated to free up an optimal number of vacancies for temporary resident relocation.
- Vacant units to be utilized for temporary resident relocation during construction are being prepared for occupancy by the BHA Maintenance Department.

61 Park Street.

- The draft RAD Conversion Commitment (RCC) has been received from HUD.

- 70 subcontractors applied by the deadline for sub-trade submissions.
- 100% construction documents are due by May 23, 2019.
- Colantonio’s construction phasing scheme has been finalized.
- The BHA hopes to get approval from the Brookline Public Works Department to allow construction vehicle access to the rear of the building directly from Park Street.
- The BHA was disappointed to learn that resident gardens plots will need to be closed this growing season for safety reasons. BHA Director of Maintenance, David Perry, has come up with a creative gardening plan that will utilize half-barrel planters in an area safe from construction activity.
- A resident meeting will be scheduled during the week of May 6, 2019. Attendees will include Springwell, the Brookline Building Department, and the Brookline Health Department.
- Construction is on target to commence in July. The groundbreaking ceremony most likely will be deferred until the fall, as July is a difficult time to schedule such an event.

90 Longwood Avenue.

- The Inspector General’s Office has approved the BHA’s application to utilize the Chapter 149 construction process.
- Schematic drawings are getting preliminary price estimates.
- The OAS application is forthcoming.

RAD Preliminary Applications

Ms. Maffei reported the following:

- In October of 2017, the BHA applied to HUD for a RAD multi-property award, and a CHAP (Commitment to Enter in Housing Assistance Payments) for 61 Park Street. The BHA has also applied for a CHAP for 90 Longwood Avenue.
- Staff is seeking a Board vote tonight authorizing the BHA to seek CHAPs for the rest of the BHA portfolio.
- Historically high RAD rent levels are a good incentive to apply for CHAPs now. Approval would not preclude the BHA from receiving higher rents if rent levels continue to go up.

On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Sullivan, authorization to apply to HUD for CHAPs (Commitments to Enter in Housing Assistance Payments) for Morse Apartments, Sussman House, Kickham Apartments, Col. Floyd Apartments, and Walnut Street Apartments, and to authorize the Executive Director to submit a final application in the form substantially the same as the draft application attached hereto, was unanimously approved.

Meeting Minutes

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Katz, the minutes of the meeting held on March 19, 2019 as well as the minutes of the meeting held on March 28, 2019 were approved (agenda item 5A). The vote was as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTAINED
Ms. Dugan		Mr. Jacobs
Ms. Katz		
Ms. Sullivan		
Ms. Cohen		

Section 8 Payment Standards

Mr. Hernandez reported the following:

- The BHA Board voted to approve HUD’s new Section 8 Fair Market Rents (FMRs) in October of 2018.
- The Boston and Cambridge Housing Authorities along with DHCD made a formal request to HUD for a reevaluation of these Payment Standards, and on March 14, 2019, HUD published updated FY 2019 FMRs.
- The updated FY 2019 FMRs on average increased by 26% over the 2018 FMRs.
- A survey of several area housing authorities revealed that most plan to set their FMRs at 100% of the updated FY 2019 FMRs.
- The Board is being asked to consider new BHA Payment Standards based on 100% of the updated FMRs for multi-bedroom apartments, SROs, and studio apartments, and 110% for one-bedroom apartments.

On a motion from Ms. Dugan and a second from Ms. Katz, 2019-2020 Payment Standards for Section 8 assistance administered by the Brookline Housing Authority, at rent levels recommended in the attached memo from Carlos Hernandez dated April 12, 2019, were unanimously approved.

Other Business and Public Comments

Mr. Hernandez said that Edgemere Consulting, Inc. is conducting a series of trainings for BHA Leased Housing staff, Management Department Staff, and Applications Department staff on the new BHA Section 8 Administrative Plan. Edgemere is in the middle of their two-year \$80,000.00 consulting contract with the BHA and to date they have expended about half of the contract sum.

Mr. Hernandez has had some encouraging discussions with the BHA software vendor about their ability to handle RAD and tax credit data processing.

The Board confirmed that the next meeting will be held at the Morse Apartments at 4:30 PM on May 14, 2019.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Katz, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 PM.

**A TRUE COPY
ATTEST**



**Patrick Dober
Executive Director**