

Branford Housing Authority

115 South Montowese St., Branford, CT 06405

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

Held Via Zoom on April 7, 2021 [Click here to Access the Recorded Zoom Meeting](#)

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BRANFORD TOWN CLERK

Commissioners Attending: Tacie Lowe, Kate Collins, Mark Colello, Jerry Mastrangelo, Paula Humphrey

Other Participants: Jamie Kavanaugh, John Elliott, Zenaida Junes, Anika Singh Lemar, Koloa Wolfgramm

1. The meeting was called to order by Tacie Lowe at 7:03 pm.
2. **Approval Of Minutes** – Kate Collins moved to approve the minutes as submitted; Tacie Lowe seconded.
Abstaining: Jerry Mastrangelo, Mark Colello
3. **Resident Association Update**

Jamie Kavanaugh, president of Resident Association at Parkside I, reported that there is no reference to the election of Tenant Commissioner in the by-laws of the Resident Association. The association is waiting for a clarification on the election matter to move forward. They can now move forward to hold an election before the May 5th meeting of the BHA. They also appreciated the Beacon Celebration to thank residents for patience with the redevelopment process.

Zenaida Junes explained that a letter had been recently sent to residents, giving them 30 days' notice that the Tenant Commissioner position was expiring. There was a question as to the length of the term of a Tenant Commissioner. Only 5 responses of Petition for Election were received, which is insufficient. The current Tenant Commissioner's term expires on April 30, 2021. There was an extended discussion on the need to improve noticing procedures.

Koloa Wolfgramm of Yale Law School, referencing State Statute 8-41, Sections B, C and some subsequent sections, reported that the notice period and what triggers and election are set by this statute. A Tenant Commissioner election is only triggered when 10% of tenants, or 75 tenants, whichever is fewer, petition for an election. If this threshold is not met, then the Tenants' Association is responsible for appointing a commissioner. This can be done by an election or a simple appointment. If a new commissioner is not named within a 90-day time frame, then the Housing Authority Board will select. State statute also specifies that the current commissioner remains in the position until a successor is named and qualified. If a new Tenant Commissioner is not elected by June 3, 2021, then the Housing Authority Board will name a successor.

4. **Tenant Commissioner Update**

Paula Humphrey indicated that there are some maintenance things that aren't getting done, and residents are annoyed. These issues were related to maintenance issues, mostly. There was a discussion of how problems are communicated and how the board is noticed of these issues.

John Elliott reported that a Spring clean-up is planned, but that maintenance issues are followed up. He explained a number of processes are available for reporting these issues. Mark Colello suggested that a more regularized recording process might be needed. Zenaida reported that there is a database that is used regularly by workers, and that she follows up on verbal reports made by Paula.

5. **Property Management Report**

John Elliott of Beacon Residential Management reported that they had received notice of re-development funding, and that they plan to be on-site during the month of May to meet and talk with tenants about relocation plans, though it is still early on.

Zenaida Junes reported that the second re-certification notices had been sent by the end of March. Responses are coming in. There is currently an open position in Maintenance. Tacie Lowe reported that the vacancy rate is stabilized and that many units are filled; new tenant applications are now on hold because redevelopment financing has come through, and efforts will now turn to relocating current residents in a timely way. John Elliott reported that there had been two move-outs and two move-ins over the last month, resulting in no net change in occupancy.

6. Management Oversight Committee Report and Redevelopment Update

An RFP for Property Management Services for one or both Parkside I and II properties was issued by the BHA in early February, 2021. Kate Collins reported that there had been two respondents to the RFP: Beacon Residential Properties and Conover Corporation. Conover withdrew their application upon notice that Beacon had won the LITECH Award. Beacon will remain as Property Manager after April 30, when their current contract expires.

There was a discussion to clarify the sub-committee work for the RFP process. There was also a discussion of how information is to be shared when emails are not responded to.

Annika Singh Lemar pointed out that a vote is needed on the Property Management contract before moving on to other business. She suggested that either with an extension of the current contract, or entry into a new contract, BHA can provide in the contract that the contract will terminate for Parkside 1 when the financing closes for Parkside I. The signed redevelopment contract for Parkside I contains the agreement for Beacon to remain as Property Manager for Parkside I until redevelopment begins.

After a lengthy discussion of what to vote on, Kate Collins moved that Beacon Management retain their contract to manage Parkside I until redevelopment work is official; the motion was seconded by Tacie Lowe. The motion did not carry by a vote of three to two:

Tacie Lowe – yes; Mark Colello – no; Kate Collins – yes; Paula Humphrey – no; Jerry Mastrangelo – no.

Subsequently, Kate Collins moved that Beacon Management retain their contract to manage Parkside II for two years; the motion was seconded by Tacie Lowe. The motion did not carry by a vote of three to two:

Tacie Lowe – yes; Mark Colello – no; Kate Collins – yes; Paula Humphrey – no; Jerry Mastrangelo – no.

With these votes, Beacon's contracts as Property Managers of Parkside I and II will expire on April 30, 2021.

In response to statements that the bid process was incorrect, Kate summarized the process of the development and issuing of the RFP, and the difficulties of re-issuing an RFP at this late date.

7. New Business

a.) There was a lengthy discussion of the number of votes needed to amend the agenda of a publicly noticed meeting. Legal guidance under the Freedom of Information Act requires a super-majority of 2/3 of members to vote for an amendment, which in the case of a 5-person board would require 4 votes in favor. There was disagreement that four was the correct number, however in order to move the meeting forward, the Chair authorized the vote to amend, but requested that it be reflected in the minutes that any votes held under these circumstances may be illegal, and therefore voided. It is so noted. The vote to amend carried by three votes in favor, two against.

Tacie Lowe – no; Mark Colello – yes; Kate Collins – no; Paula Humphrey – yes; Jerry Mastrangelo – yes.

b.) **Yale Law School** – A motion to terminate the contract with the Yale Law School was made and seconded. It carried by a vote of three to two.

Tacie Lowe – no; Mark Colello – yes; Kate Collins – no; Paula Humphrey – yes; Jerry Mastrangelo – yes.

c.) **Authorizing Alternate Signatory** – It was decided that no action is necessary at this time.

8. **BAH Appointments** – No action taken.

9. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.