

**Meeting Minutes  
Branford Housing Authority  
Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, October 2, 2019 p.m.  
The Community Room – Parkside II  
Annual Meeting**

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BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT

Commissioners Present: T. Lowe, K. Collins, D. D'Amelio, M. Colello and V. Verderame

Commissioners Absent: None

Management: C. Daniw, L. Hampton

Guests: E. Gaebler and J. Pottenger of Yale CED Clinic, L. Kluetsch, J. Kavanaugh and other Board Members of the Tenant Organization Tenants from Parkside Village I & II, RTM Ray Ingraham, Community Members and Indian Neck Civic Assoc.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Meeting called to order at 7:03 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

K. Collins made a motion to accept the minutes of the special orientation meeting held on September 25, 2019.

Seconded by D. D'Amelio

Vote 5-0

**TENANT COMMISSONER REPORT:**

D. D'Amelio stated that he spoke with Dara Kovel of Beacon Communities following the Tenant Organization meeting. Ms. Kovel wanted to send out a letter to reassure the tenants and meet again with the residents. He stated it was not a good time that the tenants stated their position and did not think it was the right time. Everything else has been good; no one has been calling him or knocking on his door.

**RESIDENT ORGANIZATION REPORT:**

J. Kavanaugh stated that they had quite an eventful month. The Organization held a special tenant meeting, a meeting with Beacon and then held an additional tenant meeting. J. Kavanaugh sent out a summary in an email and handed out a paper copy. The summary indicated the resident's position after attending the meetings. The major change is that they felt the buildings were able to be fixed as is. His recommendations are that a professional assessment be done to determine the condition of the buildings and if they are repairable. What funding sources are available for those repairs? What impact would be on the rents if debt is incurred? Included in the summary he noted feelings from some of the residents on certain items that may not be able to be addressed such as not wanting families which is already part of the deal. An item that may be changed is tenants that are placed in a two bedroom do not want to move a third time to a one bedroom. Now Beacon has acquired a secured subsidy for thirty years the tenants want to be subsidized so they do not have to move again.

T. Lowe stated that it sounded like a reasonable request. T. Lowe asked L. Kluetsch and C. Daniw to address how the assessment would happen and how it would be funded. L. Kluetsch questioned what was done before he was involved. C. Daniw stated that a CNA was conducted by the Housing Authority and another one was conducted by CHFA. Branford Housing Authority participated in all of the CHFA/DOH workshop classes for small housing authorities to be redeveloped as affordable housing. Site visits and meetings were conducted by staff at CHFA to discuss a plan. The previous Governor allocated funds especially for this portfolio of properties that were originally developed with DOH funds. If new funds were allocated to these projects it was expected to provide at least 20% of additional housing and to be fully sustainable so that no further funds would be needed for at least 25 years. L. Kluetsch stated that CHFA took all of the CNA assessments and used it to generate a plan. The funding environment has changed since then and in 2018 no SSHP funds were available. There are small funding sources that might be available or a 4% tax credit round for renovation at Parkside Village II. Beacon is applying for the 9% funding round of tax credits. The 4% would not generate enough funds to complete a redevelopment. K. Collins asked if predevelopment funds would be available for engineering and other services that might be needed to start a project. L. Kluetsch suggested taking the 2013

study and use it as a baseline. T. Lowe asked if renovations could be completed if the units are currently not ADA compliant and are too small now to become ADA compliant. L. Kluetsch stated that at Parkside Village II, units could be combined but if the renovation level exceeds 50% you do have to comply with all of the new ADA and building codes such as installing a sprinkler system and all the other code requirements. Unit count would be decreased. There are two funding sources that DOH has available SSHP and CHAMP. Each has specific criteria. T. Lowe asked J. Kavanaugh if this was an adequate start to the concerns and if there was anything else that was a concern. J. Kavanaugh responded yes and the last item was that the residents did not think Beacon's statement about rents not going up is honest. T. Lowe stated that this will be addressed when we get to the redevelopment of Parkside One requirements that will address this issue.

## **MANAGEMENT REPORT**

C. Daniw stated at Parkside Village II, there is a tenant that they have been working with that made a reasonable accommodation request with the company that provides the washers and dryers at the complex to have a coin operated machine. We all met last week with the company to add Braille stickers to the cash card machine and looked at options with the machines. Management agrees with the tenant that the current machines do not allow them to do their laundry independently. It has been requested that they remove one of the card activated stackable units and replace it with a coin operated stackable unit. When the current machine beeps there is no way to indicate what the problem is. It is not voice activated and has a digital scroll indicating what the issue is that must be read. The supervisor stated that PV1 and PV2 are treated as separate accounts. A different person collects coins and dollars and it is difficult to mix a coin and card machine in the same laundry room. T. Lowe stated if we do not get satisfaction she can direct us to the disability rights advocacy group that she works with that would be able to assist us. She directed C. Daniw to send her an email with the information if needed. C. Daniw stated that Joanne Frank, the Resident Service Coordinator also contacted an agency for assistance. The tenant spoke on her own behalf that she was the tenant making this request. The Braille is a start but it does address if the machines beep she does not know what message it is giving her making it not accessible to her. T. Lowe stated she agreed and will assist with this request especially if the company is not willing to provide the machines. She can contact a disability attorney that handles these matters.

Snow Removal Specifications are being sent out to contractors to bid on 2019-2020 snow season. In years past the Town of Branford would make an emergency pass through the parking lots. A few years ago this service was no longer provided. T. Lowe asked if Ray Ingraham had a comment on this or help he could provide. He stated that in cases of private roads if ambulances needed to come out a plow usually assists them. C. Daniw stated that they indicated to her that they would use a back hoe to respond if they needed to.

C. Daniw stated that Ray Ingraham was kind enough to make some contacts at our request for Parkside Village II for the odor that comes from the Sewage Plant adjacent to the property. It appears that there is not much they can do. When Ray Ingraham spoke to them it was noted that they have record of receiving two or three complaints over the summer. To assist with controlling this odor they have requested that when a smell is detected that a call be made to the NON EMERGENCY NUMBER AT THE POLICE DEPARTMENT. By calling it will assist the Plant to determine a cause on that day and time of the complaint. There will always be some smell. T. Lowe asked J. Kavanaugh to mention it to the tenants. Tenants present spoke that there is a smell and that they will now call. Ray Ingraham explained the process of the plant and noted that there also could be a smell coming from the nearby swamp and low tides. If a call is made it would help determine if it is the Plant or not.

Applicants are needed for the efficiency units. Only one application was received this week. Lease up at Parkside Village II will continue. There are now three units available as a move out occurred at the end of September.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

Renewal of the Legal Engagement

K. Collins stated that two years ago the Branford Housing Authority had the opportunity to be represented by the Yale Law School students. It is an intern program that has a rotation of students who can intern for a semester or until they graduate.

Emilee Gaebler described the program and explained that the students can negotiate documents, do research, draft documents and attend meetings. Jay Pottenger clarified and reiterated that they are not lawyers and are students and can't do anything unless they are supervised by lawyers. Anika Lemar-Singh is their primary supervisor with Jay Pottenger when he assists. T. Lowe and K. Collins noted that this service is free and has been a valuable asset to the Branford Housing Authority. The students have helped with the organization of the Housing Authority and development matters. Ms. Gaebler reviewed the proposed contract with the Commissioners indicating that program does not provide litigation work. The term runs from September 30, 2019 to September 30, 2020. They follow the rules of conduct and must advise you if there is any conflict of interest. M. Colello asked whether this service would continue if the project was to remain a senior housing project. Ms. Gaebler responded that currently they will continue to work on the unfinished project of the redevelopment, assist with 8-30G appeal and the corporation governess. V. Verderame asked whether we have retained any other legal services. C. Daniw stated that if there are issues that pertain to the tenants with evictions for nonpayment or a need for mediation with case workers and tenants then an attorney is used. Mr. Pottenjer indicated that they do not represent landlords as they represent tenants and it would be a conflict for them.

T. Lowe requested a motion to approve the signing of the Legal Engagement Letter

K. Collins made a motion to approve to renew the Legal Engagement Letter with Yale Law School.

D. D'Amelio seconded

Discussion

M. Colello stated it was not really clear to him and thought it was pushy. He stated he was not for or against it, he does not know enough after a couple weeks of being on the board to make that decision.

J. Pottenger requested to speak to the comment. The old contract expired on September 30. He does not want anyone to feel they are being pushy as they are not. The legal rule of ethics requires that there be written rules of engagement. It is up to the Board as to whether they wish to renew or not.

Vote taken:

3 for

1 opposed

1 abstained

Vote passed 3-2

#### Redevelopment of Parkside Village I – Requirements

Ms. Gaebler explained the General Information Notice and cover letter that are required to be provided to each of the tenants at Parkside Village I. The document is aligning with the requirements in both the federal and state relocation laws. T. Lowe stated that her name is on this document and feels strongly that the tenants should have confidence that they will be living at Parkside should they chose to and are in good standing. The document summarizes the Resident Participation Plan to focus on the recent concerns of the tenants.

D. D'Amelio. Stated the tenants are nervous, Lee Thompson also a board member of the Tenant Organization spoke to this point and explained that there were people that went door to door and scared the tenants and told lies that they would not be allowed to come back. The tenants still have these ideas in their heads. T. Lowe stated she hopes that these documents will answer some of their questions. It is a legal document and a law that protects residents that need to be taken care of and it is a legal binding document. It is unfortunate that people are scaring the tenants. No one should be knocking on their doors and appreciates what Jamie and Dave do to help the residents.

A tenant requested to discuss an issue regarding Beacon. He was told by the Beacon representative a few weeks back that Beacon and Merit have nothing to do with each another. He discovered that Beacon hired Merit out to manage many of their properties. C. Daniw stated no, that was not correct. Merit Properties has their own management company and are developers as Beacon has their own management and are developers. They are two separate corporations.

The tenant indicated that he did research that Beacon has dealt with Merit throughout New England. It was explained that there are many companies with a similar name Merit. It was also stated that Beacon will eventually be the property manager for Parkside Village I. The tenant then stated that he did not get this information directly he received the information from someone else. T. Lowe stated this is an example of the false information that is being shared with people. L. Kluetsch commented for additional assurances for the tenants. The same people that are overseeing and protecting these properties DOH, CHFA and HUD all three will be scrutinizing what is happening. As a developer they will be making sure the plan is implemented and that tenants are protected.

T. Lowe requested a motion to sign and distribute the documents General Information Notice Residential Tenant – Non Displacement and a cover letter reiterating the 2017 Resident Participation Agreement to the tenants as presented.

V. Verderame made a motion to approve and distribute the required General Information Notice with a cover letter to the tenants that was presented.

K. Collins seconded

Vote passed 5-0

Ms. Gaebler also presented another requirement for the funding cycle round on November 6<sup>th</sup> as that CHFA requires a resolution of the Board of Commissioner to be submitted with the application. The Housing Authority is required to participate in the submission. This resolution does not guarantee that CHFA will provide credits.

T. Lowe asked if she was able to sign as Vice-Chair if the document is submitted on November 6<sup>th</sup> and asked if anyone had any questions on this document.

Ray Ingraham asked for a point of information. When did the board have elections for the officers? He stated there is nothing on the website indicating a vote in 2018. K. Collins responded that in there was a vote in 2017 Kate Collins, Treasurer, Michael Calter, Secretary, Tacie Lowe, Vice Chair and Doug Denes, Chairman and read from the by-laws

Article III, Section 2. Selection of Officers

The Officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Authority and shall hold office for one year or until a successor is elected and qualified. Tonight we will be voting on officers. Clarification was made that this section had not changed in 2018. Ms. Gaebler stated the change in 2018 was made in accordance with Section 8-41(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes. Ray Ingraham suggested that the Authority contact the town to correct the information on the website. Ms. Gaebler indicated that they will do that when they contact the town to correct an error noted with the Commissioner terms also.

T. Lowe asked for a motion to approve the resolution as presented.

K. Collins made a motion to approve the resolution to submit with the application to CHFA for funding

V. Verderame seconded

Vote 5-0

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

K. Collins asked L. Kluetsch for his suggestion on whether the Budget for 2020 be separated for Parkside Village I and II. C. Daniw stated that currently CHFA and DOH recognize the properties as one and only has one set of books. L. Kluetsch had suggested moving toward separating the properties.

## **ELECTIONS**

Ms. Gaebler reviewed the ballot, voting procedures and different methods of voting with the Board of Commissioners. Individual ballots were distributed for each of the positions.

T. Lowe asked the Board if they wished to use the hand or paper ballot method for voting. A motion was made to use the paper ballot method. It was a unanimous vote to use the paper ballots.

T. Lowe opened the nominations starting with position of the Chairperson

K. Collins nominated T. Lowe  
D. D'Amelio seconded the nomination  
Any other nominations  
V. Verderame nominated M. Colello  
D. D'Amelio seconded the nomination  
Any other nominations  
Paper Ballot votes collected  
Vote 3-2 T. Lowe, Tacie Lowe accepts the nomination

T. Lowe opened the nominations for the position of Vice-Chair  
T. Lowe nominated D. D'Amelio  
K. Collins seconded  
Any other nominations  
V. Verderame nominated M. Colello  
K. Collins seconded  
Any other nominations  
Paper Ballot votes collected  
Vote 3-2 M. Colello, Mark Colello accepts the nomination

T. Lowe opened the nominations for position of Secretary  
M. Colello nominated K. Collins, She declined  
K. Collins nominated V. Verderame  
D'Amelio seconded  
Any other nominations  
Paper Ballot votes collected  
Vote 5-0 V. Verderame, Victoria Verderame accepts the nomination

T. Lowe opened the nominations for position of Treasurer  
D. D'Amelio nominated K. Collins  
T. Lowe seconded  
Any other nominations  
Paper Ballot votes collected  
Vote 5-0 K. Collins, Kate Collins accepts the nomination

T. Lowe moved to adjourn the meeting  
K. Collins seconded  
Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m. 5-0

Respectfully Submitted  
Cheryl Daniw, Management Agent