

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

FINAL

MINUTES

Wednesday, October 12, 2016

(Full minutes will be published once approved)

The Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia Housing Authority (“DCHA”) held its monthly meeting at Potomac Gardens 1225 G Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003

I. CALL TO ORDER

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Terri Thompson, Chairman
Ken Grossinger, Vice Chairman
Kenneth Council
William Slover
Shelore Fisher
Aquarius Vann-Ghasri
Jose Ortiz Gaud
Nakeisha Neal Jones
Frank Lancaster

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Clarence Mobley
Brian Kenner

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm. She made a statement regarding DCHA’s policy on decorum in public meetings. She also made a statement acknowledging Yom Kippur followed by a moment of silence. Chairman Thompson then asked for a roll call to determine a quorum.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioner Kenneth Council – “Present”
Commissioner Shelore Fisher – “Here”
Commissioner Brian Kenner – no response
Commissioner Frank Lancaster – “Present”
Commissioner Clarence Mobley – no response
Commissioner Nakeisha Neal Jones – “Present”
Commissioner Jose Ortiz Gaud – “Here”
Commissioner William Slover – “Present”
Commissioner Aquarius Vann-Ghasri – “Present”
Commissioner Ken Grossinger - “Here”
Chairman Terri Thompson – “Present”

A quorum was recognized with nine Commissioners present.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 14, 2016 BOC MEETING

Chairman Thompson asked the Commissioners to consider the minutes of the September 14, 2016 Board of Commissioners' meeting. Commissioner Slover stated that he felt his testimony regarding resolution 16-14 at the September board meeting was not complete and that he felt the minutes should be verbatim. Director Todman explained that the minutes are a summary and not verbatim and went on to explain the process and stated that the process had not changed from the normal format of which the Board approved previously. Commissioner Lancaster added that he would like to see more detail in the minutes. Chairman Thompson stated the minutes would be tabled to give Commissioner Slover ample opportunity to request the specifics of what he would like to have added to the minutes and the minutes would be brought back for approval at the November Board meeting.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Todman highlighted the following activities that occurred during the month of September:

Potomac Gardens - Director Todman thanked Potomac Gardens for hosting this month's Board of Commissioners meeting. She recognized the Hopkins and Potomac Gardens resident leadership including Commissioner Vann-Ghasri who is also the Resident Council President of Potomac Gardens. She also stated that all residents in attendance today were given a ticket for a chance to win two passes to the new National Museum of African American History and Culture and she would ask the Commissioners to assist her in the drawing at the end of her report.

OPS Summer Safety Program – Director Todman acknowledged the work that the Office of Public Safety did over the summer with a number of DCHA youth in providing activities and field trips, one of which was to the National Football League Players Association. She also acknowledged OPS programs for seniors at many of the senior sites.

Homeownership – Director Todman stated that three DCHA families have become first time homebuyers. An HCV participant and two public housing residents were able to purchase a home through the Achieving Your Best Life (AYBL) program.

New Fiscal Year – Director Todman stated that October 1st was the start of a new fiscal year. This fiscal year will bring new officers to the Public Safety department and Director Todman thanked the Mayor and the City for the funds. She also stated that there will be additional funding to do repairs to public housing.

Employee of the Month – Director Todman recognized Mr. Ron Friday of the Office of Resident Services as the Employee of the Month Award for August. She stated that Mr. Friday always puts the clients first and his compassion reveals itself every day. Mr. Friday was presented with a certificate and monetary award.

Customer Service Award – Director Todman stated that the September Customer Service Award is special because it acknowledges an entire team. All of the Call Center Customer Service Representatives were acknowledged for their excellent performance. Director Todman stated that the team worked hard. Kisha Bunn, Elizabeth Butler, Jennifer Crawford-Blake, Frank Davis, Valencia Gripper, Maurice Holton, Henry Jackson, Carlene London, Tonya Parker, Latoya Robinson, Karen Scott, Terrance Stroman, Andrea Summers were called forward and presented with a certificates and monetary awards.

Director Todman asked Commissioner Vann-Ghasri and Chairman Thompson to draw a ticket for passes to the new museum. Two residents were present at the drawing and presented their winning tickets. Director Todman congratulated them both. Commissioner Lancaster wanted to acknowledge again Commissioner Vann-Ghasri as the Resident Council Leader of Potomac Gardens and Commissioner Slover added that it was also Commissioner Vann-Ghasri's birthday. The Board, staff and audience members wished her a happy birthday. Director Todman added that birthday cake would be available to attendees at the conclusion of the meeting.

V. RESOLUTIONS

PUBLIC COMMENT

PRESENTATION AND BOARD DISCUSSION OF THE RESOLUTIONS

[At this point in the meeting, those members of the public who signed up to speak were given the opportunity to address the Board on the resolutions under consideration.]

No one signed up to speak.

Resolution 16-24 To Authorize the Execution of General legal Services Contracts

Director Todman stated that in July DCHA put out a solicitation for legal services and received 13 proposals. She stated that DCHA has an Office of the General Counsel but there are some areas of legal expertise for which they need additional support. Director Todman stated that DCHA does a solicitation for legal services every other year and that there are 7 firms that are recommended to engage in legal activities. She asked the Board to approve the resolution to authorize the execution of legal contracts. Commissioner Vann-Ghasri recommended that the Section 3 compliance portion include an action plan by the law firms so that the Resident Councils are aware of the services the firms will offer to residents. Commissioner Slover asked that the Board be given a tally on how much is used for legal expenses versus how much is refunded. He also asked the Board to consider if they should have access to their own attorney and asked that topic be brought up in the Committee on Operations meeting. It was stated the DCHA General Counsel is the Boards attorney. Commissioner Vann-Ghasri requested data on the results of cases handled by the various firms on behalf of DCHA. Director Todman was asked to state the proposed firms and their area of expertise. Director Todman stated that Reno & Cavanaugh, Ballard Spahr, and Venable's primary

function with DCHA is real estate transactions, particularly Reno and Ballard. Venable from time to time deals with some of the litigation cases. She also stated that Coats Rose is new and handles policy and some level of litigation and that Hawkins, Delafield, and Wood will deal with some of the complex HUD transactions that are coming out of some of the work with RAD, which is the Real Estate Demonstration Program and Beveridge & Diamond are also new firm as well and will be used for legal cases involving environmental issues.

Chairman Thompson called for a roll call vote on the resolution after the motion to approve was moved and properly seconded.

The Commissioners responded as follows:

Commissioner Neal Jones – “Yes”

Commissioner Ortiz Gaud – “Yes”

Commissioner Slover – “Yes”

Commissioner Vann-Ghasri – “Yes”

Commissioner Grossinger – “Yes”

Commissioner Council – “Yes”

Commissioner Fisher – “Yes”

Commissioner Lancaster – “Yes”

Chairman Thompson – “Yes”

There were nine yes, the resolution was approved.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

RESIDENTS

Mary Duncan – Ms. Duncan is a resident of Potomac Gardens Senior and stated that there are issues with cleanliness, rodents and security in the Potomac Senior building. She also stated that she is concerned about the welfare of some of the residents who suffer with mental or physical disabilities who may need additional services to help them care for themselves and their homes. Ms. Duncan also asked if there were plans for redevelopment of Potomac Gardens. Commissioner Vann-Ghasri stated that there are discrimination laws in place to protect the mental and physically disabled and that there is a misconception regarding senior buildings. She also stated that she felt that it's the property manager's responsibility to follow up on case management. Director Todman stated that she will ask CT Management to address the rodent and cleanliness issues in the building and stated there are no current plans for redevelopment of Potomac Senior; however DCHA is exploring the RAD HUD program as a possible future option for Potomac Senior. She also stated that the Office of Resident Services (ORS) is working on additional mental health services. Chairman Thompson asked that case management be followed up in the Committee of Resident Services. Commissioner Neal Jones added that the City has services to offer residents in need as well.

Antoinette Freeman – A resident of Hopkins came before the Board with concerns regarding rats and roaches in her home. Director Todman asked Ms. Freeman to see Laurie Putscher, Director of Asset Management regarding her concerns with her unit.

Shirlen Robinson – A resident of Hopkins stated that she could hear rats in walls in her unit and there is also a problem with roaches. Director Todman stated that she would ask CT Management to assist with Ms. Robinsons' concerns.

Meshawn Dorsey – A resident of Hopkins stated that she has the same issues as the other Hopkins residents and said she saw a rat on her balcony that morning. Director Todman asked Nathan Bovel, Deputy Executive Director of Operations to talk to CT Management about the work that was being done at other DCHA sites to combat the rodent problem so that we can maximize efforts and strategies.

Detrice Belt – A Barry Farm resident stated that she was part of the Barry Farm Tenant Allies Association and came before the Board and asked why Resolution 16-14 was passed at the last Board of Commissioners meeting after so much resident opposition. She stated that Barry Farm residents want to build in place and be able to stay in their homes during redevelopment. Commissioner Vann-Ghasri advised Ms. Belt that she voted no for resolution 16-14 along with Commissioner Slover, Commissioner Fisher, and Commissioner Council.

Paulette Matthews – A Barry Farm resident stated that she was a member of the Barry Farm Tenant Allies Association and stated that she felt that no one is listening to the concerns of the Barry Farm residents and felt that is inconsiderate. Ms. Matthews also stated that at the Emergency Board meeting all the resident Commissioners were absent. She stated that she felt that homes should be in place for residents before the redevelopment could go forward. She added that her son was employed for three months at Barry Farm to help with the summer grass cutting but that job had ended and she wanted to know if there was any funding for further employment. Commissioner Lancaster thanked Ms. Matthews for her comments and stated he was proud of her presentation. Commissioner Vann-Ghasri suggested Ms. Matthews also talk to her Resident Council President.

Rhonda Edwards-Hines – Ms. Edwards-Hines stated that she is a Barry Farm resident as well as the Barry Farm Resident Council President. She stated that many residents have been receiving \$250 parking fines on their vehicles on the property and asked why fines went up from \$35 to \$250. She stated that this has been going on for several months and she has been working with the property manager. Commissioner Vann-Ghasri encouraged Ms. Edwards-Hines bring the parking tickets to the attention of the Office of Public Safety to get them dismissed if they verify the ticket was issued to someone on the lease. Director Todman stated that what Public Safety is doing is for everyone's protection and that residents should make sure their cars are properly registered. Commissioner Slover stated that the parking topic has come up a few times before and requested the Board address it through the Committee on Operations.

Charlene Marshall – A Highland Addition resident stated that she is a longtime resident and has problems with pests and environmental concerns in her unit. She asked how money is being allocated for repairs. She also stated that Highland Addition has no active Resident Council. She stated that the property manager also runs several other properties and is not always available onsite. Ms. Marshall also said there are traffic problems in the area for residents due to two nearby schools and she has videos of loitering and other ongoing problems occurring on the property. Director Todman stated that there is an

interest meeting scheduled for October 19th for residents of Highland Additions interested in being part of Resident Councils. Commissioner Vann-Ghasri stated to Ms. Marshall that it is important to know your rights as a Resident Council regarding grants, resident participation funds and other matters and to be clear on the bylaws. Commissioner Lancaster thanked Ms. Marshall for her remarks.

Dorothy Gray – A resident of Potomac Gardens Senior stated that a 94 year old resident was tied up in his apartment and robbed and there are problems with security and drug dealing as well as usage on the property. Chairman Thompson thanked Ms. Gray for her comments.

Lakeeda Gassaway – A resident of Potomac Gardens stated that she has been living at Potomac Gardens for a year and she is repeatedly physically attacked by other women who live on the property. She has changed her appearance covering most of her face and body as a Muslim woman in hopes preventing attacks. She stated that she and her children do not feel safe. She also stated that she has started a makeup and skin care class on the property in hope of raising the self-esteem of women and young girls on the property. Director Todman stated that she would follow up with Chief Maupin regarding Ms. Gassaway's concerns.

Daughter of Linda Cunningham – a resident of Hopkins apartments came before the Board to speak on behalf of her Mother who asked for a reasonable accommodation transfer in 2011. She accepted an apartment on the first floor and was told it was temporary because it still did not meet the needs of her request however she has now been told that by accepting the apartment on the first floor voids her original ADA request. She stated that she lives with her mother who requires constant care and that the transfer would enable her mother to care for herself. Director Todman asked her to give the details to Mr. Bovelie who would contact her tomorrow regarding the status of her ADA request.

Lionel Adams – A resident and Vice President of Potomac Gardens senior stated that some residents are afraid to come out of their apartments due to the drug activity in the halls. He also stated that many residents put their trash near the trash shoot instead of in the shoot and that contributes to the rodent problem. Mr. Adams thanked Commissioner Vann-Ghasri for the computer program at Potomac Gardens and stated that he would be starting a class soon. Commissioner Lancaster thanked Mr. Adams for his comments.

NONRESIDENTS

Leon Kafele – Mr. Kafele stated that he came before the Board representing ICP, a developer that is interested in redeveloping the Potomac Gardens property. He stated that he lives near Potomac Gardens and is very familiar with the property. He also stated that his company submitted an unsolicited proposal to the Housing Authority and wanted to present the same proposal to the Board for consideration. Mr. Kafele stated that he gained signatures of residents from the Potomac Senior property who are in favor of the redevelopment and has included those signatures with the proposal. Commissioner Vann-Ghasri stated that she asked Mr. Kafele not to knock on any doors at the Potomac Gardens Family property and said he did not. She also asked if the residents at the senior property were aware of what they were signing regarding the petition. Mr. Kafele stated

that residents were given an explanation of what the petition was for and were well aware of what they were signing.

Kristal Gaddy – Ms. Gaddy stated that she applied for housing in 2007 and was sent an appointment letter in 2009. However when she showed up for her appointment she was told that she was not in the system. Director Todman asked Ms. Gaddy to speak with Mr. Bovellet to find out more regarding her situation.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Thompson announced that the next DCHA Board of Commissioners meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 9, 2016 at Barry Farm Recreation Center, 1230 Sumner Road SE, Washington, DC 20020 at 1pm.

Meeting adjourned at 3:11 pm.