

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

DRAFT

MINUTES

Wednesday, April 12, 2017

(Final minutes will be published once approved)

The Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia Housing Authority (“DCHA”) held its monthly meeting at the Community Center of Capitol Quarter, 1000 5th Street, SE, Room 213; Washington, DC 20003.

I. CALL TO ORDER

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Terri Thompson, Chairman
William Slover
Kenneth Council
Shelore Fisher
Brian Kenner
Frank Lancaster
Clarence Mobley
Jose Ortiz Gaud
Aquarius Vann-Ghasri

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Ken Grossinger
Nakeisha Neal Jones

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order at 1:24 pm. After identifying herself by name and as Chair of the Board of Commissioners, she called the meeting to order and asked for a moment of silence. She read a statement regarding DCHA’s policy on decorum in public meetings followed by a request for a call of the roll to determine a quorum.

II. ROLL CALL

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

A quorum was recognized with nine Commissioners present.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 8, 2017

Chairman Thompson asked the Commissioners to consider the minutes of the March 8, 2017 Board of Commissioners' meeting. A motion was made and properly seconded to approve the minutes. The minutes of the March 8, 2017 BOC meeting were approved. Chairman Thompson announced that the Report of the Executive Director would be next on the agenda.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Todman first welcomed those assembled to this very special place which she described both historically and aesthetically. She then indicated that in the interest of time she would forego giving her usual report and simply give two special awards – one Employee of the Month and second Customer Service for the First Quarter.

Customer Service for the First Quarter – Director Todman detailed a scenario about employees who go over and above their regular duties. Inspections of units in the voucher program is one of the most important things DCHA does. A unit must pass the Housing Quality Standards Test to be determined livable. There are upwards of 14 thousand units in our voucher portfolio. When a landlord is cited and abatement should happen sometimes it's lost. There are "I"s to dot and "T"s to cross. The person in the Housing Choice Voucher program who does that is Ms. Gail Daniels, a quiet force in that office. Congratulations.

Employee of the Month – Director Todman acknowledged the next awardee as someone she has known since her tenure at the DC Housing Authority. And she added there is no quiet storm-ness about this sister. She's just a storm and that's a good thing. Sometimes you need the storm. So what's really important to our public housing communities, in addition to just making sure they're livable, we want to make sure we pick up the trash. At the end of last year, we had a very difficult time with a new vendor trash collector. This individual not only was inside the office fighting on behalf of our public housing communities, but took the time to take the contractor by the hand and go to the sites and say, this is the trash you need to pick up. This award is to the wonderful Ms. Melanie Marshall. When she puts her mind to something, you know that something absolutely gets done. On behalf of our public housing communities and the staff, congratulations. Thank you for your help.

Final Award – Director Todman announced the final award for somebody who is not part of the Housing Authority family but has become part of the DCHA Housing Authority family for what she is doing for our youth, particularly at our Benning site, located in Ward Seven. The DC Building Industry Association (DCBIA) has for years gone to our parks and recreation centers and now Ms. Lisa Mallory, Chief Executive Officer wants to do something with our public housing youth. She has worked with her team for the past two years at the Benning Terrace Community. Thank you for your leadership at DCBIA and for all of our families at the Benning Terrace site.

Director Todman announced that after the most formative 14 years of her life it's time for change. She was very proud to be here at DCHA and thanked everyone. She is honored to have been offered the CEO position at a national industry group called NAHRO, the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO). She explained that what NAHRO does is really not a whole lot different than what she does every day, which is advocate on your behalf and to continue to tell the public and the congress and anybody who's listening the importance of not just affordable housing, but public housing, and the voucher program and about the integrity with which we should treat individuals, and how much we owe each other as human beings. So she will be starting that job in June which means she will be quietly exiting this job in short order. She continued that it brings her hardship to say goodbye but the good news is that her office is right here in Chinatown. She's not too far away. Ms. Todman concluded her report with a thanks to her senior team, stakeholders and the dedicated staff at DCHA.

Chairman Thompson thanked Director Todman acknowledging that she will be missed. The next item on the agenda is Public comment on the resolutions. One person was registered to speak on Resolution 17-05.

V. RESOLUTIONS

There were two resolutions before the Board today. Resolution 17-04, To Accept Audit of DCHA for Final Issuance for Fiscal Year 2016 and Resolution 17-05, To Adopt and Publish Final Regulations to Increase the Fiscal Year 2017 Payment Standard Schedule.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Debra Frazier asked to speak on Resolution 17-05. Ms. Frazier asked for an explanation of the 175% fair market rate, is it below or above fair market rate? The resolution also states that it will be in effect as of the date of this resolution. How long will this current standard last? Will it be retroactive? How will voucher holders know what the standard is? Where will it be published and how will we [voucher holders] be made aware of it so we effectively do housing searches? Director Todman responded. The first question speaks to 175% of fair market rent, a definition created by HUD [US Department of Housing and Urban Development]. HUD creates what the fair market rent is for anything that touches its programs in the country. What DCHA is doing is setting a payment standard that will be 175% more of HUD's fair market rent. HUD's fair market rent does not keep up with the pace of the real rents that are happening in the localities. One of the reasons that we are increasing it is because they gave us information about this neighborhood, for example, where it was already outdated at the point that HUD published the fair market rent. DCHA is trying to keep pace with the rent increases in the District of Columbia. To try to stay in those neighborhoods where we have been for the past several years and are now priced out like Shaw, NoMa where DCHA is located, except for the 175% increase, someone with a voucher would not be able to be there. This resolution was originally approved by the BOC last December. It was done as an emergency. Similar to the Council of the District of Columbia, following an emergency, you have to double back and make it permanent. The question about retroactive is that it will last until the BOC approves another payment standard which is usually annually. Ms. Frazier suggested a public forum for the publication of this

information so that voucher holders will know what it is and will have a tool to work with when negotiating with renters.

RESOLUTION 17-04 TO ACCEPT AUDIT OF DCHA FOR FINAL ISSUANCE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

Director Todman explained the purpose of the annual audit, with a description of the Process. This year's audit is a clean audit with no findings. Ms. Todman thanked Ms. Rainbow Lin, Deputy Executive Director for Administration/CFO, for her leadership and for getting us to this point. Director Todman submitted the FY 2016 independent audit to the BOC for acceptance. A question was asked about the general expenses line item. The explanation given was that compensatory absences were being reported in the general expense category. Another question was asked about the conversion of certain public housing properties into the RAD (Rental Assistance Demonstration) program. Director Todman responded that both Columbia and Colorado which are small sites with about 44 units were approved by the BOC some years ago and are now in the final stages of RAD approvals. And finally, the organizational chart did not include the position of Advocate Commissioner nor the HCVP Commissioner. A statement was made that the impact of these dollars on residents would be useful to see. The resolution was properly moved and seconded. The roll was called.

Commissioner Kenneth Council – “yes”
Commissioner Shelore Fisher - “yes”
Commissioner Brian Kenner – “no response”
Commissioner Frank Lancaster – “yes”
Commissioner Clarence Mobley – “yes”
Commissioner Jose Ortiz Gaud – “yes”
Commissioner William Slover – “no”
Commissioner Aquarius Vann-Ghasri – “yes”
Chairman Terri Thompson – “yes”

The vote was seven yes; one no; three absent. The resolution is approved. Director Todman thanked the Commissioners.

RESOLUTION 17-05 TO ADOPT AND PUBLISH FINAL REGULATIONS TO INCREASE THE FISCAL YEAR 2017 PAYMENT STANDARD SCHEDULE

Director Todman noted that Ms. Frazier's questions had allowed for a description of this resolution that will increase the value of our vouchers. Families who want to move to neighborhoods previously out of our reach are now able to do so. Neighborhoods like Shaw, and Trinidad that have a higher rental cost. The BOC's concern to amend the resolution and add language that addresses rents based on where the house is actually located is what is being considered. Attention was given also to the whereas paragraph that speaks to the rent reasonableness standard established by DCHA based on the average market rents in applicable DC sub-markets. The payment standard by definition has to equal up to 175%, and the test is the reasonable rent.

Annually, the DCHA does an analysis by neighborhood to determine what the actual market rents are. The market determines the rent; we created the maximum DCHA will pay. The emergency that the BOC approved in December will end tomorrow. Another question was how many vouchers if any can be put based on moving from 130% to 175%. The answer was that the same issue was raised in December with an agreement to do an analysis and come back to the BOC in June with the numbers. Director Todman acknowledged that the payment standard is adopted by the BOC annually and that there are about 13 thousand families in the voucher program. Another question was if the 175% has any bearing on the AMI? The answer was no it does not. A discussion followed about the difference between 175% and 190% and what a person could pay who wanted to make up the difference. Families are allowed to pay up to 40% of their adjusted income. After a brief discussion about the Trump administration's impact on housing, Director Todman stated that when the actual budget is released there will likely be hits on the public housing program and some modest hits in the voucher program. And she added that the Advocate community is thrilled that we moved to 175%. The resolution was properly moved and seconded. The roll was called.

Commissioner Kenneth Council – “yes”

Commissioner Shelore Fisher - “yes”

Commissioner Frank Lancaster – “yes”

Commissioner Clarence Mobley – “yes”

Commissioner Jose Ortiz Gaud – “yes”

Commissioner William Slover – “yes”

with the understanding that section 8300.2 will be clarified per the Chairman's request

Commissioner Aquarius Vann-Ghasri – “yes”

Chairman Terri Thompson – “yes”

The vote was eight yes, three absent. The resolution is approved.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Thompson reminded those present about the time limits. The following people were called.

RESIDENTS

Valeria Flamer - She talked about the way she was treated when she moved to the Golden Rule Plaza, a building for senior citizens.

Vivian A. Mercer – Ms. Mercer advised that she is in a Single Room Occupancy (SRO) under the Marshall Heights Community Development Organization, at the William Poll Green Manor Building. How can you go from an in house voucher to a regular voucher so you can move to another unit?

Frances Crawford - I will read a letter from the Arthur Capper Riverfront Tenant Association. Our president is Amanda Taylor. She spoke about a breakdown in procedure regarding maintenance and made several suggestions. Accessibility

regarding seniors and entry doors. Security regarding the front desk not covered; the door to the roof not consistently locked and the garage door needing repair. The noise level is not enforced by staff. House rules and community expectations have been violated. Misuse of the laundry machines. There are no rules for use posted. Guest policy and use of the lobby by the tenants needs to be clarified. Recertification process has raised many concerns that confidential information is not handled properly. Rent receipts are not being provided to everyone. The constant turnover of the permanent management staff leaves residents feeling uncertain. Chairman Thompson said that responses will be directly to Ms. Crawford or to the Tenants' Association.

Mary Hamlin - A resident in Arthur Capper Senior 1 since 2010. When we went to see the apartment it had been vandalized-the blinds were bent; there were holes in the walls; and the counter had been burned by a hot pot. This is ongoing. My bathroom is used; my clothes are ripped; animal waste is on the floor. I've been to management. I've been to the police. When asked about a camera, the response was that there is one in the hallway, in front of the elevator, not near her apartment. There was a question about Edgewood Management and the complaints about them, it seems monthly. A recommendation was made to educate and inform the residents about the policy of management.

Debra Frazier - First concern raised was about the HCVP Commissioner not being communicative and how the HCVP community fought to have representation on the BOC. Second concern was about the Community Center not reflecting the concerns of the community- no one to run the center; no response to the needs of the community. She mentioned the formation of the center advisory committee. Third she mentioned several maintenance issues – unlocked doors; marijuana smoking; unclean hallways; trash.

Rebecca Bryson – She is interested in Senior Housing and asked about rent increases, how often.

Mary Harris - Noise pollution is an issue and management is not dealing with it. She has written letters; been in to speak with management; taken them doctor's reports and nothing is being done. Security also contributes to the noise. The doors are left open at all hours of the day and night. Work orders are ignored. My dishwasher has not worked for four months. I will be moving back to Michigan in September

Harold Jackson - Resident Council President, Judiciary House. We need a full time manager or we need Ms. Shirley Glenn back. The building is going through a lot of chaotic things. We have issues with the doors, people coming in and out all night. We have two good security guards.

Karen Settles - Chairperson, Citywide Advisory Board and Resident Council President, Stoddert Terrace. She thanked Director Todman for all of the hard work that she did for the Housing Authority in the years she has been here. Her concern was about the fact that they do not have a Navigator. And she said they should pick their own. She talked about a transition plan preparing for a new Executive Director

Franklin Debruce - Vice President, Resident Council at the Villager. The issue is residential parking. There's no visitor's parking pass, only one parking permit per unit; two people on the lease in the unit may drive, street parking is limited. The other issue is rodents, lots of mice. There is a pest control company that comes but the problem is still there.

Emily Jackson - I'm a resident of Arthur Capper Senior. I've been here for Helen Douglas since the building first opened. There was 24 hour security at that time. Now the door is open and often no one is at the desk. And there's no one to run the community center. Suggestions were made about volunteering. A question was asked about the staffing, programming and running the building.

NON RESIDENTS

Tamara Hill - Ms. Hill explained that she lived with her father and grandfather in subsidized housing all of her life until her grandfather passed away recently and she was unable to get his apartment in the Benning Terrace Complex and is now homeless. She attends college and is getting support from the city in the Women Strong program in Southeast. She is also seeing a therapist. Last month she lost her grandmother. She desperately needs housing. She is in a women's shelter in northeast. She has a disability.

Renee Sukinah Figgers - The owner sold the house I lived in and I got laid off from my job as a daycare worker. I was there for 25 years. I'm seeking housing in the southeast area or northwest. She has been on the DCHA waiting list since 2008.

Charles C. Crews - Mr. Crews is the CEO and executive for Boots on the Ground, LLC and the Vice President for the Client Advisory Council of Bradford City. He's been on the DCHA waiting list for over 10 years. He's been homeless and incarcerated. He's in the unit where his grandmother lived who died December 17.

Tyrone Amos - Mr. Amos is permanently disabled. He applied for Edgewood Commons and Capitol Gateway, and under ADA. He asked that they both be looked at in terms of their management.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Thompson announced that the next DCHA Board of Commissioners meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 10, 2017 at 1:00 pm at Riverside Center, 5200 Foote Street, NE, Washington, DC 20019. Before finally ending the meeting, Commissioner Vann Ghasri spoke about the April 18, 2017 event honoring Ms. Janice McCree a former President of the Langston Resident Council.

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm.