

**Boston Housing Authority RAB Meeting 5-9-19, at 10 Lamartine St. (Anna Mae Cole Center, Hailey Apartments, Jamaica Plain)**

Family Public Hsg: *Members* Val Shelley, Meena Carr, Phyllis Corbitt, Betty Rae Wade, Concetta Paul, Aracelis Tejeda, Ron Johnson, Arlene Carr, Janis McQuarrie. *Alternate:* Nicole Beckles (Alt 1): Meriem Arachiche (Alt 2); Jeanne Archibald (Alt 2): 12

Elderly/Disabled Public Hsg: *Members* Michele McNickles, Rick Gurney, Dave Turney, Arthur Alexander, Eugenia Smith, Eddie Hartfield; Dan Horne. *Alternates:* Vanessa Dobson (Alt 1), Peggy Willis (Alt 1), Anneliese Cooper (Alt 1), Anita Pleasant, St. (Alt 1): 11

Section 8: *Members* Jung Wing Lee, Edna Willrich, Arlette Coleman, Minnie Jackson, Stephen Tracey, Lennox Tillet, Judith Frey, Karen Stram, Therese Browne. *Alternates:* Robin Williams (Alt 1), Georgia McEaddy (Alt 2): 11

Absences excused: Cheryl Semnack, Jeanne Burke-Patterson, Marlena Nania

Others: John Kane. Bob Terrell, BHA; Mac McCreight, GBLS; Judy Burnette, Gabrielle Rene, CLVU; Brandon Gibbs, MSAC; Mae Fripp, CBPH.

The meeting was chaired by Edna Willrich, with assistance from Robin Williams. Phyllis Corbitt was Timekeeper; Val Shelley was Sergeant at Arms. Minutes from the prior meeting were approved.

**1/Assessment of Fair Housing:** Bob Terrell introduced himself to the RAB and said that the BHA and the City of Boston have continued to move forward on an Assessment of Fair Housing and action steps to take, even though HUD put this all on hold. He noted that Boston is one of the most segregated housing markets in the country, and the Assessment includes steps that the City and the BHA will take to desegregate. A coalition of community groups began meeting in 2014, and there's now a 4<sup>th</sup> draft of the Assessment that BHA/City hopes to finalize by the end of June or beginning of July, and then it will go out for a formal public comment and community meetings. Even after the Assessment is complete, an advisory group will continue to meet to monitor implementation and people are welcome to join. The Assessment has 4 basic parts: (a) history & context—how did things get this way; (b) community participation in the draft; (c) summary and analysis (charts, etc.); and (d) goals and objectives. The overall document is very long and detailed, but John circulated to the RAB the 14 goals/objectives specific to the BHA. These include the BHA mobility counseling program. Bob noted that discrimination by source of income is the 3<sup>rd</sup> most common kind of discrimination. Another piece is to amend zoning codes to specific enforce fair housing laws (with the goal of having this be a state-wide effort as well—in many communities, the zoning provisions are one of the primary barriers to desegregation). Another goal is to create a centralized database of affordable housing. A question was raised about what efforts will be done when particular groups are not getting an equal share of the housing that you might think they would based on demographics (for example, it's been pointed out that the Asian low-income community is underrepresented on priority waiting lists); this will be part of a working group. Bob noted that there should be residents on this working group. The discussion ran out of time (John later sent the RAB members a link to get the longer Assessment draft, and they can provide feedback to him and to Bob). .

**2/Mass. Senior Action Council:** Brandon Gibbs reported back on a topic he had come to the RAB about previously—trying to get reforms into Mass. Health, and particularly to expand those who are eligible. He reported that the campaign has been going well, and that it was in the Governor’s bill, the House bill, and the bill just released from Senate Ways & Means. People are encouraged to come to the monthly meetings.

**3/ Mass. Union of Public Housing Tenants conference:** A few people discussed what they had gotten out of the conference. Michele noted that Jerry Halberstadt discussed the proposed legislation to stop bullying in public/subsidized housing. Nicole mentioned that she went to the workshop on knowing your lease. She and Eugenia said it was surprising how many communities don’t seem to have their leases, but only the amendments that are done. Arlene said that while her slot at the conference was paid by her Task Force board, she found the workshop on rents helpful, and that she hadn’t known that you could get the earned income disregard if you went from relatively limited employment to work (as was the case with her son).

#### **4/ Committee Reports**

*Conference Coordination:* Val read the notes from the ad hoc advisory group on possible future RAB trainings/conferences. It was agreed that the budget, space, amount of time, etc. worked for the past conference. There were a number of possible topics identified (in the notes from the meeting) but no clear recommendations on what the next session will be. Karen noted that for the topic of homeless prevention, it should include expiring use.

*Budget Committee:* David noted that past bills have been paid up, so that all the past year’s budget has been used, and BHA issued a payment of \$12,603 for the first installment. There was a question whether this was less than in the past—it was noted that BHA was funding at a similar level, but the old funds had to be spent first. It was asked if the Budget Committee had discussed the question of the new “no fly” restriction for one member that had come up at last month’s meeting; it wasn’t clear what the process was, and so this will be taken up at the next meeting. For the family budget committee vacancy (see last month’s notes), given how busy things were at the end of the last meeting adding new member/alternates, there was never a picking from the hat between Nicole & Janis (the two candidates). In addition, it was pointed out that picking names from a hat really should only occur if there is a tie, and there should be a vote first. The family members voted (except for the two alternates last in order, and there was a 5-5 tie—so Mr. Lee picked a name from a bag, and Nicole won the toss-up. It was pointed out that under the revised guidelines on reimbursements, people should get in their requests by the next meeting, but sign-off is required from the chairs. People said that the bank summary didn’t give them enough information about what an expenditure was for, and David agreed that he would supplement this with material from QuikBooks.

*Policy & Procedures Committee:* Mac summarized the notes from the meeting, but noted that the main request was that the meeting with Bill McGonagle would just have the tenant participation issues as the sole topic, and enough time would be set aside—it may end up being a special meeting. John noted that June’s agenda already appears crowded with topics on Section 8 and Lenox redevelopment, and so this would be for July. In addition, it was moved and seconded that the meeting would be facilitated by someone other than the chairs (perhaps Mac), so that the chairs would be free to talk as well. (This was approved with one opposed.) The

chairs will try to gather feedback from their members so that this can be as organized and businesslike/ professional as possible, sharing questions with Bill in advance, etc.

*Outreach:* Robin noted that an ad hoc planning committee had met and had discussed having a picnic on Saturday, August 10 at the Roxbury Boys & Girls Club, which has both indoor and outdoor space. There was some disagreement about whether the event should solely be for RAB members to socialize, or if it should also be open to task forces, and there was the discussion about whether it would be a catered event or where people would bring their own food/dishes, etc. This will continue to be refined.

**5/ Unfinished/New Business, Announcements:** John noted that he forgot to mention, at the last meeting, that HUD had approved the FY 2019 Public Housing Agency (PHA) Plan. BHA also will be having a public hearing on an amendment to the PHA Plan because of changes in the Section 8 Fair Market Rents (FMRs) that HUD approved, and the option this gave the BHA to implement something called Small Area FMRs which vary by zip code. The public hearing will be on June 11 at 6 p.m. at the Copley library, and the BHA will take comments between May 10 and June 24<sup>th</sup>; David Gleich will be available at the next RAB meeting to discuss this more. (RAB members got handouts about the public hearing and the changed rents and changes to the Section 8 Administrative Plan.) There will also be a presentation about possible changes to the way in which Lenox Street is being redeveloped.

**Evaluation:** Pretty good, more respectful. Would like to see things elaborated more on Section 8.