

Boston Housing Authority RAB Meeting 9-13-18, at 125 Amory Street

Family Public Hsg: *Members* Arlene Carr, Meena Carr, Phyllis Corbitt, Val Shelley, Kassandra Ledesma, Concetta Paul, Aracelis Tejeda, Betty Rae Wade. *Alternates* Janis McQuarrie (Alt 4), Cheryl Semnack (Alt 10): 10

Elderly/Disabled Public Hsg: *Members* Michele McNickles, Rik Gurney, John Maloni, Eugenia Smith, Marlena Nania, Alex Rosin, Modesta Ballester, David Turney. *Alternates:* Arthur Alexander (Alt 1), Eddie Hartfield (Alt 2): 10

Section 8: *Members* Edna Willrich, Jung Wing Lee, Lennox Tillet, Stephen Tracey, Lerona Diggs, Judith Frey, Karen Stram. *Alternates:* Therese Browne (Alt 3), Robin Williams (Alt 4), Georgia McEaddy (Alt 5): 10

Absences excused:

Others: John Kane, St. John Smith, Randi Holland, Joe Bamberg, BHA; Mac McCreight, GBLS; Sarah Byrnes, Mel King Institute; interpreter; Jane Archibald, Commonwealth; Ethel Hall, Section 8.

The meeting was chaired by Michele McNickles. John Maloni was Timekeeper; Phyllis Corbitt was Sergeant at Arms. Minutes of prior meeting were approved.

1/Revisions to the BHA Capital Plan and to the Annual Plan: St. John Smith and Randi Holland presented information about changes to the BHA’s planned federal public housing capital expenditures both for this year and for the 5-year plan; these and other items will require an amendment to the BHA’s Public Housing Agency (PHA) Plan, for which BHA is taking comments between now and October 8 and there will be a public hearing on Tuesday, Sept. 25 at 6 p.m. in the Amory St. training room. BHA initially thought it was going to have a much more limited pool of funding available for capital work based on budget projects (\$17 million, of which much was committed to repay bonds or for operating expenses, etc.)—but the final outcome of the budget (\$27 million), plus decisions by the BHA to shift funding between operations and capital, meant that there would be roughly 3-4 times more funding available than was earlier anticipated. A PHA Plan amendment is required if there would be \$3 million or more additional funding available than was earlier planned. The handout indicated the additional items that would be addressed, and things that were “down the road” were getting bumped up in terms of when work would be done—including expansion of security cameras for family sites (\$1.2 million), and enhancing as deemed necessary for elderly sites. Tripping hazards and aging parking lots would also be addressed. One item that was confusing for people was how this and proposed redevelopment of a site through the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) intersected—say at St. Botolph St. or West Ninth Street. BHA staff clarified that, as discussed later, RAD will provide a source of higher funding that can be used to address unmet capital needs, and so some things might be deferred to be done through that where the RAD plan seems certain (as at St. Botolph). On the other hand, some developments, while on the RAD list, are still being evaluated and may be later (like W. Ninth St.), and in the meantime there was some work that needs to be done. A question was raised whether the security improvements were being evaluated in conjunction with the City’s Elderly Housing Security ordinance (which Mass. Senior Action Council had worked to set up in the 1980’s and had campaigned on a number of

times); BHA staff said they'd need to look into that. A question was asked about the cooling centers; it was explained that in 9 developments, there had been roof installations with coolant, and this equipment was being updated.

Joe Bamberg then spoke about amendments to the Annual Plan in the area of RAD and Mixed Finance redevelopment. He noted that HOPE VI redevelopment was initially how this had taken plan, and referred to the Supplement to the PHA Plan that was on the table. Much of the information was not new in terms of the sites being done—Whittier St., West Newton, Lenox/Camden. Janis said that she had been at a meeting with Beacon for Lenox/Camden, and they talked about 75% of the units being done as Project-Based Section 8 vouchers, and 25% with some kind of BHA voucher. Joe said that this was the new thing and the reason for the PHA Plan amendment. HUD is now allowing housing authorities to “blend” use of RAD and project based Section 8 vouchers where there is a disposition application. This will allow the BHA to get significantly greater financing to secure the necessary capital work. He gave three examples. If you were just talking about public housing operating subsidy (ACC unit), those figuring out the numbers might say, OK, you'll get \$500/month in funding; with RAD, it's a combination of the Operating Subsidy and the Capital Subsidy, and so it might be \$900/month. If it were a project-based Section 8, that could be \$1500/month. He said that BHA was projecting costs of \$70-\$75,000 per unit for the RAD units. HUD had also tightened up the tenant protections for the RAD program, so that there would be the usual 30% of income, etc. rules. In response to questions, he noted that BHA would continue to control the land through 99 year ground leases and this would insure the units were dedicated to low-income use. A couple of questions were asked: (a) what if the current administration required tenants to pay 35-40% of income for rent—would the ground lease protect them? Joe said BHA would probably have to follow any rule that Congress/HUD developed on what rent had to be paid, but the units would remain dedicated to low-income use. (b) what if Congress just decided to stop funding public housing or Section 8? The ground lease would not solve that problem, and everyone would have to grapple with that.

2/ **Public Housing Resident Training Program**: Sarah Byrnes from the Mel King Institute told the RAB that her group has for the past two years been doing a series of trainings for public housing residents, and BHA has agreed to help fund 3 trainings for BHA resident leaders. The first will be at the Julia Martin House, 90 Bickford Street, Jamaica Plain (at the Mildred Hailey Apts. near the Jackson Square T stop) on September 24-25. They were looking for future dates and hosts and welcomed RAB members to sign up and indicate interest. The September training is just about full but they might be able to accept 2-3 more people, but you need to sign up in advance. Mac will do a piece on tenant participation at this. A flyer was given out.

3/ **Committee Recommendation Regarding Removal or Other Sanction for Conduct of Concetta Paul**: Mac reported that on Sept. 12, the informal committee that had been selected at the last RAB meeting (Marlena Nania, Janis McQuarrie, and Karen Stram), along with himself as non-voting member, met to get testimony and formulate recommendations. The Board had previously voted to initiate the process for possible removal under the bylaws based on an email that Ms. Paul had sent to John Kane, BHA liaison, on April 6, 2018; the grounds for removal were limited to this. A summary of the Sept. 12th meeting and recommendations were provided to the Board. Both those proposing action and Ms. Paul recognized that the email was rude, disrespectful, offensive, unacceptable, and crossed the line. There was discussion about what

would be appropriate action short of removal, if the committee wished to consider that. The committee recommended that Ms. Paul: (a) apologize to the RAB, to Mr. Kane, and to others at the BHA who received the email (and the apology needed to be sincere), (b) be barred from running for any RAB office (or elected committee slot) for the balance of the RAB term, and (c) be barred from receiving RAB funding for any RAB events/conferences for the balance of the term, except for the Sept. NARSAAH event for which she had already been listed (there was some question about whether, if she were removed from the NARSAAH list, she could be replaced at this late date or if the money would just be lost). There was clarification from David and others that arrangements for the conference and transportation were such that there could be a substitution. There was a motion (and second) to bar Ms. Paul from attending the NAR-SAAH conference. After some discussion, there was a vote of 11 to bar Ms. Paul from attending NAR-SAAH, and 12 to permit her to attend. There was then a motion and second to adopt the committee recommendation. There was a vote of 22 in favor, 2 opposed, and 5 abstentions. Ms. Paul made an apology to the Board for her conduct. John Kane was not in the room at the time and so Ms. Paul said that she would make a separate apology to Mr. Kane. Several asked that the apology also be in writing, and Ms. Paul said that she would do that.

4/ **Committee Reports:** Rik noted that Policy & Procedures took a break for August and will meet again on September 26. David provided a Budget Report. Betty asked if Concetta's per diem was included (for NARSAAH); David said he hadn't issued that because her status was up in the air until tonight's vote, but that it would be issued now. Judith asked why the budget report went back to 1/18; David said that was a mistake, and it should have been 4/1/18, the beginning of the fiscal year. Judith questioned why there was nothing in the report for an expenditure for food for April, 2018; it was noted that there was no Board meeting in April.

5/ **Secretary Report:** John M. provided a report. He asked that people review their contact information and make sure he had up to date data. He was in the process of making sure that the minutes for the last 8 sessions were on the RAB site. He noted that he didn't yet have the information compiled about past absences, or whether letters had gone to either those with a series of unexcused absences or checking if non-attending alternates wanted to be removed from the list, since he needed to check with records of the past Secretary on this, but will provide this in his next report.

6/ **Attendance for Mass. Union Conference:** It was recommended that 15 be selected for the October Mass. Union conference (selection needed to be done now, since the conference would be prior to the next RAB meeting). Five were initially selected for elderly/disabled: Dave, Arthur, Eddie, Eugenia, and Marlina. Only two requested for family housing (Val and Arlene), and three for Section 8 (Edna, Robin, and Therese). Because only 10 of 15 slots were filled, there were additional elderly/disabled reps who were interested either directly or as back-up—John, Michele, and Rik.

7. **Evaluation:** Decent, better than usual, good chairing.