

**Lower Mills
Tenant Task Force
Bylaws**

Date submitted: _____

**BY LAWS FOR THE LOWER MILLS APARTMENTS ELDERLY/DISABLED
TENANTS TASK FORCE**

ARTICLE I: Lower Mills Apartments 2262 Dorchester Avenue, Dorchester, MA 02124

Section 1 Name: The name of the Task Force is the Lower Mills Apartments Elderly/Disabled Tenant Task Force.

Section 2 Principal Location: The principal location of the Task Force shall be within the Boston Housing Authority's Lower Mills Apartments Elderly/Disabled housing development. The Task Force may change the principal location, which will be effective upon a certificate of the change being filed with the Elderly/Disabled Housing Program.

Section 3 Purpose: The purpose of the Task Force is to empower public housing residents at the Boston Housing Authority's Lower Mills Apartments Elderly/Disabled public housing developments to fully participate in decisions affecting them involving the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) or other agencies, to educate residents regarding their rights and responsibilities, and to enhance economic opportunities and self-sufficiency for all residents.

Section 4 Fiscal Year:

ARTICLE II: Tenants, Task Force, Officers'

Section 1 Tenants

Definition of Tenants: The Tenants of the Task Force shall consist of the residents of the Lower Mills Apartments Elderly/Disabled public housing development of the BHA who have voting rights.

Voting Rights of Tenants: The Tenants shall have rights to elect or recall the members of the Task Force (as described in Article III below), to adopt and revise By-Laws, and to take such other steps as may be necessary to achieve the purpose of the Task Force. The Tenants shall have the right to participate in the Task Force and its committees. Voting rights will be vested in all residents of Lower Mills Apartments Elderly/Disabled development who are 18 years of age or older, or who are emancipated minors who are leaseholders in such developments, as listed on BHA leases or Tenant Status Review (TSR) reports. Residents who have vacated the developments will no longer have voting rights, except in instances where the developments are undergoing redevelopment and tenants of the Lower Mills Apartments must temporarily relocate off site, but have rights to permanently relocate back to the developments. Voting rights can only be exercised by persons present at a Tenants meeting; there shall be no voting by proxy. Each member shall only have one vote.

Meetings: There shall be at least one Tenants meeting a month. At this monthly meeting, members will receive monthly financial reports, and other information as specified by at least five (5) Officers' of Task Force. The purpose of these meetings will be to inform residents on matters of general interest, including the solicitation of input regarding BHA maintenance, modernization efforts, and revisions in BHA policies. Additional meetings of the Tenants may be called by the President of the Task Force (or, in the President absence, the Vice-president), by three (3) members of the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force, or on a written request of ten percent (10%) or more of the Tenants. Written notice concerning such meetings and the proposed agenda items for such meetings shall be provided to all resident households at least five (5) days in advance of the Tenants meetings. Items for the agenda of the Tenants meeting may be added by advance written request of 3 or more tenants of the Tenants. An annual report shall be prepared and presented by the Task Force. There must be a quorum of at least ten (10) members before any action can be taken at a Tenants meeting.

Section 2 Lower Mills Apartments Task Force Officers'

- 2.1 Number of Tenants: The Task Force of the Lower Mills Apartments shall consist of five (5) Officers'
- 2.2 Requirement of Officers' for the Task Force at Lower Mills Apartments: All Officers' shall be active tenants of the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force. If a Task Force Officer no longer has voting rights as a member of the Task Force due to vacating the development (see Section 1.2 above), he or she shall resign or be removed from the Task Force.
- 2.3 Election and Term of Officers': Each Officer of the Task Force shall be elected by the Tenants at the Election meeting of the Task Force, as described in Article III below, and shall hold office for a two year term, unless the Officer resigns, or is removed for good cause by the Task Force, or is recalled by the Tenants. The outgoing Task Force shall serve for a short period after the election of its successors (but in no case more than one month after the election) in order to wrap up and transition business to the new Lower Mills Apartments Task Force.
- 2.4 Attendance of Meetings and Participation in Committees: Officers' of the Task Force are required to attend meetings of the Task Force and tenants and management and to actively participate on at least one committee.
- 2.5 Quorum: Quorum for meetings of the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force is three (3) Officers'. However, if the Task Force is voting on whether to remove an Officer for good cause, to fill a vacancy on the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force, or to recommend amendments to the By-Laws, the quorum for such a meeting shall be five (5) Officers'. **(All tenants should be notified to attend these special meetings).**

- 2.6 Filling Vacancies of Task Force Officers': If a vacancy occurs in the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force prior to the next scheduled election, such vacancy shall be filled by the Task Force. The Task Force shall give written notice of such vacancy to the Tenants and give the Tenants a reasonable period of time (but not to exceed two (2) weeks) to submit names for consideration for appointment to the Task Force. The Officer' so appointed shall hold office only until the next election. Reasonably prompt written notice shall be given to the Tenants and to the BHA of any vacancy caused by resignation or removal of an Officer' and the name and address of the person appointed by the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force to fill the vacancy.
- 2.7 Resignation: Any Officer' may resign from the position by delivering a letter of resignation to the President (or, if the person resigning is the President, the Vice-president). Such resignation shall be effective upon receipt and acceptance of the letter by the Task Force and notification to the BHA.
- 2.8 Removal for Good Cause: Any Officer' of the Task Force may be removed from office for good cause at any time by the Residents at any meeting by a majority vote of the tenants present at such meeting. The following shall constitute good cause: (1) Absence from three (3) Task Force meetings without excuse; (2) Violating the confidentiality of residents; (3) Accepting a paid position with the BHA or a contracted management company at the Lower Mills Apartments Elderly/Disabled development, or a paid position with the BHA in a policy-making or supervisory position, provided however, a Task Force Officer's participation in a BHA advisory capacity, such as on the Monitoring Committee or the BHA Resident Advisory Board, shall not require the Task Force Officer' to resign or be removed from office; (4) Misusing the organization's office or name; (5) Failure to resign after losing tenant-ship in the Task Force, as described in Sections 1.2 and 2.2 above; or (6) Any breach of the Task Force Officers' duty of loyalty to the Task Force or its members; (7) For acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law, or (8) For any transaction from which the Task Force Officer' derived an improper personal benefit. Any action on removal must be preceded by written notice to all members of the Task Force, at least one week in advance of the meeting, stating that the issue of removal shall be considered at that meeting, and stating the grounds for removal.
- 2.9 Meetings of the Task Force Officers': The Task Force shall meet at least once a month at a regular time and place which shall be posted and made generally known to the Tenants. Special meetings may be called by the President (or in the President absence, the Vice-president), or by written request of two (2) Task Force Officers' to the Secretary. Generally, Task Force meetings shall be open to the Tenants, but the Tenants shall not have voting rights at such Task Force meetings. The Task Force can, however, call an executive session and close the meeting (or a portion of such meeting) to all but the members of the Task Force

by a vote of three (3) Task Force Officers'. Written agendas for the Task Force meeting shall be prepared and provided in advance to all Officers' shall be posted at the meeting place where the Task Force shall meet, and shall be made available to the Tenants upon request. Each member of the Task Force shall have one vote, and a member must be present at the meeting in order to determine quorum and to vote; there shall be no voting by proxy or phone.

2.10 Duties: The Task Force shall develop and carry out the policies and programs of the Lower Mills Apartments They shall establish the committees for the Task Force and coordinate their work. They shall report regularly to the members of the organization. They shall represent the interests of the Tenants before the BHA and other groups and agencies. The Task Force shall administer any funds received by the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force responsibly and for the benefit of the Tenants, consistent with the Task Force purpose.

2.11 Powers: The Task Force shall have the following powers:

- (A) Election and removal of Officers;
- (B) Filling of vacancies on the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force;
- (C) Removal of Officers' for good cause;
- (D) Authorization of expenditures;
- (E) Employment of persons as necessary to achieve the Task Force purpose;
- (F) Receiving funds for the use of the Task Force and the Tenants;
- (G) Establishment of a bank account;
- (H) Establishment and revision of committee structure;
- (I) Acting on behalf of the Tenants in matters involving the BHA and regulatory agencies.

Section 3 Officers

3.1 Election of Officers and Responsibilities: The following Officers shall be elected by the Task Force from among themselves at their first meeting following their election by the Tenants:

(A) President: The President shall chair all meetings of the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force, preside over Tenants meetings, represent the Tenants and the Task Force, sign all correspondence on behalf of the Task Force (except as the Task Force may otherwise designate), and exercise general supervision and control of the affairs of the Task Force. The President shall have the normal power to vote in the Task Force and the Tenants and to make or second a motion.

(B) Vice-President: The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President when the President is absent or unable to perform his/her duties.

(C) Secretary: The Secretary shall record and maintain minutes of all Task Force and Tenants meetings and shall insure that proper notice of Board meetings and Tenants meetings is given. The Secretary shall also function as the Clerk of the Task Force under the terms of these By-Laws. In the absence of the Secretary, a temporary secretary may be elected to record the minutes of the meeting concerned.

(D) Treasurer: The Treasurer shall have general charge of all financial affairs of the Task Force. The Treasurer shall ensure accurate recordkeeping with respect to the Task Force financial affairs, and shall sign off on checks authorized by the Task Force. The Treasurer shall provide regular financial reports to the Task Force and to the Tenants on the Task Force financial affairs, and the BHA. All checks issued by the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force shall have, in addition to that of the Treasurer, the signatures of at least the President (or, in the President absence, the Vice-president) or Secretary.

(E) Alternate: The Alternate is to attend all Task Force/Residents meeting to stand in for any of the elected Officers'. The Alternate shall educate themselves on the roles and responsibilities of the other elected Officers' on the Task Force.

- 3.2 Term of Office; Resignation, Removal from Office, and Filling of Vacancies: The Officers' term of office shall be the same as the Task Force. An Officer may resign by giving written notice to all other members of the Task Force. The Task Force may also remove any Officer for good cause by a majority vote. "Good cause" shall be defined in the same manner as in Article II, Section 2.8 of these By-Laws. The Tenants shall fill any vacancies in Officer Positions from the members of the Task Force. The resignation or removal of an Officer shall not be deemed to also be a resignation or removal from the Task Force unless this is stated in the resignation, or the Tenants decision. Any Officer who resigns or is removed from Office shall have the responsibility to turn over any of the Task Force's records and accounts to the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force. Reasonably prompt written notice shall be given to the Tenants and to the BHA of any vacancy caused by resignation or removal of an Officer and the name and address of the person appointed by the Task Force to fill the vacancy.

ARTICLE III: Election of the Task Force by the Tenants; Recall

Elections Every Two Years; Eligibility to Serve on the Task Force: Elections shall be held every two years for the Task Force. All residents in good standing of the Tenants shall be eligible to serve as members of the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force, so long as they are not employed by the BHA in a policy-making or supervisory position and are not employed by the BHA or a contracted management company at the Lower Mills Apartments Elderly/Disabled

development.

Election Committee: The Task Force shall establish an Election Committee to assist the Task Force in conducting its election of the Task Force. No person who will be a candidate for the Task Force may be a member of this committee. The committee shall consist of residents, and can include third-party volunteers who do not reside at the development. The Election Committee shall implement and oversee all election activities as well as ensure the Task Force compliance with all relevant election requirements, including those provided by the BHA's policy, "Participation of Recognized Local Tenant Organizations in the Administration of Boston Housing Authority Local Developments."

Notice of Election Procedures: The Election Committee, working in conjunction with the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force, shall ensure that all voting member households will be given written notice at least seventy-two (72) days in advance of the election of the election procedures. The notice will be delivered to each occupied unit of the development and shall include a description of the election procedures, eligibility requirements, deadline for submission of nominations and for the election, and a copy of nomination papers. To ensure the notice solicits the broadest possible attention of residents and encourages their participation in the electoral process, such notices shall be translated from English into at least the three most appropriate languages for the developments' population. The BHA shall, upon request of the President to the manager of the development, provide copies of these translated materials and assist in their distribution to each household. Such a request must be made to the manager forty-five (45) days prior to the initial election notice, to give the BHA sufficient time to prepare such materials. The Election Committee and the Task Force shall ensure that these time frames for translation of materials are met where necessary to ensure broad participation. The notice of election procedures shall provide clear instructions where nomination papers may be obtained, who is an eligible candidate, and how the nomination form is to be completed, where and when it is to be filed, and the number of residents whose signature is required in support of the nomination. Nomination papers, in addition to being attached to the initial notice, must also be available to residents at both the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force office at 2262 Dorchester Avenue and the BHA management office.

- 1.4 Number of Signatures Required for Nominations: Each candidate for the Task Force must obtain twenty (20) signatures from Tenants in order to be eligible as a nominee for the Task Force. Members of the Tenants may sign more than one candidate's nominating papers. Multiple signatures by the same member on a candidate's nomination papers shall be stricken. (OPTIONAL)
- 1.5 Period for Nominations; Submission of Signatures to the BHA for Verification; Certified Papers Remaining on File: Nominations must remain open for a minimum of at least three (3) weeks from the date of the initial election notice.

BHA shall not certify if they are authentic. To ensure candidates an opportunity to avoid having their nomination papers rejected for an insufficient number of certifiable names, a preliminary inspection of nomination papers by BHA management shall be conducted fifteen (15) days prior to the end of the nomination period. Those candidates who fail to submit nomination papers on or before this preliminary date do so at risk of being rejected from the election. The certified nomination papers shall be maintained on file with the Election Committee and the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force until the following election. **(Optional) (TBA)**

- 1.6 Encouraging Diversity in Candidate Pool: The Task Force and the Election Committee shall attempt to achieve reasonable representation on the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force of all racial and ethnic groups and all geographic areas within the Lower Mills Apartments Elderly/Disabled development.
- 1.7 Notice of Nominations; Encouraging Resident Participation: The Election Committee and the Task Force shall give written notice to all member households by way of leaflets regarding the certified nominees for the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force. The notices shall display a sample ballot with each candidate's name and address listed. Such notices shall be posted in every hallway, management, and Task Force office at a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the election. The Election Committee and the Task Force shall conduct a broad range of activities to encourage resident participation in the election through candidates' nights, providing poster and leaflet materials to candidates for campaign purposes, and/or issuing election reminder notices to residents, consistent with resources available to the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force.
- 1.8 Conduct of Election: The Task Force and the Election Committee shall obtain an impartial third party to monitor the balloting and tabulation processes. At the time of the election, polling stations will be located in an area of adequate size to provide voters a sufficient level of privacy to mark ballots. A secured ballot box shall be provided at each station, and the Election Committee shall verify each voter's eligibility (based on lease and TSR information provided by BHA). The persons staffing the polling stations and acting as third party observers shall be impartial. No candidate for election may be allowed in the polling station other than to cast his/her own ballot. No campaign activities shall be conducted by any candidate or his/her supporters within twenty (20) feet of the polling station.
- 1.9 Notice of Election Results: Within three (3) days of the election, the Lower Mills Apartments Task Force and the Election Committee shall provide notice to the Tenants of the election results by posting the same at both the Task Force office at 2262Dorchester Avenue and at the BHA management office. The Task Force and the Election Committee shall provide notice to the BHA of the election results within ten (10) working days of the election. The correspondence to BHA shall include a list of all Board tenants elected, their addresses, and a description of

election procedures. It shall also include a request for recognition of the new Task Force and a letter from the new members of the Task Force, agreeing to abide by arbitration, consistent with the requirements of BHA's policy "Participation of Recognized Local Tenant Organizations in the Administration of Boston Housing Authority Local Developments."

1.10 Petition for Recall: The Tenants may move to recall one or more tenants of the Task Force during the Officers' term of office. In order for the Tenants to recall Officers', there must be a written petition containing the signatures of at least twenty percent (20%) of the adult household tenants of the development. Such recall petition shall have a clearly stated reason for the recall typed at the top of each page of signatures. The reason for recall is not limited to the reasons for removal for good cause stated in Article II, Section 2.8.

1.11 Recall Election; Limitation on Further Petitions for Recall of Same Officers': Upon receipt of a recall petition in the proper form and with the proper number of signatures, the Task Force shall promptly call a meeting of the Tenants for the purpose of having a recall election. The notice of the meeting shall state the date, time and place of the meeting, the purpose of the meeting, and the grounds stated for recall in the petition. The recall election need not take the form of the general election provided for above. The Tenants shall be free to choose several options for recall, including designation of a particular person to serve as an Officer' in lieu of the Task Force Officers' proposed for recall, or granting the Task Force the discretion to appoint another person as Officer' for the balance of the term. If the majority of the Tenants present at the meeting votes to recall the Officers', the Officer' shall be recalled. Reasonably prompt written notice shall be given to the Tenants and to the BHA of the outcome of any recall election. If the Tenants decide not to recall an Officer', no petition to recall that Officer' shall be considered until a 12-month period has lapsed from the submission of the last petition. This shall not, however, be a limitation on the power of the Task Force to remove a Task Force officer for "good cause" in accordance with Article II, Section 2.8.

ARTICLE IV: Committees

1.1 Standing Committees: The Task Force shall establish standing committees to carry out the goals and objectives of the Task Force. It shall actively recruit the Tenants to serve on committees to ensure democratic participation and to further the goals of the Task Force. The standing committees shall report to the Task Force and to the Tenants on their ongoing work.

ARTICLE V: External Representation

1.4 The Task Force shall appoint representatives of the Task Force who will serve on other boards and organizations.

- 1.5 Any such representative may be removed for good cause at any time by the Task Force at any meeting upon the vote of the majority present.

**ARTICLE VI: Personal Liability of Officers' and Members of the Task Force;
Conflict of Interest**

Section 1 Personal Liability

The Task Force shall not have the power to bind the Residents of the Task Force personally or call upon such members to discharge any debts. The members of the Task Force and the Officers' shall not be held personally liable for any debt, liability or obligation of the Task Force. This provision, however, shall not eliminate or limit the liability of an Officer' or a member of the Task Force for any breach of the Officer' or Officers' duty of loyalty to the Task Force or its members, for acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law, or for any transaction from which the Officer' or Officers' derived an improper personal benefit.

Section 2 Conflict of Interest

- 2.1 The Conflict of Interest provisions of any state or federal statutes or regulations that apply to public housing or non-profit Task Forces shall be in force with respect to the Task Force, including any decisions to hire personnel or to expend funds. No member of the Task Force or members of the immediate families of members of the Task Force shall be employed by the Task Force.
- 2.2 Gifts, goods, services, and funds provided to the Lower Mills Apartments Elderly/Disabled development must be equitably distributed, and no member of the Task Force, members of Committees, or members of the immediate families of such persons shall benefit from such gifts, goods, services, or funds in a manner disproportionate with the benefits received by the Tenants; provided, however, nothing in this provision shall bar members of the Task Force or committee members from being reimbursed for legitimate expenses that they have incurred while acting on behalf of the Task Force.

ARTICLE VII: Amendment of By-Laws

- 1.2 Procedure for Amendment of By-Laws: The By-Laws may be amended by a majority vote of the Tenants at a regular or special Tenants meeting. Any amendments may be proposed by a majority vote of the Task Force. The Task Force shall ensure that written notice is provided to all resident households at the Lower Mills Apartments Elderly/Disabled development at least five (5) days in advance of such meeting. Such notice shall state the date, time and place of such

meeting, that it is proposed that the By-Laws be amended, and a summary of the proposed changes in the By-Laws. Tenants shall be free to propose other changes to the By-Laws at such meeting, but such proposals must be made in writing and shall be read and explained to all persons present at such meeting in advance of being voted upon.

- 1.3 Limitation on Certain By-Law Amendments: No By-Law amendment shall be proposed or adopted which would have the effect of disqualifying the Task Force from recognition as a Local Tenant Organization (LTO) under the BHA's policy, "Participation of Recognized Local Tenant Organizations in the Administration of Boston Housing Authority Local Developments", as the same may from time to time be lawfully amended, or applicable lawful HUD or DHCD requirements governing participation of LTOs in the affairs of public housing authorities. No By-Law amendment shall be proposed or adopted which will be contrary to the provisions of G.L. c. 180 as the same apply to non-profit Task Forces.

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