

Minutes
Public Hearing - 2014 Annual and Five Year Plan
Housing Authority of the City of Bridgeport d/b/a Park City Communities
150 Highland Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06610
Held on Friday, July 11, 2014 at 4:00 PM

Staff present included:

Sharon Ebert, Interim Executive Director and Director of Planning, Development and Modernization Department
Eva Miranda, Executive Office Manager
Robyn Stewart – Human Resources
Edwin Jamora – Chief Financial Officer
Jeff Zimmerman – Information Technology
Jennifer Black – In House Attorney

Others present included:

Alice King-Greene Homes
Catherine Stewart –Harborview Towers
Bettie Cook-Scattered Sites
Janet C. Walker-Harborview Towers
Hadassah Nightingale – Harborview Towers
Kim McLaughlin, PHRN
Richard Tenenbaum, Esq., CT Legal Services

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The public hearing opened at 4:13 pm

Ms. Sharon Ebert, Interim Executive Director, stated the purpose of the public hearing was to review and receive comments on the Authority's developing 2014-2015 Annual Plan. The hearing is in compliance with the United States' Quality and Work Responsibility Act of 1998.

Ms. Ebert gave an oral summary of the changes being made to the Annual Plan. She referenced the following changes that are listed under Section 5.2, Goals and Objectives:

1. Expand and Sustain the Supply of Housing Choice
2. Improve the Quality and Safety of the Living Environment
3. Improve the Energy Efficiency of the Living Environment
4. Promote Household Self-Sufficiency and Asset Development
5. Promote Equal Opportunity and Affirmatively Further Fair Housing
6. Improve and Deliver Quality Customer Service
7. Become a "High Performer" Agency by Improving Operations in All Areas
8. Develop Business Opportunities to Increase Non-Federal Funds

9. Encourage Greater Resident Involvement in HACB Planning and Operations.

Ms. Ebert expanded on:

1. Goal 1, Objective 8, to examine using Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program to renovate Greene Homes, P. T. Barnum Apartments, Trumbull Gardens, Fireside Apartments and Harborview Towers. If feasible, RAD applications would be submitted to HUD for funding. This would allow the Authority to infuse outside private funds into the development allowing the Authority to take the equity proceeds to do capital improvements such as repairs to roofs, kitchens, bathrooms, etc. The cost to cover these repairs far exceeds the monies received from HUD on an annual basis. The goal is to do a study to determine if some of the housing sites are feasible for this program. It would then be brought to the Board for their approval.
2. Goal 6, Improve and Deliver Quality Customer Service: See our residents as clients and deploy a Facebook and Twitter site to improve communication with the younger generation using the social media.

This version includes an update of the Budget, listing the federal and non federal sources of monies currently available. Included also are the new flat rents preapproved by the Board in February 2014.

VAWA compliance has been updated as well as Housing Needs section.

Mr. Richard Tenenbaum, Esquire, of Connecticut Legal Services questioned if the RAD feasibility study would be done as a whole or individually per site? Response: It will probably be done individually. An RFP has not been drafted. If there are monies for services, outside service would be sought to help with the study. The studies would be made in the same time period for all the sites. HUD allows the Authorities to do a portfolio submission. At this point and time it is a little premature to know the route to be taken. Attorney Tenenbaum suggested his office suggests that the RAB be consulted in the beginning and at the end of the feasibility study as each development site has different views.

Attorney Tenenbaum questioned if the housing authority would continue to own the properties when the RAD application is approved: Response: Yes. The housing authority would continue to own the properties; this would be a mechanism to bring some monies to the table to renovate the properties. It would be owned by the housing authority's instrumentality, Baldwin Holdings, Inc. because of the structure. It would not be for any other entity.

Attorney Tenenbaum questioned if the two towers at Trumbull Gardens would be demolished since part of the development was marked for RAD. Response: It has been left open since it is a large development. Originally the initial thought was for the towers; unless there was a strong resident input to include the entire development.

Resident Comments:

Hadassah Nightingale added that at Harborview Towers there has been a lack of consistency with repairing water leaks, etc, and the electricity flickers. Repaired band aids being made are not solving the maintenance problems.

Bettie Cook, Scattered Sites, stated the lack of follow up with the contractors with the repairs at 1810-1812 Stratford Avenue.

At Harborview, the outside of the building is being beautified; however, the painting work inside the building has not been completed. The cosmetic surgery is needed inside the building.

The water smells. It turns brown and it is evident in the toilet bowl. The water is used for bathing and cooking. The tap water should be tested.

Fruit flies or black bugs are present during the summer and winter months in some of the apartments at Harborview Towers. These flies are also visible in the site manager's office.

View and Goals and objectives by CT Legal Services:

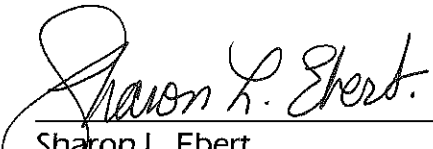
Attorney Tenenbaum commented his concern on the decline of maintenance in the developments. The complaints are many on the conditions and it is the most he has heard in the twenty years he has been in Bridgeport. He is not sure if it is a consequence of the budget or related to the reorganization of the work order structure. It is serious enough that it should a separate cohort of what has to be done over the next year involving other group of residents.

Customer outreach and customer service is a long time coming. Both residents and Section 8 participants will welcome that. Ms. Ebert was complimented for adding and addressing the Customer Service section in this annual plan.

On what date is the waiting list opening? Response: Before the end of summer. It will be posted in our website and newspapers.

The residents have not had easy access to the housing authority's policies; such as the ACOP, Grievance Procedure and Rent Collection Policy. The changes to the policies are not updated on the website. What is listed is an old policy and it does not have a link to nowhere. Now that there are new changes in the website, the Authority's name, staff changes and new goals, this is an opportunity for anyone to find the current policies without requesting copies from staff.

Public Hearing was closed at 4:45.



Sharon L. Ebert
Interim Executive Director