

Boston Housing Authority Resident Advisory Board (BHA RAB) external notes, mtg.
10-12-23

Hybrid meeting at 52 Chauncy Street conference room.

Minutes from prior meeting were approved.

1/ Federal 5-Year and Capital Plan. Randi Holland of BHA presented on this and noted that BHA held regional meetings for all its federal sites, (there were 3 meetings per Region with each meeting including 5 to 7 sites regionally located near the meeting site) which were held at the site that had the most capacity (with transportation arrangements for residents) and/or with Zoom participation. She noted that Zoom cameras are in process of being set up in all community rooms to be able to facilitate exchanges like this. There were 4 main work items identified--

- Elevator upgrades/replacements. This is a big issue at a number of elderly sites. At Barkley, there was a “short” in the existing elevator @ 19 Monsignor Reynolds which meant that the only elevator for a high-rise kept shutting down. New protocols have been set up. At Commonwealth Elderly, some redundancy is being built in, so not reliant on one elevator. Hassan (under construction now) & Torre Unidad (to be bid shortly) will have upgrades. Elevator work is planned for the “3 Sisters” in the South End (Hampton House, Frederick Douglass, and Washington Manor), as well as at Alice Taylor. Elevator work will be done at Patricia White, St. Botolph, and Doris Bunte as part of subsidy conversions.
- Upgrade kitchens/baths. This includes work at Washington Manor & Commonwealth, as well as General Warren.
- Windows. BHA is getting Healthy Housing funding from the City (ARPA) for 5 sites, but will supplement it with Capital Fund. That’s for Franklin Field, Roslyn, Rockland, Barkley & Alice Taylor.
- Ventilation/heating systems. This has been complicated by Mayor Wu’s energy sustainability & carbon reduction goals, so it’s not just a matter of duplicating existing systems as they age, but replacing with new. This includes completing a loop of 7 buildings at Franklin Field, as well as work at St. Botolph (part of the conversion), Pond Street, and Ashmont. An architect/engineer is working on these system designs now.

Randi noted that if an item didn’t appear in the 5-year or annual plan, but work is underway, this might mean one of two things--(a) The funds were allocated in a prior year, and BHA may be getting to that work now (she will report on capital fund obligations for 2018, 2019 and 2020 in next month’s report, along with the state capital plan), or (b) it may be that the site has already been or is in the process of conversion to a

different subsidy (such as Section 8 PBV), and the funding would come out of the Section 8 operating budget rather than from the public housing capital budget.

A RAB member noted that at St. Botolph, the scope of the work keeps changing (originally included both kitchens & bathrooms, but now doesn't include kitchen upgrade), and they haven't had a recent update on the status of the subsidy conversion. Randi said she'd contact Joe Bamberg of BHA to follow up with the tenant organization in the next couple of months.

Randi also noted that Boston Water & Sewer Commission may start to charge BHA unless it has storm water management systems, so that's a feature it's incorporating into sustainability (green roofs or retention facilities). She also noted that the Capital Plan includes supplementing the City's \$50 million for modernization of 2/3 of the Hailey site that isn't otherwise being redeveloped, that Mayor Wu is planning a site visit, and that work should kick off in the spring.

2/ Calendar for FY 2024 Annual Plan. John Kane of BHA presented on this, and noted that this year, BHA was going to have both in-person and on-line options for public hearings, with the "in person" one at 1p.m. at City Hall on Monday, Dec. 11th, and the on-line one the next day 6 pm. The RAB will be receiving materials on both the Federal and State plans at the end of this month, and as usual it will be a lot to review & comment on. He suggested that, as in prior years, it would make sense to move the RAB meetings dates back a week, to the first Thursday in December and January (Dec. 7th and Jan. 4th, respectively), so there can be discussion with the RAB in December prior to the public hearing and enough time in January for the RAB to see BHA's final responses in case there is any last minute feedback before the documents go to HUD. There was some discussion about whether this scheduling would cause a problem because the RAB Budget Committee usually meets the 1st Thursday, but Mac McCreight of GBLs pointed out that later on the agenda, there was the topic of selecting a date for RAB officer elections, and if officers change, Budget Committee composition will change & scheduling of Budget Committee has always been based on what date works best for the Committee members. *It was moved, seconded, and approved to change the dates for the Dec. & Jan. meetings.*

3/ Budget Committee Report. The Treasurer noted that at the beginning of September, there was a balance of \$20,495 in the RAB Budget, and given various disbursements (mostly associated with either NAR-SAAH or Networking BBQ), there was a balance at the end of September of \$10,163.47.

4/ RAB Election & Bylaw Changes. John noted that there was an Ad Hoc Election Committee on Oct. 2nd and shared the notes from that. While efforts so far to secure vendors to do outreach for RAB elections (last done in 2016) hadn't panned out, there

had been some indications of interest by Mass. Union this past week. (A RAB member also said she knew of a vendor.) John will continue to look into this. However, the committee was recommending that Greater Boston Legal Services do the information events & election administration, since they were willing to do this and had done it in the past. It was moved, seconded, and approved to have GBLs have this election role. John & Mac also noted that the Committee recommended some limited bylaw changes to--(a) scrap a reference to a particular election date (since we had missed that), (b) change DHCD to EOHL (since the state agency name had changed for the State annual plan), (c) allow for more flexibility in the range of remote options to encourage resident participation in the nomination & election process (not just email or mail, but possibly on line or phone), and (d) give flexibility for details about nomination ballot, etc., decisions to be jointly decided by BHA/RAB in the event that there was no vendor selected for all constituencies (existing bylaws put this solely on the vendor, and didn't have a default if there was no vendor). A RAB member asked some questions about the bylaw text, and Mac sought to clarify (for example, the bylaw amendments done a number of months ago include a provision to first ask Leased Housing participants to indicate an interest in participating in elections to get follow-up contact, in order to control what could otherwise be fairly high costs). It was moved, seconded, and approved to make those bylaw changes. John noted that while the committee had discussed possible use of stipends in an election committee process (as has happened to support LTO elections), no decisions or recommendations were yet made on that.

5/ Including a Piece in RAB Meetings for People to Share What's Going on with Their Developments/LTOs. A RAB co-chair introduced this and thought it might be a good idea to include in RAB agendas. For example, Bellflower had recently had LTO elections. It was agreed that this was fine to include but was completely voluntary.

6/ Unfinished or New Business, etc.

- (a) Officer Elections—Mac noted that the item on the agenda included whether officer elections should be held in a special RAB meeting on Thursday, Oct. 26th from 6-8. A majority of the board agreed to extend the meeting time 10 minutes to discuss this. John said that the meeting would be hybrid like tonight at 52 Chauncy Street, and the first part would be the elections and the second part would be the officer training (open to others who wanted to participate, but required for those who would be serving as officers.) It was moved, seconded, and approved to hold the officer elections & training on Thursday, Oct. 26th from 6 to 8.

Meeting adjourned without evaluation.