

External Boston Housing Authority Resident Advisory Board Notes/Minutes, Meeting of Sept. 8, 2022

1/ Annual Plan Amendment/Public Hearing Oct. 3rd: Joe Bamberg from BHA noted that there will be a public hearing on 10/3 at 6 p.m. on zoom about an amendment to the PHA Plan to authorize disposition of a vacant parcel at Orchard Gardens (about 2,000 sq. Ft.) He provided slides about this Yeoman St. Piece and indicated that it had previously been part of Adams St. Which was then removed as a public street, and would be sold to F.W. Webb Plumbing & Supply as part of a new facility they're constructing on an abutting non-BHA parcel. BHA had determined that it could not build affordable housing on this spot and this went through a BPDA permitting process finding it was a good use for this vacant parcel. It will be sold for fair value, and BHA can provide more info about how the proceeds can be shared to help benefit Orchard. A number of questions were raised by RAB members about how this would benefit residents (would there be job opportunities? was there consideration whether the land could be used for drug rehab or homelessness?) Joe said BGA thought this would improve use of the land/cleanup/good neighbor, but agreed to get more info including any BPDA findings. It was pointed out that in most dispositions, BHA holds onto the land (such as with redevelopment with private partners), but this would be different since BHA would no longer have the parcel. (BHA has come to the RAB before for vacant parcels like O'Connor Way, but that was used to build non-BHA affordable housing.)

Lueteshia Raymond from BHA said that another part of the public hearing will be used to discuss the BHA's Sheltered Market proposal to try to address inequities in contracting that have disadvantaged Minority & Women Business Enterprises. She will get the RAB a more user-friendly piece on this before the public hearing. This isn't part of the PHA Plan. Someone asked, wasn't it true that these contractors could bid now on BHA jobs? Lueteshia said yes, but there might be factors that disadvantaged them. Mac McCreight from GBLS noted that in Charlestown, residents had noticed that some factors (like extra points for longevity in doing certain work) wouldn't favor newer vendors. In addition, even if the RAB election contracts in the past, we saw that insurance requirements could deter certain vendors (and BHA might want to think about how contracting could be reframed to allow more to get an opportunity). Lueteshia agreed that those were good examples of the problem BHA was trying to address with its new proposal.

2/ Committee Reports: Budget chair gave the Budget Committee report.

3/ Unfinished/New Business:

- (a) *Secretary Report*: The Board authorized, in response to Secretary Report, that a RAB member be removed for lack of attendance, and that an alternate would then be moved up to member status, and approved two requests for leaves of absence.
- (b) *RAB/BHA Webpage*: BHA is in the process of updating the RAB webpage so that external notes will be posted, but given some privacy concerns, it was voted to table the

question whether full names of RAB members would be listed until some clarification is obtained from BHA Legal Department.

- (c) *United Front Against Displacement (UFAD)*: RAB in August had invited UFAD to come to tonight's meeting and in advance to answer certain questions about their organization (after UFAD couldn't make an earlier date in July). UFAD asked if it could do October instead and that it would address the questions in the meantime. RAB agreed that given how hectic the PHA Plan schedule is going to be for fall, it would make sense: (a) not to schedule anything until UFAD addressed the questions; and (b) then to only do it after Annual Plan process is completed. One member voted nay.

- (d) *Mass. Union Fall Conference*: More detail is needed from Mass. Union, but in the meantime 11 people expressed interest or possible interest in attending fall conference at end of October.

- (e) *Announcements*: Mac reminded RAB of the special meeting set up with Bob Terrell of the BHA to discuss Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, for Wed. Sept. 21st at 10 a.m. on zoom. He also noted the day-long conference on BHA redevelopment & tenant empowerment issues set for Saturday, October 15th at the Possible Zone near Hailey Apts./Jackson Square (in-person or on zoom)--registration information should be going out soon. Finally, the RAB Ad Hoc Election Committee will be meeting next week on zoom to discuss next steps in planning for RAB elections in early 2023.