

Boston Housing Authority RAB Meeting 1-10-19, at 125 Amory Street

Family Public Hsg: *Members* Val Shelley, Arlene Carr, Phyllis Corbitt, Betty Rae Wade, Concetta Paul. *Alternates* Janis McQuarrie (Alt 4), Cheryl Semnack (Alt 10): 7

Elderly/Disabled Public Hsg: *Members* Michele McNickles, Alex Rosin, Rick Gurney, Eugenia Smith, Marlana Nania, David Turney. Arthur Alexander. *Alternates:* Eddie Hartfield (Alt 1): 8

Section 8: *Members* Edna Willrich, Jung Wing Lee, Lennox Tillet, Stephen Tracey, Arlette Coleman, Judith Frey, Minnie Jackson, Karen Stram. *Alternates:* Anita Morris-Merriman (Alt 1), Therese Browne (Alt 2), Georgia McEaddy (Alt 4): 11

Absences excused: Meena Carr and Ron Johnson, Family; Modesta Ballester and Jeanne Burke Patterson, Elderly/Disabled.

Others: John Kane, BHA; Mac McCreight, GBLS; Nicole Beckers, Orient Heights; Ethel Hall, Section 8; Tom ***, Hailey Apts; Charina Francisco

The meeting was chaired by Val Shelley; Lennox Tillet was Timekeeper; Dave Turney was Sergeant at Arms. Minutes of prior meeting were approved.

1/FY 2019 Public Housing Agency Plan Comments and Responses: John Kane noted that there was good participation in the PHA Plan process this year, with 50 residents coming to the morning public hearing and 25 to the evening public hearing, with 5 RAB members coming to the hearing (David, Janis, Karen, Stephen, and Arthur) and with Betty, Cheryl, Karen, David, Georgia, Alex, David, and Mac participating with the Reading Committee. He noted that a number of changes were made to the Annual Plan in response to comments and provided 39 page draft on this. If RAB members think that something wasn't accurate or wasn't clear, please contact John by Friday, 1/11 to let him know and he can check with BHA Departments; a final version will go to HUD on Monday, 1/14. (Although HUD is technically closed due to the partial government shutdown, BHA still needs to submit by then and it would be expected that HUD would respond by April 1.) John noted that in a number of areas, such as in Leased Housing and Capital Planning, Fair Housing and Operations, BHA has offered to follow up with the RAB, so the RAB will need to discuss how to do follow up.

2/ Ad Hoc Committee on RAB Training Conference: Arlene reported that more details for the conference on Saturday, March 16, 2019 had been fleshed out. Two vendors had been contacted so far for food, and a third will likely be contacted. Several of the residents for the panels have been pinned down, as well as from private management (Trinity Financial) and interpreters are being sought. RAB members will be asked to volunteer to help with registration, putting up balloons (to show the way from Jackson Square T stop to the Anna Mae Cole Center), and clean-up. In response to a question from Karen, Mac reminded people that there would be 3 sessions of roughly 90 minutes each: I. Why Redevelop Public Housing?, with a presentation by Bill McGonagle, and then a description of how it's happening at different sites; II. Resident Voices, Concerns and Power, with a panel of resident leaders who have gone through or are going through the redevelopment process, identifying issues they've seen that have come up; and

III. What's Similar and What's Different between Public Housing and Section 8, to discuss the changes that happen (and don't happen) when a site is redeveloped in terms of tenant rights and protections. The Board was given two versions of a flyer for the event, and after a motion, second, discussion and vote, approved the version with the blue border. Mr. Lee suggested having a clearer map, and Karen that this was an Information Session (so people didn't think attendance was mandatory).

3/ **Proposed RAB Budget for 2019:** David presented a draft proposed budget for 2019 (starting April 1, 2019), with \$46,000 total and with rough categories. It was explained that the exact figures within a category might change. For example, there was a projection for the spring Mass. Union conference, but it may be that this year's conference will be in Norwood and people would not be staying overnight, which would change costs and how many could go. It was pointed out that things can change over time—thus, taxi costs could go up, or another category go down. After some discussion, there was a motion to table the budget until more information could be obtained on specific line items—this motion lost on a vote of 9 to 8. There was then a motion to adopt the proposed budget, which was approved on a vote of 11 yeases, 8 abstentions, and 2 nos.

4/ **Future Meeting Locations for the RAB:** John noted again that given the closing that occurred at Amory Street and impending construction, the RAB will not be able to meet at Amory Street beyond the meeting in February, and another location for meetings will be needed. He cited a number of criteria to be considered in deciding on a meeting location, either at sites that are BHA controlled, controlled by City Hall, or available through friendly non-profits. Several different possible locations/sites were floated by different people, including St. Botolph, Orchard Gardens, West Ninth Street, Julia Martin House, Tobin Community Center, the Anna Mae Cole Center. the Amory Street Annex building, Roxbury Boys & Girls Club, and Bellflower. John said the Board should put this on the agenda as a major topic for its February meeting and decide. It could also be that people might want to go to a number of different locations and try them out. Edna has secured Anna Mae Cole as a fall-back if needed for the March, April, and May sessions, but this can be discussed and voted on next month.

5/ **Committee Reports:** For the *Policy & Procedures Committee*, Rick noted there was no meeting in December, but there will be a meeting on Wednesday Jan. 23rd at 6 p.m. at the Amory Street Annex.

Arlene gave a report and set of recommendations from the *Budget Committee*, including paying the National Low Income Housing Coalition and Mass Union dues and a change in how reimbursements will be done. It was pointed out that since the recommendations were very long and detailed, it would be hard for people to follow this and know recommendations were being made for Board approval and this should all be put in writing and shared with the Board. In addition, it was pointed out that any change in reimbursement policy should be done prospectively, since people may understandably have relied on past procedures. The committee agreed that no action needed to be taken until its recommendations were written up for the Board's consideration. Questions were posted about members getting reimbursements now for transportation and child care where paperwork had already been submitted; it was agreed that these payments would be processed in the meantime.

6/Unfinished/New Business and Announcements:

Tenants' Rights Training: put in a plug for the Tenants' Rights training (Legal Tactics) that was being done through Mass. Continuing Legal Education which would include an 800-page booklet that Mass. Law Reform worked on, and thought this would be an appropriate expenditure of RAB funds for those who might want to attend.

Attendance Report and Action to Remove Non-Attending Members, to Move Up Two Alternates, and to Ask Alternates if They Wished to Remain on RAB List: In lieu of having a Secretary, Mac prepared a report on RAB attendance from May through December 2018, and noted that two RAB members (Betty Walker and Bettie Cutler, for Family and Elderly/Disabled Public Housing, respectively) had three or more consecutive unexcused absences. Letters were prepared for their removal (with a right to contest if they thought there was good cause), and letters were also prepared for a number of Alternates who haven't attended most RAB meetings to find out if they wanted to still be listed or not; these would be signed by the chairs, rather than by the Secretary (since there is none at present). Mac noted that if the Board removed Betty Walker and Bettie Cutler, then Ron Johnson would move up to be a Family Public Housing Member (and Janis and Cheryl would move up in alternate order—they've regularly attended for Family Public Housing) and Eddie Hartfield would move up to be an Elderly Disabled Public Housing Member. A question was raised whether the Board needed to wait to move people up until the letters went out and saw if there was a response; Mac thought not, but that if there was a response, the Board would then need to decide what to do. A motion was made to do this as a package, and it was seconded and unanimously adopted.

Government Shutdown: Janis gave RAB members details about a rally on Jan. 11th to protest the government shutdown/

Additional Family Public Housing Alternate: Arlene proposed that an additional person, Nicole Beckers from Orient Heights, be added as the next Family Public Housing Alternate in order. Nicole introduced herself and explained why she was interested in serving. The Board voted unanimously to add her as the next Family Public Housing Alternate.

7 Evaluation: Need a better explanation of what you're voting on. A lot of distracting/argumentative talking—be more considerate. Meeting would go better if we had heat. Too many sidebars. Productive.