

MINUTES FROM A REGULAR MEETING ON JANUARY 17, 2013

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Orange was called to order at 6:20 p.m. on January 17, 2013 in the Community Room at Washington Manor, 340 Thomas Blvd, Orange, New Jersey. The Executive Director advised that all requirements of the Sunshine Law were met. A roll call was taken as follows:

Present

Chairman Clifford Ross
Commissioner Lillie Davis
Commissioner Joseph Juliano
Commissioner Coram Rimes

Absent

Commissioner Ernest Williams
Commissioner Evelyn Hudson-Dorrah
Commissioner David Rossi

Also Present

Walter D. McNeil, Jr., Executive Director
Ernest Booker, Esq., Feinstein, Raiss, Kelin and Booker
Several Tenants
Several Employees

Pledge of Allegiance was said

Chairman Ross called for a motion to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Davis moved to adopted. Commissioner Juliano seconded. Inaudible

Chairman Ross called for discussion
No discussion
A roll call was taken
All Commissioners voted in favor

Commissioner Williams called for a motion to for the adoption and/or correction of the Minutes from a Special Board meeting on December 5, 2012. Commissioner Davis moved to adopt. Commissioner Julian seconded.

Chairman Ross called for discussion
No discussion
A roll call was taken
All Commissioners voted in favor

Treasurer's Report

Executive Director will email the Treasurer's Report to the Commissioners after the Finance Committee meets with the Accountant, Tony Polcari.

Executive Director Report

Mr. McNeil requested to reserve the report until later.

Public Session

Wayne Richardson of Local 55 Construction introduced himself to the Board of Commissioners. His organization is statewide. He would like to help local residents obtain training/apprenticeships when new developments are being considered in the community. He has worked with other housing agencies under Section 3 to assist families in becoming self-sufficient.

Resolutions

Chairman Ross called for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 5212-13. Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Orange Approving Bills Resolution No. 1846. Commissioner Davis moved to adopt. Commissioner Juliano seconded.

Chairman Ross called for discussion
No discussion
A roll call was taken
All Commissioners voted in favor

Chairman Ross called for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 5213-13. Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Orange authorizing the Executive Director to advertise and hold a Public Hearing on the Annual Plan for fiscal year 2013. Commissioner Rimes moved to adopt. Commissioner Juliano seconded.

Chairman Ross called for discussion
No discussion
A roll call was taken
All Commissioners voted in favor

Chairman Ross called for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 5214-13. Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Orange authorizing the Executive Director to commence eminent domain proceedings on the attached properties. Commissioner Rimes moved to adopt. Commissioner Juliano seconded.

Chairman Ross called for discussion

Mr. McNeil stated that after this (resolution) is approved, we will set a date for a public hearing. It has to be advertised within a ten day period. People will have the opportunity to see it in the newspaper. Then we will hold a public meeting. The director explained the process before advertisement is placed in newspaper.

A roll call was taken
All Commissioners voted in favor

Chairman Ross called for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 5215-13. Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the City of Orange authorizing the Executive Director to proceed with the renovations of the community room and administrative offices at Washington Manor.

Chairman Ross called for discussion

Mr. McNeil noted there was a list attached to the packets indicating units we would like to proceed with eminent domain. We have an obligation to do these proceedings. Most of the units (listed) have been subject to mortgage difficulty. Owners are not taking care of the properties. The City is sending Public Works to clean places at additional cost to the City and community. This has a devastating impact on our new developments we are trying to do. We believe we have found the solution for the city and for us to initiate eminent domain proceedings. We are taking possession of the neighborhood and making it better. I want to make it clear. Our objective is not to take people's homes that they are living in and have been in for 20 or 30 years or to displace senior citizens. We are looking at properties that have been the subject of some sort of mortgage issue – nobody is living in the property (137/139 Central Place) except for people squatting there – living there illegally. We want to get them out of there and get these properties up and going. Attached is a copy of the statutes to explain the process (eminent domain). Director McNeil pointed out that the only agencies that

can use eminent domain are the Housing Authorities and the City. It is a very effective development tool.

Commissioner Rimes asked why the Director thinks banks are not interested in going after people with outstanding mortgages? Mr. McNeil replied – that's a national question. They (the banks) haven't been doing it for 6 years across the country. Congress has held banks back because of bank fraud.

Commissioner Rimes asked if these properties that are being taken by eminent domain, and if the property knocked down, why is there still an obligation of the former property owner if there is no property there anymore? Mr. McNeil because he (the property owner) took out a note for \$300,000.00 and the house was used to secure that note. When we go through eminent domain proceedings, we detach the note from the house putting the note on the mortgage owners' responsibility. We take no responsibility at all.

Commissioner Rimes asked what happens to the money we put up to secure the properties? Director McNeil said anyone who has interest in the property can go to the court to vie for those dollars. It is up to the courts how the money will be disbursed.

Commissioner Rimes said so we lose the money we put up in the courts when we go through the eminent domain process? Mr. McNeil said, no. You can consider it our cost.

Chairman Ross said any liens on a property, not our responsibility? General Counsel, Ernest Booker responded, they are distinguished by this action. Mr. McNeil said, that's why it's the best action to do. We did it on Oakwood Avenue. Other Housing Agencies are reluctant to do this. They don't have the money to put up in court. We have redevelopment/replacement money.

A roll call was taken
All Commissioners voted in favor

Chairman Ross called for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 5216-13. Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Orange adopting and approving Department of Personnel one additional title and salary range added for the Housing Authority personnel last amended May 17, 2012. Commissioner Davis moved to adopt. Commissioner Juliano seconded.

Chairman Ross called for discussion

Chairman Ross if there was a survey with the residents on designs on how renovations would pan out? Mr. McNeil stated that was no survey. Meetings were held with the residents. The residents picked out the material for the community room. The architect met with us after that. This is just approving the plan. Then I'd have to come back to you once we process the activity, process contractor. We've already processed the architect that's why you have the design. Once we process the contractor, then we will have a better idea of what we will put before you.

Roll call was taken.
All voted in favor.

Commissioner Juliano received an urgent message and had to leave the meeting (6:57 p.m.)

Chairman Ross called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Rimes moved to adjourn. Commissioner Davis seconded.

Chairman Ross called for discussion

No discussion

A roll call was taken

All Commissioners voted in favor

Meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter D. McNeil, Jr.
Secretary/Treasurer