

Trumbull Housing Authority – December 28, 2016

Trumbull Housing Authority
December 28, 2016
4:00 pm
Community Room of Stern Village

Commissioners Present: Commissioners Paul Niebuhr, Deborah Dowd and Suzanne Fatse

Also Present: Executive Director Harriet Polansky

Commissioners Absent: Janice Kopchik and Suzanne D’Onofrio

The meeting was called to order at 4:38 pm by Mr. Niebuhr in the absence of Mrs. Kopchik. Roll call was conducted followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Past Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Niebuhr to approve the minutes of November 28, 2016 as written. Seconded by Mrs. Fatse and approved unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report

Ms. Dowd reported for the Trumbull Housing Authority for the period ending November 30, 2016. Stern Village and Stern Center had an overall loss of approximately \$15,896. This is attributed to the numerous vacancies in the Village and Congregate reducing the rental income as well as additional legal expenses, the cost of advertising for the wait list and necessary credit checks. The reserve balance is over \$1,519,684 which is approximately \$6,845 for each unit in the entire complex. The overall cash position as of November 30, 2016 shows a balance of \$1,001,229 including the investment account. As of November 30, 2016, we have Accounts Payable of approximately \$64,316 including our PILOT accrual for the current year and the prior fiscal year.

Executive Director’s Report

Ms. Polansky reviewed her Recap from July 1, 2016 through the end of 2016.

A Small Cities Grant for \$800,000 was received by the town. At a meeting on 12/28, bid documents were reviewed from approximately 15 companies. Questions were answered and a tour was given. There will be an addendum to the bid process which will be out next week.

Unfinished Business

Mr. Paul Littlefield read the following statement:

“Thank you, because of my recent grievance, I have this opportunity to address the concern I was raising at the September 26th Board meeting. I was pointing out, when I got interrupted and couldn’t finish, that the law calls for an impartial third party to monitor the voting to elect a Tenant Commissioners, someone who has no interest in the outcome, financial or otherwise.

I want the public to know that you took the recommendation offered by the Stern Village Tenants’ Association, Inc. seriously and you requested that I recruit a monitor for that election to replace Kim

Petrorazio of TOVAH and spare her the appearance of impropriety. I was happy to do so and recruited Lisa Labella and Jon Greene.

It came as no surprise to the Tenants' Association, since we keep in close touch with Village residents and know how most think, that there was a very low turnout for the election of Tenant Commissioner with less than 50 people voting and only 33 of those voted in the election of officers for the non-conforming and competing tenant organization that you, as management, have set up.

The point that I want to leave with this Board of Commissioners is to conduct business according to the Roberts Rules of Order, revised which you adopted, and to have discussions and comments done with order, civility, and clarity as under Federal and state statutes having to do with the management and operation of public housing for the low-income elderly and disabled. Stern Village is for INDEPENDENT living-not a "nanny" community. Respectfully submitted, Paul Littlefield"

New Business

1. THA Board of Commissioners Election of Officers – Mr. Niebuhr moved to approve Mr. Niebuhr as Vice-Chairperson, seconded by Mrs. Fatse and approved. Mr. Niebuhr moved to approve Ms. Dowd as Treasurer; seconded by Mrs. Fatse and approved. The remainder of the positions will be the same.
2. Discussion and possible action regarding the creation of a 501c3 – Section 501c3 is the portion of the US Internal Revenue Code that allows for federal tax exemption of non-profit organizations, specifically those that are considered public charities, private foundations or private operating foundations. It is regulated and administered by the US Department of Treasury through the Internal Revenue Service. Ms. Polansky noted that because the monies are tight with the state and because the State does not have RAP to give, she spoke with CHFA and they suggested a 501c3 to procure monies that might not ordinarily be received. Attorney Scaramosa was contacted as well as Attorney Melanie Roche, who has set up a 501c3 for the Fairfield Housing Authority. The good thing about the 501c3 is that the THA can secure funding that they would not ordinarily be able to secure, such as donations and any money from the state, when available, banks, corporations and the like. After speaking with Attorney Roche, the THA Board of Directors will be the administrators. The completed application will take approximately six months for approval. However, there may be ways to expedite the procedure. She is asking the Board for their approval to move forward with this process. Ms. Polansky noted she is looking for all available avenues to secure income as well as working with the State to receive any money that is available. This will allow improvements and upgrades in the Village. Mr. Niebuhr made a motion to start the process of developing a 501c3. Seconded by Mrs. Fatse and approved.

Updates From the Duly Elected Stern Village Resident Association

Mr. John Vogel noted the Association conducted a meeting and discussed a petition concerning the repair of the sidewalks and walking paths in the Village. This petition was suggested by First Selectman Herbst at a prior Commission meeting. Several signatures have been secured and they will be

contacting all residents before the petition is presented. Ms. Dowd noted the condition of the walkways definitely needs to be addressed. This will be discussed at the next meeting of the Tenants' Association.

Resident Comments

Mr. Niebuhr read the following statement regarding resident comments:

“The “Resident Comments” portion of the THA Board Meeting is an opportunity for residents to provide comments relating to Stern Village. This portion of the meeting is not intended to be a question and answer session. If a resident poses a question to the THA Board, THA Board Members will hold their remarks on that question until the resident has concluded his or her comment. At that point, THA Board Members can choose to answer such questions posed during the comment or decline to answer. Residents will be provided three (3) minutes to speak on matters relating to Stern Village and will not be interrupted by THA Board Members, except for extenuating circumstances such as profanity, slander or verbally attacking another person, or to simply ask the resident to restate or clarify a comment. If a resident is interrupted during their comment, the Acting Chair shall allow the resident additional time to speak for a rough equivalent of the time period of the interruption. If a THA Board Member wishes to remark on the content of a comment made by a resident, he or she will hold that remark until the resident has concluded his or her comment and then state it for the record.”

Paul Littlefield – requested that during snow events, the Board look into hiring a contractor who will come and take care of the secondary exits off the bedrooms. This has not been done in the past and he noted it is a safety issue. Maintenance maintains everything else and they have a lot to take care of. He also thought the Town did not come during the last snow event; maintenance cleared the snow.

Sal Martinez – concerned about the handicapped parking spaces. Only a couple of spaces have an extension which provides easy access for the residents. He spoke about some of the problems encountered by residents who use these parking spaces noting he felt it was a serious issue. Ms. Polansky noted the spaces with the extensions are a combination of two spaces but not all spaces have been adjusted to this size. Ms. Polansky will place something in the newsletter about parking. Mrs. Fatse noted that if there is a grievance, it should be presented to the office so they can remedy any issues.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Niebuhr moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:15 pm. Seconded by Ms. Dowd and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk



December 27, 2016

THA RECAP

PERIOD: JULY 1, 2016 – DECEMBER 31, 2016

\$800,000 Received Through Small Cities Grant

In July the Town of Trumbull received a Small Cities Grant from Governor Malloy to be used for heat pumps for the 186 units in Stern Village. The application process was long and arduous, involving several department heads from the Town of Trumbull and their consultant Larry Wagner of Wagner Associates. Since July, we have been finalizing the specs and working on the bid process. We had a pre-bid meeting on Wednesday, December 28 at Stern Village to review the bid documents with interested parties.

CHFA Asset Manager Visits the THA

Our Asset Manager visited us in July to review our protocols, methodology and requisite forms. We met all the criteria established by CHFA.

Harriet's Monthly Resident Meetings

Harriet's Tuesday Teas are still going strong. I continually update the residents on happenings and we discuss pertinent issues involving their well-being. Jeff Holt our Maintenance Manager has attended a couple of my meetings to discuss work orders, sewer issues, i.e., what to flush and what not to flush down the toilet, alternating sections for mowing and snow removal, and the like.

Security Guard Service

In July we outsourced ICS Security for the Congregate. We have and will continue to work very closely with the owners of ICS Security and their guards to update protocols and deal with potential security issues. Additional cameras were installed in the Congregate to enhance the safety of the residents.

Windows

We replaced fifteen windows in the Congregate with new, energy efficient ones.

Partnering with Goodwill Industries

Goodwill Industries provided the THA with part time assistants, at no charge, as part of their Employment Training program. We have had assistants for the Congregate and for our Maintenance Staff.

Wait List 2016

We opened the Wait List for the month of August. We received 82 applications and 49 out of 82 applicants made the Wait List. We had 12 vacancies (not including units 5, 6, 7 and 8), and filled 11 units. Units 5, 6, 7 and 8 have been set aside to evaluate the potential for a straight rehab with the Board's approval.

GBT

We worked with GBT and Michelle Jakob, Director of the Senior Center to develop a bus transportation schedule to meet the needs of THA residents. We have a dedicated bus driver twice a week for 5-6 hours. For the coming year, we will be working with GBT on improving scheduling and transportation.

Key Fob for Congregate

We implemented a key-fob automatic door system for the Congregate. This has made a huge difference for the Congregants, alleviating the need to manually open the heavy door.

Solar Power

The installation of equipment for solar power was started in September. This was a long, arduous process. The THA will see a savings which will help the Congregate overall. This is a significant achievement for a CT Public Housing Authority to have solar and to implement a green initiative.

Kim Pietrorazio from TOVAH

Based on a grant from the state, Kim has been working very closely with the residents to form a duly elected Stern Village Resident Association for all the residents of the THA.

THA Annual Picnic

Our 2016 picnic was a success! The weather was perfect, the food was outstanding, our DJ Tony Castle got everyone up dancing and we received several donations from our vendors and suppliers to off-set the costs.

Fire Drill

Alex Rauso, Trumbull Deputy Fire Marshall, informed our Congregants about fire drill procedures. We are in the process of creating “What to Do in Case of a Fire” instructions and a “you go here map” for every Congregate. We are going to have several drills in 2017.

Grievance Policy

The THA now has a Grievance Policy based on State statutes. This new policy should help alleviate the need for attorney fees and make any eviction process smoother. Attorney Mike Jankovsky and I diligently worked on this policy for several weeks prior to THA Board approval. Each resident was also provided with a copy of the policy.

Tree Removal

Several dead trees were removed, roots pulled up, bushes pruned, and stumps removed. This should alleviate several problems we have had due to overgrowth and roots disturbing our sewer lines.

Sewer Issues

We continue to have sewer issues and we have hired a company to flush all the lines quarterly. However, it is up to the residents to make sure they are mindful of what goes in the toilet or down the drain.

Circuit Breakers

We updated several circuit breakers since many were obsolete and could cause the panels to burn out.

Funding for Redevelopment and Revitalization

The THA did not get the funding necessary to redevelop and revitalize Stern Village. Our application was flawless - it came down to the necessity for rental assistance. Funding for rental assistance is currently not available. This is not going to impede our constant fight for funding and we are looking at additional ways on how we can rehabilitate Stern Village and the Congregate.

On December 17th, Neil, Daisy and I had a conference call with CHFA and DOH to discuss some funding alternatives and we have provided information for CHFA and DOH to review.

The THA is committed to improve our infrastructure within the realm of affordability.

Annual Inspections

Our annual maintenance inspections started in October. Heather and I updated our inspection form to make it easy to use without losing thoroughness. Maintenance fixed any issues found during inspection and I met with residents who failed some of the categories.

Rent Stratification

We implemented rent stratification for incoming tenants in order to get additional money into the THA. Neil and I worked closely with CHFA on this and with Board approval the new rent is \$400 for an efficiency and \$450 for one-bedroom.

Volunteers from CES (Cooperative Educational Services)

We had student volunteers from CES to help collate, staple, fold and distribute our newsletter. These remarkable students also decorated our Christmas tree and made gifts for our residents. They will continue helping us in 2017.

Job Coaching Program from the State

The THA has partnered with the State to provide job coaching to select individuals that meet certain criteria. In January we will have a CNA at the Community Room and at the Congregate to take residents' blood-pressure and discuss certain issues. All information is proprietary.

Small Cities Grant for 2017

We have started the ideation process for a small cities grant in 2017. We are contemplating new windows (and maybe doors) for every unit in Stern Village.

THA Elections

We had elections for our THA Resident Commissioner and for the Board of the Stern Village Resident Association. Both elections went smoothly thanks to Kim Pietrorazio, who oversaw the entire process. We also had Trumbull residents Lisa Labella and Jon Green help with the election, as well as an intern from the Trumbull Senior Center and Maureen Bova from the Stamford League of Woman Voters.

Wellness Coach

Romy Ganser is our Wellness Coach for the residents of the Congregate and Stern Village. Romy's weekly chair exercises and special yoga classes have been well attended. Romy has worked with several residents on healthy eating, providing techniques for reducing stress and anxiety, and Romy has worked with our Chef to introduce quinoa and other healthy foods to the menu. Starting next Friday, Romy will be teaching knitting, crocheting and felting classes at 10:30 am in the Community Room

Arts and Crafts

Allison Spitzer London has worked with our residents to create beautiful and useful items during her creative expression classes. Our residents are working with a variety of mediums and love attending Allison's classes.

Long Hill Garden Club

The members of the Long Hill Garden Club come to Stern Village on a monthly basis to work with our resident on creating magnificent floral arrangements, based on the season. The members donate their time and often bring homemade food and drinks made from fresh herbs.

Sacred Heart University

We have partnered with Sacred Heart University to provide an internship to one of their students majoring in Social Work. Megan will work with our residents beginning the middle of January. She will do some innovative programs with our residents and be available to discuss issues.

Special Activities

- Susan Pinto from Griswold Home Care Agency held a Make Your Own Strawberry Shortcake Event for the residents.
- Michelle from the Scents-A-bility Project discussed the power of scents and residents made necklaces and were given a healing necklace.
- Unity Pharmacy provided a delicious lunch and discussed Medication Safety.
- Wheel of Fortune was presented by Home Instead Home Care.
- Kaitlin, an Intern from the Trumbull Senior Center, discussed the importance of the File of Life.
- The Residents' Holiday Party was coordinated by residents June Leonard and friends.
- The Trumbull High School Choir preformed for our residents.