

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY
700 COUNTY ROAD
SECAUCUS, NEW JERSEY

This is a condensed transcription of the taped minutes as taken on Thursday, December 12, 2019, The Elms, 777 Fifth Street, Secaucus, New Jersey.

Executive Director Christopher called the meeting to order.

SWEARING IN OF COMMISSIONER

Mr. D'Amico swore in Commissioner Richard Fairman for his 2nd term as a Commissioner of the Secaucus Housing Authority.

Commissioner Fairman noted this is his first meeting prior to August; his non-attendance at these meetings was not related to any lack of responsibility, but a matter of processing appointment papers.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Michael Schlemm
Vice-Chairman Michael Harper
Commissioner Patricia Mondadori
Commissioner Carmine Rivera
Commissioner Richard Fairman

Also Present: Executive Director Christopher Marra
Deputy Executive Director Jake Naszimento
Charles D'Amico, Esq., Counsel to the Authority

Absent: Commissioner Antonio Suarez

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

“Adequate notice of this meeting, as required by the Open Public Meetings Act, has been provided by the filing of a Regular Meeting Notice with the Municipal Clerk, the posting of said notice on the official bulletin board in the Municipal Government Center, and delivery of same to the Jersey Journal on December 18, 2018. This body wishes to advise you that, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 26:3D(1), et seq. (Smoking in Public Buildings), smoking is prohibited while this body is in open or closed session.”

FLAG SALUTE

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES – October 24, 2019

Motion to approve minutes of October 24, 2019 made by Commissioner Harper; 2nd by Commissioner Mondadori.

Closed session minutes of October 24th and September 26th will be given at January 2020 meeting.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)
Absent: Suarez Abstain: Fairman

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS

Motion to approve payment of claims for November and early December 2019 made by Commissioner Harper; 2nd by Commissioner Rivera.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)
Absent: Suarez Abstain: Fairman

FINANCE COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION #2019-25 – APPOINTMENT OF JACKOB NASZIMENTO AS FUND COMMISSIONER TO NJPHAJIF.

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Harper; 2nd by Commissioner Mondadori.

Resolution # 2019-26

(Resolution appointing Jacob Naszimento as its
FUND Commissioner for 2020 to the NJ Public Housing Authority JIF)

WHEREAS, the Secaucus Housing Authority (member) is a member of the New Jersey Public Housing Authority Joint Insurance Fund; and

WHEREAS, the bylaws of said Fund require that each member Housing Authority appoint a FUND Commissioner to represent and serve the Authority as its representative to said Fund; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the Secaucus Housing Authority do hereby appoint Jacob Naszimento as its FUND

Commissioner for the New Jersey Public Housing Authority Joint Insurance Fund for the Fund Year 2020.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS IS A TRUE COPY OF A RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY AT A MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 12, 2019

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5) Absent: Suarez

MONTHLY ACCOUNT BALANCES REPORT – balances through November 30th in Commissioners' package.

NJSEM Update included in package noting reimbursement check for \$27,000 as they miscalculated SHA usage. Paperwork goes up to November 2019, but does not include \$27,000 credit. Credit is from June 2018 through September 2019 where mistake had been made. It covers 2 sets of years. They did not break it down for ED Marra and will be impossible to give Commissioners a true figure up to end of May.

ED Marra will send an email next week updating RAD Capital Repairs Budget vs. Actual Expenses on Capital Repairs that have been done so far. Finance Committee met last week. Commissioner Fairman requested that Finance Committee do a high level review of existing contract with NJSEM to include the notice provisions, if SHA decides to exit, and prepare a decision along that line. Sometimes these contracts have auto-renewal; other provisions can be a bit cumbersome. ED Marra will send NJSEM an email tomorrow that SHA is not committed to joining the next round, which begins in May. They should not include SHA, and should inform SHA when the last possible moment is to be included. This is the 2nd time wrong billing has occurred.

Commissioner Fairman complimented ED Marra about being a bird dog putting a spotlight on this for the benefit of all of New Jersey. Somehow Mr. Marra was the one to find mistake; NJSEM did not find the mistake.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

No bid went out for this as it is Professional Service, and only \$2,500. An agreement was signed with Lee Mestres of Habitech Architect to do minor work at Kroll Heights and Impreveduto Towers. Information was included in Commissioners' package – renovation in bathrooms at Kroll and to repair ground floor at 600 County Avenue, which needs significant flooring and other repairs.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION #2019-25 – MEMORIALIZATION OF FINAL INTER-LOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY AND BRICK HOUSING AUTHORITY

This agreement has not changed in since it was created in 2018 regarding wording other than amount of money Brick HA pays SHA, going from \$55,000 in first year to \$60,000 and beginning October 1, 2019 (retroactively) – they will pay SHA \$65,000 for 12 months. At BHA's November meeting they passed the resolution, sent ED Marra a copy, and sent same agreement. Both Housing Authority Chairmen will sign it and it will be filed away until next August/September.

Chairman Schlemm noted he spoke with Director of BHA and they are exceedingly happy with work that DED Naszimento has done. Keep up the good work and it is a good relationship with Brick.

RESOLUTION 2019-25 (Approval of Agreement with Brick Housing Authority)

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus has entered into an agreement with the Housing Authority of the Township of Brick in order to provide the services of a qualified Executive Director; and

WHEREAS, the services of the Executive Director are enumerated in the agreement for services as previously executed by the Authorities; and

WHEREAS, the compensation to the Secaucus Housing Authority for the Deputy Executive Director's services shall be \$65,000 for a 12 month period beginning October 1, 2019 until September 30, 2020, plus a \$70 per diem travel expense.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus that the attached agreement for services with the Brick Housing Authority be hereby approved for a 12 month period which may be terminated by either party with a 30 days advance notice.

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Harper; 2nd by Commissioner Rivera.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Suarez

POLICY COMMITTEE

ED Marra reminded those in the audience that on April 2018 SHA instituted a No Smoking Policy in all 3 buildings; you can only smoke outside. There are people not abiding by that No Smoking Policy. SHA spent \$5,000 to conduct test done in many apartments, which could have gone to better usage and probably will have to spend \$5,000 again. ED Marra sent out results of test to Commissioners.

Next week letters will be issued, which in some cases it will be first time SHA is acknowledging something – a warning letter. If you received a warning letter, you will now receive a letter from the attorney, which is called “Notice to Cease Letter”. This is an escalation. If you continue to smoke in your apartment, next letter will be from lawyer. When SHA goes to Court, science will be on side of SHA. It won't be that Ms. Shackelford said she smelled smoke or take the stand and say she smelled smoke from Mr. Somebody's apartment. Science will be on SHA's side and it will win.

Mr. Marra's offer of taking a voucher and moving out is still open, but when Mr. D'Amico sends the person the eviction notice, that is gone! Don't ask for a voucher after that. Please spread the word that smokers will have nothing.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Patrick McNamara was the meeting representing Solar Landscape, having met with B&G committee; sent overview of what he's done. Warehouses on County Road are flat roofed gigantic warehouses – they put solar panels on roofs of those and many like them. People in building get money from them. In turn they get the opportunity to sell electricity to companies/individuals and different organizations. There is a special incentive given to them by the State, which is to make sure 51% of what they sell goes to low-moderate income people, like **HOUSING AUTHORITIES**. They would be able to sell SHA electricity at a lower rate than what SHA is getting through NJSEM, which is what Patrick proved in what was dispersed this evening, thereby, lowering SHA costs in our buildings. The Elms doesn't pay a utility bill, but SHA is hoping to lower electricity bill in this building and another, through different methods, this being one of them.

Patrick explained connections from solar panels to SHA goes through a software program, then through utility company. Transition would be seamless. They would be able to lower SHA bills and also able to offer it to residents. They are looking for SHA to be their partner in the project, strengthening what Solar Landscape is showing State of N.J. They met with town officials today, which also supports the idea. Solar Landscape would be the provider and a direct relationship, very transparent. There would be no long-term commitment or penalty for not renewing. Solar Landscape is a local New Jersey company founded in 1985 as a landscape company, having been in solar industry as long as it's been around in N.J. SHA would run 100% on solar without having to put solar panels around the building.

Mr. D'Amico told Patrick he is not comfortable advising SHA to sign the letter to Board of Public Utilities because language in letter is not (inaudible). Does Patrick have a problem with Mr. D'Amico redoing the letter somewhat – not changing (inaudible) that EPA can work with Solar Landscape, but wants to change a few words re: (inaudible). Patrick said that would be fine.

Chairman Schlemm asked about the timetable and what is their estimated time as to when this may happen. Patrick said first round of projects was submitted to N.J.B.P.U. in September 2019 and haven't heard if any of the projects have been accepted yet. If all goes well, about time SHA's contract with NJSEM is up, then Solar Landscape would be ready to go into this. It is possible, but more likely a gap between end of May and when project would be up and running. Solar Landscape will keep SHA, as their affordable housing partner in this process, every step of the way with any information Solar gets. BPU has said they've received a lot of applications for community solar and happy there's a lot of interest. Everyone in solar markets is waiting to hear what N.J. is going to say.

Commissioner Fairman asked if this piece of paper commits SHA. Patrick said no, there is no committal to a contract of any kind. It's a letter of support to memorialize relationship; that Solar Landscape has educated SHA and that they are working toward a contract. Project has to be up and running in order to sign anything. Commissioner Fairman asked if Solar Landscape does actual installation of equipment on the property. Patrick said Solar is the actual installer, workers on Solar's payroll. State wants to see that Solar has a job training program, which they've put together and are working with non-profits throughout the State in local areas where projects will be. Estimation is 6 people per megawatt of solar put up to make them eligible for a certified job. Commissioner Fairman asked if this would run parallel to what Town of Secaucus does. Parallel meaning whatever papers they enter into beyond this, SHA would entertain similar papers – is SHA going to be largely aligned with whatever the town does. Mr. Marra noted SHA is ahead of the town at this point. Mr. Marra said next thing is you enter into a contract; no more preliminary paperwork. Mr. D'Amico added Solar Landscape might get SHA and/or Secaucus – completely independent of each other. Mr. Marra stated SHA is looking for best deal to save on electricity – Solar Landscape or MX (reverse auction). SHA likes Solar Landscape as all electric is sustainable, green and local. Commissioner Fairman just wants communication between town and SHA.

Commissioner Harper asked if Solar is working with any other housing authorities. Patrick said working with Perth Amboy HA and they signed up to be affordable housing partner for a project in Perth Amboy – 3 big buildings owned by Duke Realty; they have big presence in Perth Amboy and want to get PAHA on board.

Patrick added community solar would be about \$8,000 cheaper than what NJSEM charges SHA even with reimbursement. Chairman Schlemm said this would help people in other two buildings. SHA doesn't benefit from it. It is extended to them so tenants would see benefit of lower utility bill through that.

RESOLUTION #2019-27 – INSTRUCTING THE ED TO PROVIDE SOLAR LANDSCAPE WITH SIGNED DOCUMENTS, SUPPORTING THEIR PROJECT.

Resolution # 2019-27

(Resolution authorizing the Executive Director to provide a letter of Support to the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) and sign a Non-Binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Solar Landscape)

WHEREAS, the Secaucus Housing Authority (Authority) is always seeking to identify measures to lower its energy costs and become more efficient and sustainable in the process; and

WHEREAS, The State of New Jersey has passed into law the **Clean Energy Act of 2018**, which established a statewide Community Solar Program. This program allows all community members to purchase their electricity from a single solar installation- regardless of where it is installed: and

WHEREAS, the electricity generated through this program is fed through the grid to ratepayers which are known as ‘subscribers’. The goal is to have at least 51% of the system be low-to-moderate income (LMI) residential subscribers, and for as much of 40% of the system be an ‘anchor subscriber’ – usually a municipality, school or housing authority: and

WHEREAS, Solar Landscape, a New Jersey based business, has submitted and will submit further applications to New Jersey’s Community Solar Energy Pilot Program (“Community Solar”); and

WHEREAS the Authority’ Buildings & Grounds Committee has met with representatives from Solar Landscape, and those representatives have provided to the Authority an Estimated Savings Analysis as an estimate of potential savings should The Authority become a partner; and

WHEREAS, Solar Landscape is seeking the Authority’s support through a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Letter of Support, and an Affidavit. This support does not in any way bind the Authority to Solar Landscape or is to be interpreted as a contract with Solar Landscape for services.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Secaucus Housing Authority Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the Executive Director to provide Solar Landscape with an executed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Letter of Support and signed affidavit to take a first step toward possible partnership with Solar Landscape.

Christopher W. Marra, Executive Director

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Harper; 2nd by Commissioner Fairman.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Suarez

REPORT OF PSE&G MULTI-FAMILY PROGRAM WITH MaGRANN ASSOCIATES

Everyone got report from PSE&G Multi-Family Program. After doing some initial review of project, PSE&G is estimating cost of total project – reduced by \$300,000 to just a bit over \$900,000; are moving forward and back here after holidays. In running with that project, SHA has a notice out to take bids to replace 100 breaker boxes at 777 5th Street. Walk through on December 23rd and bids due on January 7th, 2020; hope to award at January 23rd meeting and by February winner will begin that replacement project.

UPDATE ON REPLACEMENT OF FIRE PUMP AT THE ELMS

In January, fire pump will be delivered to SHA on December 23rd; work being done by A&A Contractors with subcontractors. Montebono is architect and January will begin replacing fire pump, jockey pump and other associated instruments used for fire pump.

UPDATE ON REPLACEMENT OF COMMUNITY ROOM FLOOR AT THE ELMS

During week of December 23rd after The Elms Christmas Party on 12/21st, blinds are coming down; piece of heating equipment coming out; room being painted; new blinds going up – will happen during week of Christmas. Piano has been removed. Either on 12/30 or 12/31 flooring will be taken up; start putting in new flooring for the room. No New Year's Eve Party can be planned. Project must be completed here by January 12th. Room will be used on 1/14/20 – as there will be a long-term problem at 101 Centre Avenue. Bingo players know bingo is held at Kroll Heights. Bingo will be here 2 times then – they are giving SHA their machine.

600 COUNTY AVENUE – REPLACEMENT OF 16 APARTMENT DOORS - Job is completed but SHA hopes to do more than 16 doors a year.

THE ELMS – UPDATE ON WATERPROOFING FOR WATER INFILTRATION

People came to patch up here at The Elms. One rain did put water in a window in Apt. #405. Tomorrow rain is supposed to be harder, #405 will probably get more rain. Hopefully, other apartments will not get rain. Cracks have been taken care of, areas filled in. ED Marra does not anticipate any more leaks on 5th floor. The original contractor who installed windows came to #405 this week, met with tenant and now has a plan for post-holiday to see if they can figure out where water is coming in. Resident has agreed to that.

THE ELMS – CENTRE AVENUE PARKING LOT SINK HOLE – Secaucus Paving has not spoken with ED Marra re: filling in sink holes in that parking lot. He has no idea if it can be done in the middle of winter. It will be done as soon as weather allows.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM – DED NASZIMENTO

November and December numbers: increased expenditure by almost \$12,000, which was by design. SHA identified an additional amount of money which SHA has chosen to obligate for half of expenditures with hopes that HUD will award SHA a larger amount of money next year.

4 families are searching for housing outside of Secaucus; and 5 families searching within Secaucus. SHA is not issuing any new vouchers at this time.
CORRESPONDENCE - A memo was in package about offset lawsuit with U.S. Department of Housing.

OTHER

OLD BUSINESS: - Greg Kohl, since April, has been in this building helping Harry. He installed 50 stoves and changed 50 older hot water heaters. By Thanksgiving Greg had changed all but 2 hot water heaters. For SHA it was a significant savings of money – if done by a plumber cost was \$125/hour taking 6-8 hours to do it. Greg doesn't make \$125/hour – even if he took 6-8 hours, it was not that costly. SHA plan for him is – it's been 10 years since new hot water heaters were installed underneath kitchen sinks at 600 County Avenue, so beginning in February Greg will be sent over there to change older ones in need of upgrade. When he did stoves, it allowed Harry to do turnovers and other items.

NEW BUSINESS – Commissioners given sample of resolution that Affordable Housing Board passed last evening. There is an approved project to build 116 apartments at end of Paterson Plank Road – Schmidt Concrete on left – redeveloped into 116 apartment buildings of which 23 will be affordable.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Package contains annual meeting schedule notice for 2020. It will be approved this evening and noticed in newspaper. In 2020 NARHO will hold their summer conference in NYC. Normally, SHA doesn't attend as travel costs would be expensive. It is the fourth Thursday, Friday and Saturday of July. It is possible meeting date will be changed, which will be decided in July.

Motion to approve Annual Meeting Notice made by Commissioner Harper; 2nd by Commissioner Rivera.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5) Absent: Suarez

REMARKS OF CITIZENS

FRANCES - #506 – asked about problem with bed bugs. ED Marra answered 2 units with them are being treated; had 2nd of 3 treatments. Tomorrow is bi-monthly extermination for building.

BETTY - #604 – she has a problem with someone smoking since May 10th. Chairman Schlemm said ED Marra working on problem; science on SHA's side and plans are forthcoming that whatever has to be done, will be done. Vent on left side of building allows blowing into her apartment. Is there anything that could be put on vent to prevent it from blowing in. Mr. Marra thinks vent to her is possibly blowing in; someone will come and look at it. Betty said someone tried it once, but it didn't help.

ANGELA - #405 – she is one that found 3 cockroaches. People come into Community Room every Saturday and make a mess; do not clean up what's left on the table. Chairman Schlemm said it will be looked into. One woman suggested security cameras on each floor – packages stolen, Christmas ornaments taken; bread trays purchased for Tenant Association also taken. ED Marra asked them to come to the office and speak with him.

#505 – Man said that outside laundry room there are 2 bins of trash and strip of fly paper hanging, which is disgusting. Could it be removed?

MARY ANN - #318 – thanked ED Marra for helping her with kitchen situation, however, her shower is still backing up, not black water but is filling up. ED Marra asked her if Harry has checked out bathroom within past 3 days – she said no.

PATRICIA - #206 – shared a photo on her cell phone of trash. ED Marra noted there is no garbage pick up on Saturday & Sunday. Every Monday morning at Kroll Heights, 2 women show him photos of trash on 2nd and 4th floor. Commissioner Rivera formerly lived in Kroll Heights, but now is at Exchange Place. The trash room looks the same at Exchange Place every Monday even though they are paying \$2,200 for a 1-bedroom apartment. Recycling goes out on Friday as late as possible, and every day here, but the week-ends are a different story. He has no alternative place in any building.

PHYLLIS - #601 – spoke about cleaning service. Is it going to be changed? ED Marra is considering changing them – all he will say about it at this time. They've worked for SHA for six months.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Harper; 2nd by Commissioner Rivera.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5) Absent: Suarez

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez