

STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY  
700 COUNTY AVENUE  
SECAUCUS, NEW JERSEY  
**SPECIAL MEETING**

January 12, 2019

This is a condensed transcription of the taped minutes as taken on Wednesday, January 12, 2019 at Kroll Heights, 700 County Road, Imprevduto Towers, 600 County Avenue, and The Elms 777 Fifth Street Secaucus, New Jersey.

Chairman Schlemm welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Chairman Michael Schlemm  
Vice Chairman Michael Harper  
Treasurer Richard Fairman  
Commissioner Patricia Mondadori  
Commissioner Carmen Rivera

Also Present: Executive Director Christopher Marra

Absent: Commissioner Michael Grecco  
Commissioner Antonio Suarez

ED Marra Executive Marra waived the reading of the Open Public Meetings Act and the flag salute and went right to the order of business.

ED Marra stated that over the past several months both residents, family members of residents, and some elected officials had raised concerns both at meetings, in letters, and in telephone calls that the buildings' conditions were less than adequate. In many cases they stated that the buildings were "dirty." The purpose of calling this Special Meeting was to have the commissioners walk through the three buildings 26 total floors, other common areas, and see apartments of long-time residents in order to obtain a first-hand perspective of the buildings' condition.

The group started the tour on the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of Kroll Heights. On that floor we visited Al Danduonno's apartment. Ms. Danduonno has lived in the building since 1993. He is a WW II veteran. His apartment was repainted and received a

new rug in 2009 and 2010, respectively. ED Marra also showed the commissioners the compactor room on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors. We talked about what happens to these rooms during the weekends which residents have spoken about at meetings. The Commissioners also stopped on the third floor and looked at the vestibule and bridge that takes resident out of the building and onto County Avenue. Finally when we arrived back at the 1<sup>st</sup> floor we entered the laundry room. Commissioners noted how well the room appeared, especially behind the dryers.

The group then moved onto Impreveduto Towers. While walking over the bridge two items were spoken about

- **The brightness of the lights on the bridge.**

- Do we need brighter LCD LIGHTING?

- Can we clean the light fixture to make it brighter?

- We should remove the heating system in the bridge it makes it look old and we do not use it.

We then took everyone to the Penthouse at 600 County Avenue. While in the Penthouse we spoke about the water infiltration at this site and could see the results.

- **Cove base has peeled back**

- The cove base along the wall where the windows are have peeled back as a result of water infiltration.

- Also perhaps we could replace the ceiling tiles in the library

- Also, old equipment in the Penthouse may be able to be discarded

Next the group went to the Community Room. We looked at the roofs that were repaired right outside the community room, as well as the rug and the public bathrooms.

While we were in this area, I showed the commissioners a door that Joseph Junewicz was working on. This was either someone's front door or a bedroom door from inside their apartment. All these doors are original from 1986. The door has a piece of laminate or contact paper as some saw it layered over it. Over the years due to heat, lighting, and natural light this laminate/contact paper begins to deteriorate and peel away. I told commissioners that they would see this as they go through the building on resident's front doors.

As we moved through 600 County's upper floors, I again showed the commissioners the compactor rooms. We talked about how these rooms in this building do not have the same "issues" as 700 County and 777 Fifth Street because there are only 8 units per floor. Finally, when we go to the 8<sup>th</sup> floor we

visited Bernice Calder. Ms. Calder has been in her apartment since 2002, 16 years. Ms. Calder's apartment was very nicely kept. However, she told us that her unit has not been painted since she moved in and that she has not had a new rug, since she moved in.

After Ms. Calder's apartment we moved through the other floors. Three items were noticed during this walk.

- **8<sup>th</sup> Floor ceiling south end**

At this point in the ceiling appeared to be flaking  
Not sure if from water infiltration or possible hot water heater leak from past.

- **Hallway lighting**

Are hallways too dark, do we need more light?

- **Front Doors to Resident's Apartments**

As we walked through the floors commissioners saw the condition of the front doors of many resident's apartments. They saw the problem and suggested that perhaps we need to – overtime – say 2 floors per year, replace the front doors for all units (16 doors per year) with a metal door that would last longer and not show the wear that the current doors do.

We then went to the Ground Floor, where we walked to the end and then outside to where the side steps are located. The result of this walk was:

- **Staircase on south side of 600 County**

This staircase installed probably in 1986 is no longer viable or meets code. It was suggested that the staircase be removed and the area landscaped.

- **Water infiltration on south end of ground floor**

It was clear that on the south end of the building there is water infiltration which is visible on the wall and on the rug.

The group then met walked up to the first floor and convened in the central area outside Joseph Junewicz office. ED Marra reminded commissioners that the building had not been painted (common area only) since the summer of 2005 – 14 years. The rugs (common area only) had not been changed since the winter of 2008-2009 – 10 years.

Commissioner Fairman raised the issue – (Which had been raised earlier upon exiting an elevator at 600 County that perhaps the windows in the building did need to be cleaned, especially those in which visitors to the building see on a regular basis.

ED Marra's response was that it was possible that windows could be cleaned, especially in common areas, but that if we began to clean tenant's windows, we could raise the expectation that it would become a regularly scheduled activity.

It was determined that we would seek prices from professional window washers for 600 County Avenue.

The group then got into their respective cars and traveled to The Elms.

Once there the group convened outside the laundry facility and then inspected the public restrooms located on the first floor. After that the group went to the 6<sup>th</sup> floor where we saw the condition of the rug and began to walk the halls.

ED Marra reminded the commissioners that the building had last been painted in the summer and fall of 2009 – almost ten years ago. As we walked through we again inspected the compactor rooms. We then stopped at apartment #405. This resident Ms. DeLeo moved in on November 1, 2018. Her apartment had experienced water infiltration - even though new windows had been installed.

As we continued down the building we looked at the common area windows, the window treatments, common area furniture, and the patios located on floors 2 and 3.

Finally as we got to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor I reminded the commissioners that the 1<sup>st</sup> floor had been repainted and re floored in February/March 2018, due to the flood.

Prior to entering the Community Room Commissioner Fairman brought to ED Marra's attention wiring that was exposed over the inside front entrance door. He asked if it could be encapsulated like the cable wire. ED Marra stated that he would look into it.

Finally we ended up in the community room of The Elms. During our portion of the meeting here ED Marra laid out the following scenarios for the commissioners:

ED Marra reading from prepared notes told the commissioners the following: The authority had approximately \$2,500,000 that must sustain itself over the next 13 years. The authority took a 15 year loan with a 20 year amortization from Bogota Savings Bank. The Authority has completed two years of that loan.

It always assumed that at the conclusion of year 15, the Authority will refinance the existing debt (as their will be a balloon payment) and seek additional financing for future capital repairs to the three properties.

The Authority has 2 major bank accounts. One account identified as The Rehabilitation Account was to fund 4 projects:

- 1) Replacement of rooftop air handler at 600 County Avenue (Completed)
- 2) Roof removal and replacement at 777 Fifth Street & 600 County Avenue (almost completed) **(These are thought of as 2 projects)**
- 3) Retrofit of The Elms from all electric heat to either gas heat or the use of split system (not started)

The other account is identified as the IDRR or Initial Deposit for Reserve Replacement Account. This account started out with \$1,000,000. In year 1 of the loan we deposited \$55,000. Each month of each year of the loan we must deposit funds into this account. This is referred to as our Annual Deposit for Reserve Replacement. Each year that amount is increased by 2%. In our fiscal year of 4.1.18 we deposited \$56,100 or \$4,675 per month. This will be the major fund we use when making any repair other than the three cited above. For example we used it for the repairs to the elevators at The Elms. (\$275,000)

The last item estimated cost is between \$850,000 and \$1.1 million. This investment will produce a cost savings for the Authority with the estimated payback being 12 to 14 years. There is also some possibility that grants could be received from PSE&G to help offset the cost of this improvement. However, those grants are not guaranteed.

The Authority has also preliminarily investigated the idea of sub-metering people's apartments at 777 Fifth Street, thereby reducing the Authority's cost. However, this idea has received negative feedback from the SHA accountant. This type of project would preserve the Authority's funds for a longer period of time.

ED Marra concluded that no matter what, the authority needs to take action and move forward on some type of energy savings project. In addition, we also seriously look at the projects such as painting and flooring in buildings that have not had it done in excess of 10 years. ED Marra noted that within two years, Kroll Heights would also join that list.

Finally, we went outside into the courtyard of The Elms and ED Marra pointed out to commissioners cracks in the east side (southern wing) of The Elms which were most likely the cause of water infiltration into people's apartments on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors. He stated that he would have to get Michael Malpere to come out and investigate these cracks and provide ED Marra with a proposal to repair the building.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m. in the Community Room at The Elms with a motion from Commissioner Rivera and a Second from Commissioner Fairman. All voted in favor.

Submitted by Christopher Marra