

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

June 23, 2022

This is condensed transcription of taped minutes as taken on Thursday,
June 23, 2022, Imprevduto Towers, Secaucus, New Jersey.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Vice-Chairman Michael Schlemm
Commissioner Richard Fairman
Commissioner Raj Pardasani
Commissioner Carmen Rivera
Commissioner Antonio Suarez

Also Present:

Executive Director Christopher Marra
Charles D'Amico, Esq., Counsel to the Authority – On Zoom
Deborah L. Alvarez, Secretary/Transcriber

On Zoom:

Chairman Michael Harper
Commissioner Patricia Mondadori

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 Annual 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 12, 2021. This body wishes to advise you that no smoking in building,”

FLAG SALUTE

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES – May 26, 2022

Motion to accept minutes made by Commissioner Suarez; 2nd by Commissioner Pardasani.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)
ABSTAIN: Fairman/Schlemm

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS – JUNE 2022

Motion to approve payment of claims made by Commissioner Schlemm; 2nd by Commissioner Rivera.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (7)

INTRODUCTION OF MLAK HASSAN – GRADUATE OF SECAUCUS H.S. AND RECIPIENT OF A NJNAHRO SCHOLARSHIP

ED MARRA: Each year SHA writes to participants in Housing Choice Voucher Program – 17/18 years old; TO submit an application for a scholarship to New Jersey NAHRO. They have a scholarship that was traditionally \$2,000 for each year that you are in college, maintaining a certain grade point average. 1st recipient went for 4 years – got \$8,000. Over next 2 years, individuals got scholarships but for a variety of reasons, mostly associated with pandemic as they didn't care for online, never got any more money than first year. This year, Ms. Hassan submitted her application; process changed in way those applications reviewed; began to score them. A perfect score is 25. If you score between 20-24 points, you wouldn't get \$2,000 annually; you'd get \$3,000. Ms. Hassan was high scorer of 8 applicants that submitted it – 23 points. Today at NAHRO meeting, all applicants were awarded their scholarships and Ms. Hassan received \$3,000 per year.

MS. MLAK HASSAN: I'm going to NJIT; majoring in Biology and a concentration on Neuro-biology. My end goal is to be a Psychiatrist. Graduating high school tomorrow; very excited to go to college.

ED MARRA (reading little bit of summary written about Mlak's application): You are currently a Senior at Secaucus H.S. with GPA of 3.115; studying at NJIT and would like to become a Psychiatrist. Her essay she wrote about importance of education instilled in her from a young age, as she watched her father continue his education earning his Master's Degree at age of 50. Having access to a quality education is a privilege that she will not take for granted. Has many hours of volunteer work assisting at Hudson Regional Hospital, participating in Secaucus Community Park Clean Up Days and received First Responder Training. Mlak feels her life's purpose is to provide useful assistance to people who are struggling with their mental health. Her Human Anatomy Teacher Daniel Roberto indicated Mlak challenges herself academically, receiving honor roll. She participates in numerous hours of community service and is a caring individual always willing to lend a hand. Michael Kelly, English teacher, wrote: Mlak has a great personality and is one of the nicest students I have every had the pleasure to know. She is an intelligent leader and works hard inside and outside of the classroom. (The letters were sealed when received by ED Marra.) Secaucus has gotten 4 scholarships over last 5 years. She has been offered an Internship job for next summer; please see me in March.

Thank you for coming and thank you to your Mom. (Applause.)

(Audio low for those on Zoom. Using ED Marra's iPhone as access. Vice-Chairman Schlemm conducting meeting at this point.)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE COMMITTEE

V/C SCHLEMM: Monthly account balances provided. (No questions.) Annual Audit for FY 3/31/22 – will be done on July 26-27; Finance Committee meeting with them at end of audit. SHA received check for \$140,287 – These were fund secured through a joint lawsuit of NAHRO and PHADA which had been taken from Housing Authority in 2012; SHA made a \$5,000 investment with lawyers for law suit – thus check for \$140,287. Finance Committee has requested funds be deposited in the long term capital account with Bogota Savings Bank. Amount received was a percentage of whatever your surplus was; SHA doing well at the time – doing some work/ideas what to do, which curtailed a bit of what SHA was planning on doing.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE - nothing at this time

POLICY COMMITTEE

SMOKING POLICY – Smoke Free Policy placed in Commissioners' packets. ED MARRA: Different entities are being contacted including insurance company and HUD, and various housing authorities similar to SHA to see what their experience has been with their rules and enforcing the Smoke Free Policies.

TENANT SERVICES – We had a Fire Prevention seminar with 30-40 at each building; all questions asked that were asked at last Commissioners' meeting – why no fire extinguisher in apartment, etc. Mr. D'Amico explained ED Marra went into #406, smelled smoke, wrote to tenant – if this went to Court – Ronnie Gallo in Court would say I fixed sink and saw ashtray on such & such a day. ED Marra told residents they are going to have to participate in same Court action – if they can actually testify that they saw person smoking in building or saw evidence of smoking in apartment, whether your friend of 30 years or someone's apartment that you visited – you have to do that as that is only way, if we go to Court, that will help us, or like Betty Burke in The Elms – she writes down every day that she smokes marijuana – have a log – re #606 as man in #406 smoking marijuana – going up vent, she smells it.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

THE ELMS PROJECT

This project was to go out for bid, but we have now submitted application to Hudson County Community Development Block Grant Program, SHA cannot go out to bid until it has been awarded grant; can't award contract before getting grant. I related this to V/C Schlemm: if you recall this is a resurfacing & taking out existing windows and EIFs of building. Some discussion re: instead of returning in electric baseboard heater and an air-conditioning unit. We put in a split system. Lee Mestres spoke with me Tuesday. Basically, he said we aren't doing split system. Lee has calculated cost would be in hundreds of thousands of dollars for electrical work going on behind walls. We do not know what is behind some walls; that we should stay with a/c and electric baseboard. Building will be much more sealed up as there will be 3 windows in living room, one in bedroom whereas some apartments have 6 windows; some studios have 10. This is biggest change to project.

Lee submitted items to them and Town of Secaucus providing SHA services of Millennium Strategies at no cost to us, company they hire to do all grant writing. Secaucus not getting any Community Development money, SHA is. We should thank Mayor Gonnelli and Counsel and Gary Jeffas for that generosity.

Balances of Buildings & Grounds projects

Geocon Industries should start replacing the front apartment doors by middle of July in Imprevduto Towers. Excel Elevators has been sending information to me and architect – cut sheets of what inside of elevator will look like; equipment of what elevator is going to look like, making sure it's meeting architect's experience. Don't think it will start until after Labor Day, based upon supplies.

Today and past 2 days, the three properties access system has been switched. Several here need to get their new fobs this evening.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM - March through May report was given out.

RESOLUTION #2022-25 – APPROVAL OF THE SUBMISSION OF SECTION EIGHT MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (SEMAP) CERTIFICATION FORM TO HUD

(Resolution #2022-25 was introduced at May's meeting, but no action was taken. Secretary Alvarez brought it to ED Marra's attention when transcribing May's minutes.)

SHA submits each year SEMAP – Section 8 Management Administrative Assessment Program – which is submitted to HUD each year. It is recommended that after we all took classes through NAROD (ph.), we are supposed to submit Resolution to Board before you submit it to SEMAP. I haven't done it in 11 years; always had great scores.

Motion to approve submission to HUD of SEMAP Certification made by Commissioner Suarez; 2nd by Commissioner Rivera.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (7)

REMARKS OF CITIZENS

LINDA CROWLEY - #304 – In laundry room, “slop sink” needs to be replaced, it is very dirty. Heights has new slop sink and faucets. Benches out front of building are falling apart and wobbly; need to be replaced. Concrete just outside entrance of building – it is rotting and inside also (Linda shared photographs on her phone with ED Marra and Commissioners). When it rains hard, rain enters vestibule.

Commissioner Pardasani asked about cost and Commissioner Suarez asked if she had mentioned it to anyone else? ED MARRA: Slop sink was first time; bench I've heard about. Concrete, Linda kept forgetting to mention. Linda usually comes to my office.

DEBORAH - #902 – Umbrellas are broken outside and need to be replaced.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Suarez; 2nd by Commissioner Pardasani.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (7)

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez
Secretary/Transcriber

MEETING ADJOURNED: 7:45 P.M.