

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

July 27, 2023

(This is condensed transcription of taped minutes taken on Thursday, July 27, 2023, Kroll Heights, 700 County Road, Secaucus, New Jersey.)

(Prior to opening of the public meeting, Executive Director Christopher Marra introduced 3 recipients of the NJNAHRO Scholarships. Areeba, Betsabe and Bryan each told the Board about themselves and their plans for the future.

AREEBA SIDDIQ will receive \$3,000; she is planning to attend Penn State/Altoona, PA and hopes to become an attorney. Areeba was a devoted student, active in her community, partaking in multiple extracurricular activities.

BETSABE PAULINO will receive \$2,500 and planning to attend Fairleigh Dickinson to study Forensic Psychology. Betsabe is diligent, hard-working and disciplined.

BRYAN REYES will receive \$1,500, and a senior at Union City High School. He plans on attending Hudson Community College. He is first in his family to attend college. Bryan is polite, level-headed and responsible; he has perseverance in adversity and is hard-working. Bryan will be taking Business Administration and Trading Market courses.

(Tape recorder not turned on until later in the meeting.)

Chairman Michael Harper called the meeting to order at 7:10 P.M...

ROLL CALL;

Present: Chairman Michael Harper
Vice-Chairman Antonio Suarez
Commissioner Raj Pardasani
Commissioner John Bujnowski
Commissioner Richard Fairman

Also Present: Executive Director Christopher Marra
Stephen Natoli, Esq.
Deborah L. Alvarez – Secretary/Transcriber

Excused: Commissioner Patricia Mondadori
Commissioner Michael Schlemm

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

“Adequate notice of this meeting, as required by the Open Public Meetings Act, has been provided by the filing of an 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, 2022. 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 MINUTES – JUNE 22, 2023

Motion to approve Minutes made by Commissioner Bujnowski; 2nd by Commissioner Pardasani.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)
Absent: Mondadori/Schlemm

Abstain: Suarez

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS FOR MONTH OF JULY 2023

Commissioner Pardasani asked about the \$6,000 bill for PEG Service. ED Marra explained and told about HQS Training bill as well. Commissioner Fairman inquired about Verizon's bill. ED Marra said it is paid automatically.

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Suarez; 2nd by Chairman Harper.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Mondadori/Schlemm

REMARKS OF CITIZENS – nothing at this time

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Commissioners received copies of the monthly account balances and also a Memorandum on Transfer of Funds: ED Marra transferred \$980,000 out of one bank to another and looking at several banks with good CD interest rates for various time periods: TD – 6 months @ 5%; Valley National – 12 months @ 4.85%; Bayonne had a rate of 5.25%; and ED Marra looking at Santander as well.

J.A. MONTGOMERY did a Loss Control Report. There will be JIF Training on safety issues via a class on Zoom. ED Marra and Joe Junewicz will be taking it.

Polcari was at SHA for two days doing an audit and then a debriefing with Chairman Harper, Commissioner Bujnowski, ED Marra and Mr. Katchen in attendance. SHA's debt loss ratio is within the range.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Resident Services Coordinator position was previously held by Tanya Oliveros. Group that interviewed was: ED Marra, Linda Fanning and Patricia Mondadori and concluded that Kayla Quintero was best candidate. Kayla will start on September 12th; enrolled in school in Fall of 2023 at Bergen CC in a specific program 2 days a week/Mondays & Fridays. She will work Tuesday, Thursday, Friday part time – 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM – hour for lunch under 20 hours at \$19/hour. When we get to December, end of her classes, whether or not she'd like to

pursue career with SHA. Kayla is animal lover and wants to be a Veterinary Technician, but her interview and issue of dealing with people that overwhelmed other candidates that day.

POLICY COMMITTEE

Employment Practice Liability Program – copy given to Commissioners, which happens every 2 years. SHA has to complete several things, which ED Marra will do over next few months; give a form then to Mr. Natoli, he will sign; send to JIF and it helps SHA with our deductibles. If we accomplish these things that they're doing.

At September's meeting ED Marra will send a memo with backup information as there is a lot of money being spent by authorities that are happening in insurance industry which are impacting JIF, which is why SHA's premiums raise so much. I attended a one-day meeting in Atlantic City. SHA has used JIF for the fire and some floods, there are other outside forces impacting premiums. I hope to have better information for you in a more comprehensive manner than just explaining to you verbally.

1. Smoking Policy – Through month of July since June's meeting, no reports have come into ED Marra's office. In Kroll Heights and the Towers there are probably less than 4 smokers out of 175 units. At The Elms, there are probably 10 smokers, which have reduced over time. People are going outside more.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

1. RESOLUTION #2023-17 – SOLAR LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

Motion to table Resolution #2023-17 made by Commissioner Suarez; 2nd by Commissioner Pardasani.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Mondadori/Schlemm

Tonight ED Marra handed out drawing/rendering of The Elms and Information Session for Residents Memorandum being held Monday, July 31st at The Elms. He sent out electronic notices to residents of The Elms. This afternoon between 3:00-4:00 PM he got back feedback; not good, which is why ED having informational meeting. Feedback includes: now they're doing windows, who will put shades/drapes back up? Are they going to drag dirt in/out of apartments? What if they break something, will they pay for it? It's so hot out there, why don't they do it in the spring? Personally, I wish I could move. That was first feedback within an hour of this information session.

ED Marra's plan is: agenda made, going at 11:00 A.M. and 5:30 P.M., having a sign-in sheet. Doesn't anticipate getting 100% of population to come, but hoping for 75% of tenants.

(At this point in the meeting, ED Marra explained the drawing/rendering to Commissioners: Where construction is starting is in (indicating) smaller section in back of building, which impacts: 211/214/215 -- 311/314/315 – 411/414/415 – 511/514/515 – 611/614/615.

Commissioners Suarez, Schlemm and Chairman Harper were on call with contractor via zoom. ED Marra met them 2 times; CEO comes out every time. They are taking project very seriously; discussing what happens in beginning going into apartments. It is clear tenant HAS TO LEAVE APARTMENT; they cannot stay in apartment as workers taking off side of the

building right to their wallboard. Windows have to be taken out from inside apartment and then “pushed out”. (ED Marra used rendering to explain each step to Commissioners.)

Contractor plans to do both sides simultaneously – indicating part on 5th Street (big wing) and back part that faces other area – by setting up electronic scaffolding system where they can go up/down building. Part done last is front part (indicating) as of last meeting with company. Doors will remain open for fire purposes, but people will go out side door. All benches will be removed from that front area for duration of time that work is being done, knowing people will want to sit and watch. Men will be up on scaffolding/a construction area.

People will go back into their apartments at nighttime, sleep there – that is the goal. Some tenants might stay with relatives/friends for 2 days because they can. Entire side of The Elms **will not be pulled off at one time**. Pre-construction meeting minutes given to Commissioners.

INTERIOR PAINTING AT 600 COUNTY AVENUE – Painting in common areas completed – hallways, floors 1-12. Building now 3 colors inside: chic gray, cracked pepper and around doors – ultra pure white to brighten door area up. Building looks much brighter. Painters did empty apartments on turnovers; now painting tenants' apartments. Some tenants had no issues/some tenants had a few issues – which we're dealing with – sometimes sloppiness. Ceilings were being painted as stated in contract, 2 men went into apartments and didn't paint ceilings. Tenant contacted office; office contacted Joe – men brought back in, which is after all furniture had been put back in place. 24-25 tenants know they have to remove items from walls; remove small knickknacks; painters move things to middle & cover; then move it back. By end of August painters should be done – full punch list completed.

Elevators working, floor still an issue, but final payment not made yet. Office was shown how to put weather on, date, time, run news, and put messages in elevator – English/Spanish – about emergency after hours.

COMMISSIONER FAIRMAN: Re: The Elms construction – has company signed and paid for bonding? Bonding reviewed by our Counsel? ED MARRA: Yes, all signed and insurance, part of what they brought to pre-construction meeting. Now going over submittals. Bonding is gone over by Lee Mestres, and has always been doing it for SHA and in order.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM (HCVP)

Report given to Commissioners for May through July. Our SEMAP score was 96, which is good – high performer housing authority. Jake also got those numbers – 96-100. This 96 belonged to Linda Fanning and Angie Oliveros.

REMARKS OF CITIZENS

LINDA CROWLEY - #304/R.I.T – Washing machine #4 out of order for a long time; always same issue that it doesn't empty water. New machine needed. Repair company doesn't fix it correctly. Change machine doesn't work – will not accept bills. Automatic door when coming off 2nd floor, button in process of breaking. Asked about paint on floors in hallways. ED MARRA: If there are funds available next year, there will be new flooring – next year. Carpets down now will be cleaned in a few months. Linda spoke to Bill (always in white van) – told him about R.I.T. brand new slop sink, messy the other day – Bill said don't tell Office, tell him instead. She left note somewhere, other man got angry, told Joe; she showed Joe the

new slop sink with paint in it and folding table; new grocery carts have paint in them also. She was informed men have their own cart. Joe did tell contractor to clean sink; Linda did visit Office, told Linda. Joe went outside with Linda, spoke to Bill. Joe told Linda don't bother the contractors. ED MARRA: He would like it if tenants went to Office or Joe; not getting enough satisfaction out of Joe, come back to Office. Don't want tenants to speak to contractors if tenant thinks something wasn't done correctly. Lee Mestres and ED Marra walk through building when contractor 90% done, talking about items that need to be remedied.

Re: Community Room – once they're done painting, flooring will be changed in it to vinyl tile, as in the Penthouse, over Fall or right before Christmas.

GARY MONGELLI - #215 – Carol and I hear other people complain, but they don't do anything or attend these meetings. Elevators are always too warm and the hallways. Even mailman complained about heat in elevator/hallways. Doors on first elevator close too soon. ED MARRA: Was in The Elms today at 3:30 and that building is in same predicament as here. No A/C in hallways. It is unlikely **forever** that there will be a/c in common areas of Kroll or The Elms. Amount of money to a/c Floors 1-5 would far exceed any funds. If done at Kroll, it would have to be done at The Elms. Fans at end of hallway aren't providing enough ventilation. Way Kroll is built, no windows in middle of building, no access to outside. Maybe figure out a way to put more fans into the hallways or dropped ceilings. Is that possible because of sprinkler system – I do not know.

CAROL – Told mailman to let Office know about the heat. ED MARRA: Will bring in elevator company in, have them test door. SHA doesn't make door timing, elevator does – has to do with regulation from State of N.J. – supposed to be open enough for handicapped people to get in/out. They can make an adjustment.

CAROL: Some people here have COPD, breathing hard for them, can't go into halls or go out to Laundry Room or throw out garbage. I did take their garbage out.

ED MARRA: SHA is Federally funded building; State or Local do not help in funding. Any housing authorities built 1 in 1950-1980 have a/c in hallways except for Impreveduto Towers. They have a/c because there is no way to open windows except in common areas.

There is an information meeting at The Elms on Monday. The Elms outside building is being totally retrofitted, removing entire side of every piece of The Elms, all windows, all air-conditioning sleeves; providing everyone with new a/c, new a/c sleeves, new windows and new siding. Two to 6 people living in The Elms – their apartment gets flooded coming through windows or above windows having a deleterious effect on the building. It will probably be the most expensive project while I'm here. Tenants at The Elms have a portable a/c in their bedrooms, if they want one.

Motion to move into Closed Session made by Commissioner Suarez; 2nd by Commissioner Pardasani.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Mondadori/Schlemm

**SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY
RESOLUTION NO. #2023-20
AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION**

WHEREAS, while the Sen. Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.) requires all meetings of the Secaucus Housing Authority to be held in public, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) sets forth nine (9) types of matters that may lawfully be discussed in “Executive Session,” i.e. without the public being permitted to attend, and

WHEREAS, the Secaucus Housing Authority has determined that 1 (insert number) issues are permitted by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) to be discussed without the public in attendance shall be discussed during an Executive Session to be held on July 23, 2023 at 7:45 P.M, and

WHEREAS, the nine (9) exceptions to public meetings set forth in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) are listed below, and next to each exception is a box within which **the number** of issues to be privately discussed that fall within that exception shall be written, and after each exception is a space where additional information that will disclose as much information about the discussion as possible without undermining the purpose of the exception shall be written.

1

“(5) Any matter involving the purchase lease or acquisition of real property with public funds, the setting of bank rates or investment of public funds where it could adversely affect the public interest if discussion of such matters were disclosed.” The nature of the matter, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality is obtaining financing for a removal and replacement of EIFS, windows, and AC sleeves at The Elms.

“(8) Any matter involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of the performance, promotion or disciplining of any specific prospective public officer or employee or current public officer or employee employed or appointed by the public body, unless all individual employees or appointees whose rights could be adversely affected request in writing that such matter or matters be discussed at a public meeting.” Subject to the balancing of the public’s interest and the employee’s privacy rights under South Jersey Publishing Co. v. New Jersey Expressway Authority, 124 N.J. 478, the employee(s) and nature of the discussion, described as specifically as possible without undermining the need for confidentiality are:

A review of the recruitment for the position of Resident Services Coordinator and the interview process that concluded with Kayla Quintero being hired.

WHEREAS, the length of the Executive Session is estimated to be 15 minutes after which the public meeting of the Secaucus Housing Authority shall (circle one) reconvene and immediately adjourn or reconvene and proceed with business.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of the Secaucus Housing Authority will go into Executive Session for **only** the above stated reasons;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners hereby declares that its discussion of the aforementioned subject(s) will be made public at a time when the public’s interest in disclosure

is greater than any privacy or governmental interest being protected from disclosure. For each of the above items, the estimated date by which such disclosure can be made and/or the occurrence that needs to take place before disclosure can be made are listed below (attach separate sheet if necessary)

Subject of Discussion	Estimated Date	Necessary Occurrence
Financing of Capital Project	7/27/2023	
Personnel	7/27/2023	

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary, at the present public meeting, shall read aloud enough of this resolution so that members of the public in attendance can understand, as precisely as possible, the nature of the matters that will privately discussed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary, on the next business day following this meeting, shall furnish a copy of this resolution to any member of the public who requests one at the fees allowed by N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.

Michael Harper, Chairperson

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS IS A TRUE COPY OF THE RESOLUTION APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE SECAUCUS HOUSING AUTHORITY AT ITS PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON _____ 20__.

Christopher Marra, Secretary

Motion to go back into Regular Session made by Commissioner Suarez; 2nd by Commissioner Pardasani.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Mondadori/Schlemm

2. RESOLUTION #2023-19 – LOAN AGREEMENT WITH THE SECAUCUS AFFORDABLE HOUSING BOARD FOR \$450,000 FOR US AT THE ELMS, 777 FIFTH STREET

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus (hereinafter referred to as SHA) had determined that it needs to procure services for removal and replacement of EIFS, windows and A/C sleeves at 777 Fifth Street (hereinafter referred to as The Elms); and

WHEREAS The Elms is a 100-unit apartment building which opened in 1975. It is for seniors 62+ and disabled; and

WHEREAS, SHA has published in the newspaper an invitation to bid; and

WHEREAS, the SHA received bids from four (4) bidders on May 9, 2023; and

WHEREAS, on the public opening of the bids Blackstone 360, 570 Broad Street, Newark, NJ with a bid of \$1,860,000 for was found to be the lowest responsible bidder pursuant to both N.J.S.A. 40A:11-2 and N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4; and

WHEREAS, the bid submitted by Blackstone 360. has been reviewed by the Habitech Architecture who recommended the contract be awarded to Blackstone 360; and

WHEREAS, the bid submitted by Blackstone 360, Inc. has been reviewed and deemed by the SHA to be both responsive and conforming with all requirements set forth by the New Jersey Public Contracts Law, the bid specifications and the invitation to bid; and

WHEREAS, the SHA only had \$1,410,000 of funds for this project; and

WHEREAS, the SHA submitted an application to the Secaucus Affordable Housing Board (hereinafter referred to as SAHB) for \$450,000 of financing; and

WHEREAS, the SAHB at their July 8, 2023 meeting approved a loan of \$450,000 to the SHA for the removal and replacement of EIFs, windows, and A/C sleeves at The Elms; and

WHEREAS, said loan is to be provided to the SHA under terms that allow the loan to be forgiven in ten (10) years, so long as the SHA keeps the property affordable.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of the SHA hereby finds that the contract for the above captioned work items as described in the bid specifications and drawings, be awarded to Blackstone 360, Inc. in the amount of \$1,309,000; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners hereby authorize and direct the Executive Director of the SHA to execute said contract and take any and all necessary administrative actions to implement this Resolution.

Motion to approve Resolution #2023-19 made by Commissioner Suarez; 2nd by Chairman Harper.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Mondadori/Schlemm

ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Mondadori/Schlemm

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Alvarez
Secretary/Transcriber