

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

February 23, 2023

(Condensed transcription of taped minutes taken on Thursday,  
The Elms, 777 Fifth Street, Secaucus, New Jersey.)

Vice-Chairman Michael Schlemm called meeting to order.

**SWEARING IN OF NEW COMMISSIONER JOHN BUJNOWSKI**

Attorney D'Amico gave the Oath of Office to Commissioner John Bujnowski.

Commissioner Bujnowski gave a quick background regarding living in Secaucus 12 years, Fire Department member, being a tax accountant, married with 5-year old twin boys.

**ROLL CALL**

Present:

Vice-Chairman Michael Schlemm  
Commissioner John Bujnowski  
Commissioner Richard Fairman  
Commissioner Patricia Mondadori  
Commissioner Raj Pardasani  
Commissioner Antonio Suarez

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

Absent: Chairman Michael Harper

ED Marra read the Open Public Meetings Act.

**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, posting of said notice on the official bulletin board in the Municipal Government Center, and delivery of same to the Jersey Journal on December 15, 2022.”**

**FLAG SALUTE**

## **REMARKS OF CITIZENS – nothing at this time**

### **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES – January 26, 2023**

Motion to accept minutes made by Commissioner Mondadori; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Suarez.

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

### **PAYMENT OF CLAIMS – February 2023**

Motion to approve payment of claims made by Commissioner Mondadori; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Suarez.

V/C SCHLEMM: Hotel reimbursement? ED MARRA: 3 Sundays ago @ 6:30 A.M. pipe burst under kitchen of #403, went to #303 to #203 to #103. Stefan was on-call; got at The Elms @ 6:40. Claim put in with insurance company – Rapid Resource. 2 people went to hotels, 2 people stayed with relatives – 1 reimbursement. 2 hotels will be submitted; there is replacements of 3 of 4 kitchen cabinets to be submitted; had to provide new bathroom vanity and sink, which was we had – getting submitted towards our insurance plus whatever Rapid Resource charges. Family was there 2 weeks in hotel – 1 came back Wednesday; other family coming back Friday (tomorrow). People with families are coming back on Monday. Stefan determined it was “shark bite” broke; water came out; tenant woke up in morning – there was delay as she called her son, who called our 800#; then Stefan came. Woman went to neighbors' doors and told them about water coming out of kitchen – not 800# -- then called her son who then called 800#. ED was in Secaucus that morning and saw the mess. \$5,000 is down payment for 3 cabinets - \$4,000 each.

COMMISSIONER SUAREZ: What about shark bites? They have a tendency of going. ED Marra will get report and send out to Commissioners. It was not hot water heater – just regular kitchen pipe. When installing hot water heaters, shark bites not used. Did Magic Touch put them in? We have been using shark bites in buildings over time even on not just ground floor. Spoke to Town and John O'Connor, Town Plumber, they are acceptable use.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)      Absent: Harper      Abstain: Bujnowski

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Effective April 1, 2023 updating change in Annual Deposit for Replacement Reserve; will contribute \$100,000 this year; last year \$90,000. Used to replace funds for Capital Repairs to 3 buildings.

Your folder contains email from NJ DCA approving our 2024 budget effective 4/1/2023. At March meeting it will be adopted; we introduced it in January 2023.

Monthly bank balances report – email sent to Bogota Savings Bank as accounts were generating .40 or .85 have all been raised to 2.0% interest. COMMISSIONER FAIRMAN: Balances should be noted in accounts as SHA has made great progress in investment balances, but yield returns also. Today a 1-year Treasury Bill Note was at auction of 5.01 or 5.05%.

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Tuesday night Commissioners Harper, Suarez and Mondadori interviewed respondent for Legal Services – receiving only one this year. Stephen Natoli is attorney's name. Very good in tenant/landlord items, which is important for SHA at this time. Mr. D'Amico is retiring as of March 31, 2023. Mr. D'Amico great help to ED while here; gave good advice and helped in many cases, which do not always get discussed at SHA meetings. Albeit major but do not need to be brought to Commissioners every single time. COMMISSIONER SUAREZ: Mr. Natoli seemed to have good experience in "this world" as he transitions from that to housing authority matters. COMMISSIONER MONDADORI: Very well spoken.

### 1. RESOLUTIONS #2023-8 – ALL LEGAL SERVICES

#### RESOLUTION #2023-8 (All Legal Services)

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus has need for ordinary legal services for the fiscal year commencing on 4/1/2023; and

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority solicited for proposals for legal services and received one (1) proposal in response to its duly advertised Request for Proposals; and

WHEREAS, the proposals have been reviewed and rated by the Professional Services Committee and it has been determined that the contract should be awarded to the highest rated proposal; NOW THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus that the proposal submitted by:

The Law Offices of Stephen J. Natoli  
766 Irving Place  
Secaucus, New Jersey 07094

in the annual amount of \$24,000.00 and an hourly rate of \$160.00 be hereby approved; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this award was made in accordance with a Fair and Open competitive process in accordance with the rules of the State of New Jersey.

Motion to approve Resolution 2023-8 made by Vice-Chairman Schlemm; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Suarez.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Harper

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – nothing at this time

## POLICY COMMITTEE

SHA has been actively monitoring residents that smoke cigarettes in their apartment, not following smoking policy. As of today, 1 resident who has already been **verbally** warned about smoking in their unit and received first **warning** letter about still smoking in your unit.

SHA doing their best to follow up; residents do provide us with first tip; we follow up in a number of ways so we're accurate when doing this.

Commissioner Fairman: Would it be possible to have monthly report from ED as to violations incurred, status of those violations, i.e. verbal/letter/actionable until SHA gets violation eradicated. ED will include that going forward including this evening; March meeting – any new reports – verbal warnings – will continue to do that as part of our meeting.

## **BUILDINGS & GROUNDS**

Lee Mestres wrote rather involved RFP up for ED; SHA moving towards no longer installing carpet on turn-overs but luxury, vinyl tile on turnovers – more expensive. SHA doing some of it, but also contractor doing some. SHA staff is capable of doing 2 apartments/month, in a month where there are 3-4 turnovers, which is occurring this March – a contractor is needed to do it. Other times, maintenance men could be on vacation – one man takes 2 weeks in July/2 weeks in August historically all 11 years ED has been at SHA. Contractor in place to fill in gaps when needed. Two companies submitted proposals; Lee provided Commissioners with letter about 2 companies – 1 recognized as having lowest, responsible proposal, which is company we have used in the past – Optimum Flooring. Contract goes from March 1, 2023 through 2/28/25.

### **2. RESOLUTION 2023-9 – AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR CARPET, FLOORING & ACCESSORY INSTALLATIONS/REPAIRS ON AN OPEN-END AS REQUIRED BASIS AT ALL BUILDINGS TO OPTIMUM FLOORING**

WHEREAS, The Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus has need for carpet/flooring installation services in order to adequately manage its housing stock at an acceptable standard; and

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority Procurement Policy requires that the Housing Authority solicit for proposals in order to obtain a high level of service at the best possible and reasonable price; and

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority publicly advertised for Carpet, Flooring, Accessory Installation/Repairs on an Open-End as Required Basis at all buildings and requested written proposals for these services; and

WHEREAS, two vendors provided quotations for their services which were tabulated (attached) and reviewed by the Executive Director;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Secaucus that the following contracts hereby be awarded for a term of 24months commencing on March 1, 2023 to:

Optimum Flooring, LLC  
1534 Paterson Plank Road  
Secaucus, NJ 07094

Motion to approve #2023-9 Resolution made by Commissioner Mondadori; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Fairman.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Harper

23 February 2023 – The Elms

At 600 County Avenue SHA currently undergoing modernization of elevator equipment; long project started in November 2022; last meeting ED gave field report. Next week we meet with them, architect and his elevator consultant to get status on where they are in fixing Elevator #1 – by their schedule they are supposed to be completed with #1 by end of March. Based upon emails received, ED thinks they will want more time just to finish #1. SHA has paid them \$155,000, submitted another bill for \$53,000 which architect signed off on. When #2 breaks, as their people on-site, they fix it – which is under the contract. More information will be provided at March meeting.

In your packet also was legal notices for removal and replacement of EIFs and windows at 777 Fifth Street and legal notice for interior painting at 600 County Avenue – dates in there; bids opening is March 21<sup>st</sup>. We won't be able to award those contracts 2 days later, not possible to do that, especially EIFs contract, but don't wait until 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday in April. We may have a special meeting to award 2 contracts maybe 10 days later after Lee looks at those bids, speak to contractor who is lowest, responsible bidder, make sure all AOK. Could be via Zoom.

### **HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM**

Report not completed. It will be updated in March.

### **OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS – nothing at this time**

Commissioner Pardasani asked about bingo machine. ED will speak about it later. ED knows about problem with microphone here.

### **REMARKS OF CITIZENS**

MARYANN - #308 – In December State inspected apartments; letter received; some things highlighted. Why are maintenance men prioritizing painting doors over things that really need to get done in various apartments? ED MARRA: Inspection done at end of October, report received end of November; sent every resident who had a problem in their apartment what would be corrected in their apartment. Important, necessary things were prioritized – broken kitchen floors, leak or some other issue that we did fix. Right now maintenance men are painting doors. That letter also said each door would be painted. Men worked on people's units in December, not just painting. ED knows problem in #308 hasn't been fixed yet. MaryAnn noted her stove is burning the wall. Don't need another fire at The Elms. ED will look at her report.

DIANE - #502 – Moved in in January; had 2 leaks under bathroom sink; water came through all windows in her apartment. Now worried about replacing furniture damaged if water is going to come through windows. ED – leak fixed under your sink. Prior to Diane moving there, windows were replaced for previous resident 5-6 years ago. It's northeast corner – explained Stefan was man on call trying to alleviate all he could do. As ED told her this afternoon, SHA is having a project this summer that will presumably end-all water infiltration issues in apartments that face east; all windows will be replaced in The Elms.

Diane also added cabinets in kitchen are horrible; stained inside; counter starting to crack. ED will take a look tomorrow.

CARLENE - #605 – Exterminator came, but ED's text said they would spray for fruit flies. Never happened. ED had exterminator come back for 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, which had issues for fruit flies and 5<sup>th</sup> floor resident who has had fruit flies since September – person there many, many times and can't figure out where they come from. I will have them come back and service your unit. Carlene: Elevator on left bounced last Sunday night. ED said elevator repair people have been here a number of times. They come in for monthly service; we will tell them.

CARMELLA - #410 – Exterminators previously squirted in cabinets; now just ask if resident has a problem – if you say no – they do nothing and walk out. What kind of a job is that? ED asked if they look into resident's closet. **Unified voices answered no. They do nothing.** ED: Do not say **no, say yes!** Same company for last 8 years, prior to that we had South Jersey company, same 2 men continually – carry spray around with them, inject onto hinge. Now you tell men where to spray – prior to this year that company charged us, based upon – RFP sent out -- \$1.50 per unit to inspect and treat. This year is \$2.00 plus. Never say you don't have a problem, make them look in cabinets as there are 275 units and they are working their way through; only in your unit 90 seconds, now maybe 60-75 seconds. You tell them to look and I will reinforce it when they come next time, but only so many times to remind them. Happy they show up at 9:15 A.M. on Friday; and call them day before to remind them. Same 2 men sent last few times, but when new men, it's a different story. I will remind them to inspect bathroom and kitchen. COMMISSIONER SUAREZ: ED Marra only one person; please tell these people to do their job right. ED will remind maintenance men they need to go into apartments. ED MARRA: Contractors, work people coming into SHA buildings are shocked to see here its clean, no smell of urine, etc., neatness. Our residents are reasons why we don't have problems – 90% -- no bugs, cockroaches. 4-5 years ago we had bed bug and mouse problems. Right before COVID – a 6-month ongoing problem.

CARMELLA: Please change tile above her head in Community Room. ED: It will be changed. No problem. CARMELLA: Laundry – there are 4 machines; they break. ED: There are 4 washers/4 dryers – here is 100 people for 45 years – 4&4 machines worked out. ED was aware that every machine worked. You are saying 1 is down? Voices said yes!

PATRICIA - #206 – People in this apartment building have very messy units; you can't walk into them – why isn't something done about it? ED did something about it based upon exterminator treatment. PATRICIA: Day aides are washing children's clothes – residents see it. ED will not chase aide; if it is your aide, they're doing something wrong, it will come back to resident. ED will chase resident who aide belongs to. If you find out where that aide works, I will go back to resident. Now they're going to get in trouble – sending resident letter as it's as if you are washing children's clothes. CARMELLA: While residents are waiting to use machines. ED: If this occurs during week before 4 P.M. notify Office. We had backup 3 times in February in sewer line as people throwing down disposable wipes. It isn't SHA fault – spending \$5-\$6,000 on plumbing because people in this building throw disposable wipes, **which are not disposable or flushable wipes** down the toilet. Call aide out, take clothes out of washing machine. PATRICIA: When we do say something, aide tells us to mind our own business in foul language. ED: Fine, I will write letter to resident that says this is not allowed. (Discussion followed regarding fact new residents are unknown, people coming in/out of building day/night. Elevators running all the time, doors opening all the time.) ED: This is an 100 unit apartment building – you can't know everyone.

Cameras will not be installing on our floors ever. Someone would have to be hired for amount of calls coming in from all 3 buildings. Issue about items removed from your apartment – a package stolen – call SPD. It isn't specific to this building, it is happening in

society. You are allowed to install a RING Doorbell on your door. SHA is not putting cameras on every floor; we have in elevators, entranceways – enough to see who comes into building/who leaves building.

CARLENE - #604 – Living here has been a great experience.

MARGARET - #211 – Another resident announced to audience that MARGARET was “**Senior of the Year**” – everyone applauded. MARGARET: Asked ED about floor and cabinets. ED under impression her cabinet above refrigerator had been fixed. He will talk to someone tomorrow about it.

VINNY - #505 – Announcement made today about walkers in hallways. His walker outside in hallway when he is going in/out of building. At night it's in his apartment. Re: the scooter – he has attacks and falls. His scooter up against wall, close to outlet, but not interfering with anything. ED: There are 18 units on your floor. If 10 residents get scooters, is ED to allow 10 scooters to park in common area? VINNY: Bringing scooter into his apartment would be unsafe – if there's an emergency, he could not get out as scooter in the way. ED: Scooters and walkers need to be in your apartment – END OF SENTENCE – NOT A DEBATE – NOT FOR DISCUSSION – NOT NEGOTIATED. (Discussion about Regulations, Mr. D'Amico noted ED Marra must follow Regulations.)

VICE-CHAIRMAN SCHLEMM: Thanked residents for coming to meeting; Commissioners volunteering their time to be here; part of this system where clean, healthy, a nice place where they live. It isn't always perfect, but they try to do their best and ED Marra does a good job. Commissioners enjoy coming to The Elms. Hope to see you again.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Suarez; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Mondadori.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (6)

Absent: Harper