

MEETING OF BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE TOWN OF MANCHESTER

March 28, 2012

6:00 PM

Attending: Chairman Josh Howroyd
Vice Chairman Timothy Becker
Paul Rubin
Robert Shanbaum
Patrick Barder, Executive Director

Absent: Flora Jimenez

- I. Chairman Howroyd opened the meeting at 6:05 pm and welcomed residents of Mayfair Gardens and introduced the Board and staff members. He explained that one Board member, Ms. Jimenez would not be attending this meeting and Mr. Becker will be arriving later.
- II. Executive Directors Report to Residents and Public Comments
Chairman Howroyd introduced Mr. Patrick Barder, Executive Director of MHA and said he will give a report to residents and then the meeting will be opened to public comments. He explained to the residents this is an opportunity for them to speak to the Board about their likes, dislikes and any concerns they may have.

Mr. Barder welcomed the residents of Mayfair Gardens and introduced Ms. Judith Taylor. Ms. Taylor has volunteered to represent Mayfair Gardens on the Resident Advisory Board (RAB). Mr. Barder went on further to explain that each of the MHA complexes has a representative on the RAB and there can be more than one representative from each complex. He explained that the RAB meets with him once a month to discuss issues within their complex. If Mayfair Garden residents have things that need to be brought to the attention of the Executive Director, please speak with Ms. Taylor and she will bring them to the monthly meeting. A question was asked about a Tenant Association and Mr. Barder said residents are welcome to create their own tenant association and he would be happy to attend any of their meetings.

Mr. Barder explained that MHA is trying to improve the look of MHA complexes and there is a lot to be done. At Mayfair Gardens some of the work had already begun with removal of trees and shrubbery and just overall cleaning up the grounds. Plans are to put some color with flowers and flowering shrubs around the grounds and there will be large planters that the residents can add some of their own plants. Residents are welcome to make suggestions as to what kind of flowers they would like to see around the grounds. He added that residents are welcome to help in any way with these plantings.

Ms. Linda Cooman addressed the Board.

Ms. Cooman asked why all the trees were cut down, there was no notice given to the residents and she had planted some of those trees and shrubs and they were just ripped out. Chairman Howroyd apologized that the residents were not notified of the plans to remove trees and some of the overgrown landscaping.

Mr. Barder asked residents that lost any of their plantings to make a list of items that were removed and he will see that they are replaced.

Chairman Howroyd added that it is important to note that plantings need to be maintained so when the lawns are mowed the landscapers can easily and neatly get around them.

Mr. Don James addressed the Board.

Mr. James asked if the dirt in the large planters will expand in the winter time and crack or break the planters.

Mr. Barder explained that the planters are reinforced with re-bar and they will not crack. He also said there are rocks in the bottom of the planters to allow for drainage. There is no set plan for the kinds of flowers to be planted and he welcomes suggestions from the residents. The objective is to make the grounds look more inviting and colorful. The trees that were removed were originally placed too close to buildings and caused problems with the gutters, roofs and utilities. New trees will be planted an appropriate distance from the buildings and will be maintained. Most of the units have a small patio and we will try to expand that in some way so residents can have a patio. We will have to be creative when we look at some of these units because in some cases there is not a lot of room to put in or expand a patio.

The area in the back where there are huge pine trees and it abuts the Lithuanian Club has been used as a dumping ground. The trees are being trimmed and the space is being cleaned out. We are going to create some kind of a wall, not a fence, to separate the properties and prevent people from cutting through Mayfair property. Some ideas are to create a wall of rocks so it looks natural but organized so that residents can still walk but vehicles cannot get through.

Mr. Barder explained that all of this will take time.

There are some capital issues that need to be addressed, some of the electrical panels on the sides of the complexes. While in the process of removing some of the trees and shrubbery we have found old cable TV wires. Mr. Barder explained that he has met with Cox Communications Services and talked about the old cable wires and Cox will be coming out to remove the old wiring and clean this place up. The electrician is looking at the dusk to dawn lights. Some will have to be moved because the existing placement does not allow them to turn on and off – they are continually on.

Mr. Barder complimented Mayfair residents during the unexpected snow storm in October. Mayfair residents were the most independent. MHA has plans to modernize the Community Centers and the kitchens with new cabinetry and industrial size appliances.

A resident commented that her unit has not been painted in 12 years.

Mr. Barder explained that the maintenance crew is extremely busy trying to renovate vacant units, which is a first priority. He said if a resident has someone to do the work and comply with MHA's specifications, MHA will purchase the paint.

Ms. Shirley Currier addressed the Commission.

Ms. Currier asked if there are plans to reseed the grass as there are many bald spots. Mr. Barder said that once the cutting and trimming is complete those areas needing it will be reseeded.

Mr. Wayne Madden from the Spencer Village complex addressed the Commission. Mr. Madden said that new doors had been installed at his complex but the doors slam shut. He noticed an allen wrench was left in the door. The oil has leaked from the tension unit on the door. Mr. Madden also asked about the status of moving his mother from a studio to a one bedroom unit.

Mr. Barder explained that he wrote a letter to Mrs. Patricia Fox, and explained that if she has to have larger equipment to aid her in being mobile then it would require her to have a larger unit.

Mrs. Pat LaVoie addressed the Commission.

Mrs. LaVoie asked if it would be possible to have the dumpster emptied more than once a week. Mr. Barder explained that another dumpster will be put at the complex as one is not enough for all these units.

Mr. Cook addressed the Commission.

Mr. Cook commented that his porch is sinking and there are numerous cracks in his ceilings. He did tell maintenance about these issues. He also noted that there is an outside light that keeps going out in the middle of the night.

Mr. Barder asked that residents give a list of their concerns to Ms. Taylor for her to bring to the next RAB meeting.

Mr. Ryan Pelequin addressed the Commission.

Mr. Pelequin shared there is a leak in his ceiling near his front door and the leak is near a light socket. He is afraid a spark might cause a fire. Mr. Barder stated he will have maintenance look at this.

Ms. Shirley Currier commented there is black soot on the wall above the baseboard radiators and she wondered if anything could be done about it. She added the units are very dusty.

Mr. Barder explained the gutters have been thoroughly cleaned, the trees trimmed back or removed and that should help with some of the dust issues.

Mr. Don James remarked that his front door is very drafty. He has had weather stripping put around the doors but there is still a draft.

Mr. Barder explained he is in the process of submitting a request for an energy performance grant and if it goes through there will be funds to make improvements to the windows, roofs, doors, boilers and water heaters.

Chairman Howroyd added all of the MHA complexes need to have these items replaced but the cost is very high. If this grant goes through MHA will be able to address some of these badly needed repairs.

Ms. Cindy Parkington asked about a block watch.

Mr. Barder indicated that residents are welcome to form their own tenant association/block watch and if they do so he would welcome the opportunity to attend one of their meetings. Chairman Howroyd mentioned the Manchester Police Department can come and speak to the residents about such formations.

Another resident asked if signed could be posted so Mayfair residents don't get solicitors knocking at their doors.

Ms. Mary Ann Murray mentioned to residents that police Officer Bernie Hallams has offered to meet with Mayfair residents to talk about ways to stay safe and block watches. She will contact Officer Hallams and get a meeting set up.

Mr. Don James asked if the hours for the laundry room could be extended.

Mr. Barder shared in order to do that there would need to be someone to supervise those extended hours and lock up afterwards.

III. Adoption of Minutes – Meeting of February 15, 2012

Mr. Rubin moved to accept the February 15, 2012 minutes as written.

Mr. Shanbaum seconded. Motion passed 2-0 with one abstention.

IV. Correspondence

Mr. Barder shared a letter from the daughter of a tenant thanking MHA for helping her mother.

He also shared a letter from Senator Cassano written in favor of funding to make improvements to the MHA complexes throughout Manchester.

V. Accounts Payable

Chairman Howroyd shared two questions raised by Mr. Becker regarding payments to JDT and Rome McGuigan.

Mr. Barder explained that the bill for JDT is for the removal of shrubbery, trees from the Mayfair Garden complex.

The legal fees were for work on the revised personnel policy.

Mr. Shanbaum asked about payment for lightning arrestors.

Mr. Barder explained there was a power outage on Bluefield Drive and residents did not have any hot water. These surge protectors will prevent them from blowing out again.

VI. Executive Directors Report

A. Financial Statements & Management Reports

Mr. Barder reported hiring two more office staff.

A bid was put out for MHA lawn mowing.

Mr. Rubin reviewed the bid sheet and commented on the vast difference in prices.

Mr. Barder explained that all bids are for lawn moving and he has checked references.

A question was asked about tree cutting services and Mr. Barder explained that we have not put this out to bid but MHA does solicit quotes on an as need basis. The amount of money spent on the lawn mowing is less than if we used MHA staff. This frees maintenance staff to work on getting vacant units ready for rental.

B. ACOP Policy Update

Ongoing.

C. Web Site Rebuild

Mr. Barder shared we are making progress with rebuilding MHA's website. There was a problem with the registration of the domain name. He will have more to report at the next meeting.

VII. Chairman's Report

Chairman Howroyd explained we have gotten approval from HUD to dispose of the Hartford Road property. He has spoken with Carl Zinsser and we will be closing on this transaction soon. The money \$263k will go to the rehabilitation of MHA's Community Centers.

Chairman Howroyd said he has a copy of an evaluation form that was used by the Town of Manchester that will be used for the MHA Executive Director.

VIII. Old Business – None

IX. New Business

A. Renewal of Legal Service Contract

Chairman Howroyd noted this item was brought up by Mr. Becker who is not here. Mr. Becker would like to see MHA exercise the option to renew this for another three years rather than putting it out for bid. Chairman Howroyd stated Attorney Houlding is willing to keep the pricing the same.

Resolution 2012-4

Whereas and pursuant to its corporate authority the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Manchester elect, pursuant to the provisions of the original contract executed 4/12/2009, to renew the Legal Services contract with Rome McGuigan for the period of 4/12/2012 thru 4/11/2015.

Motion was made by Mr. Rubin to exercise our renewal option for legal services for another three years.

Mr. Shanbaum seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

B. Revised Personnel Policy (Draft)

Chairman Howroyd explained he has reviewed the draft of the Personnel Policy and he would like to get staff input on this. Attorney Houlding wants to know what to do next.

There was a question from the Commissioners about the drug testing and there may need to be some tweaking to post accident drug testing. Chairman Howroyd suggested removing the reference to "answering service" as MHA now has voice mail. He also would like to see combining of the February holidays to be Presidents Day. Once this goes to the staff Chairman Howroyd would like to have comments in writing but staff does not necessarily have to sign the comments.

Mr. Shanbaum moved to suspend the rules and add to the agenda Health Insurance Proposal. Motion passed 3-0.

Mr. Barder shared he has had 3 different conversations with third party administrators - ADP, Tzedaca House and 360 Degree Corp Advisors. Each has different options to offer. He suggested setting a date for them to come and give a 20 minute presentation to the Board. Mr. Barder will speak with them and get back to the Board with a couple of dates.

C. Items for Future Agenda

- Emergency Plan – Mr. Barder stated he has this on his agenda. He will bring a template to the next meeting.

X. Executive Session

Mr. Shanbaum moved to go into Executive Session at 8:45 pm.

Mr. Rubin seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Becker moved to end Executive session at 8:59 pm.

Schanbaum seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

XI. Adjournment @ 9:00 pm.

Motion to adjourn - Schanbaum. Second - Becker. Motion passed 4-0.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST: _____

SECRETARY