

MINUTES
MADISON HOUSING AUTHORITY
March 15, 2022, REGULAR MEETING

Chairperson Lois Bhatt called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM via Zoom video meeting. The following Commissioners answered as present:

Lois Bhatt, Diane Driscoll, Mark McBride, Caridad Reyes, Jeffrey Smith, Mark Chiarolanza and Melissa Elias.

Also present were Tanya Van Order, Executive Director, Karen O’Keeffe, Deputy Director, Terrence Corrison, Attorney, and John Hoover, Council Liaison.

Ms. Van Order read the NJ Open Public Meetings Act Notice: Both adequate and electronic notice of this meeting has been provided by the Secretary of the Housing Authority of the Borough of Madison by preparing an Annual Notice dated January 18, 2022, setting forth the date, time and place of this meeting. Said notice was filed with the Clerk of the Borough of Madison, forwarded to newspapers of local circulation and to the persons requesting it and posted to the Madison Housing Authority website.

Approval of the Minutes

Commissioners Smith and Driscoll moved and seconded approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 15, 2022. The minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

Council Liaison Report

Mr. Hoover reported that the Planning Board will continue hearing RPM Development Group’s application for the Borough sponsored affordable housing development on Walnut Street and Community Place this evening. Once approved, RPM will be able to apply for 4% low income housing tax credits and anticipates construction starting in October 2022.

Additionally, the Borough continues to work with Drew University exploring the potential sale of non-academic land assets to stabilize Drew’s financial situation with a focus on three parcels in particular. The largest parcel is a 53-acre tract known as the Drew Forest. A second parcel is approximately 4 acres with frontage on Madison Avenue to the rear of the Methodist Church, and the third parcel is 7 acres at the corner of Madison Avenue and Vinal Place.

Mr. Hoover reported that there are a number of pending residential projects in various stages of development. These include the former movie theater site on Lincoln Place, 98 Main Street (Provident Bank), Madison Mall Apartments, the former vacuum store on Rt. 124, and 3 Central Avenue (Central & Main Restaurant).

Lastly, Mr. Hoover stated that the Borough is happy to host the authority’s monthly board meetings in the Hartley Dodge Memorial building to provide for adequate space for the Board and any public in attendance.

Report of Chairperson

Ms. Bhatt thanked Mr. Hoover for his report and thanked the Borough for providing a larger in-person meeting location. The Board will return to in-person meetings next month in the 2nd floor Committee Room of the Hartley Dodge Memorial Building. The meeting time of 4:30 PM will remain the same.

Ms. Bhatt reported that she attended the Planning Board meeting last month for RPM Development's Walnut Street/Community Place affordable housing application. Ms. Bhatt reminded the Board that she will read a statement on behalf of MHA Board supporting the project during the Public Comment portion of the hearing.

Lastly, Ms. Bhatt congratulated Commissioner Reyes on completing her state required Commissioner training courses.

Report of Executive Director

Ms. Van Order reported that The Board will be adopting the FYE 3/31/23 budget and approving the FYE 3/31/21 audit later in the meeting under resolutions.

Ms. Van Order updated the Board on efforts to obtain FEMA Mitigation funding. She will have a Zoom call with FEMA tomorrow regarding to better determine if it makes sense to pursue a formal engineering study to identify possible remedies, if any, with associated cost estimates. FEMA has a hard cap on mitigation project costs. If mitigation costs, including professional services, exceed the total loss for the event (\$143,600), FEMA will not fund the mitigation project.

Ms. Van Order reported that additional documents have been submitted to HUD Washington related to our request for a partial release from the RAD Use Agreement. Once again, we will now be waiting for HUD to review this new submission and respond to our request.

Ms. Van Order noted that a few commissioners asked for more information about our contract with NORWESCAP. MHA is the lead agency in a joint Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) grant with the Morristown Housing Authority. MHA keeps 20% of the grant money for administrative expenses that we incur. Morristown HA does not get any portion of that amount. Our administrative expenses include office space, office equipment, mailings, cell phone plan, training, HUD reporting and escrow account management. Our staff is very proactive and involved in marketing the FSS program with our RAD PBV residents and housing choice voucher program participants.

Ms. Van Order reported that we have increased utilization for the Section 8 housing choice voucher (HCV) program in the current fiscal year. This effort was driven by increased HUD funding for the program in 2021 and represents a notable accomplishment given the skyrocketing rents in our jurisdiction. We were able to accomplish this by raising our payment standards, providing cash incentives to new and existing landlords and assisting tenants in paying realtor fees. When HUD releases the 2022 funding notice we will assess our ability to continue to grow the HCV program. Ms. Van Order noted that our Annual Contributions Contract with HUD caps the number of families we can assist at 190.

Lastly, Ms. Van Order informed the Board that we have plans for the replacement of the deck at the rear of 24 Belmont Avenue. As new members of the Morris County Pricing Cooperative, we may be able to purchase the decking materials directly from the cooperative to keep the construction cost

below the bid threshold. Ms. Van Order noted that it can be challenging to get qualified contractors to respond to small scale jobs that require public bidding.

Report of Deputy Director

Ms. O’Keeffe reported that there is one family unit in turnover with 55 of the 56 units currently leased. The unit in turnover is being upgraded with luxury vinyl flooring and granite countertops. The senior building currently has three units in turn over. Names are being actively drawn from the wait list, interviews conducted, and documents gathered. We expect all three senior units to be leased as of April 1, 2022.

Zufall Health Center continues to provide programming at the senior building on Tuesdays with focus on physical exercise, fine motor functions, memory, meditation, and wellness. March activities included regular rotations of Trivia and Relax and Draw.

Interfaith Food Pantry continues to deliver senior food bags on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. All seniors who want this assistance are welcome to receive it.

On March 9th, eighteen of our senior residents went to see the Madison High School musical production of “Sweet Charity.” The senior bus provided transportation to and from the event.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee: Mr. McBride reminded the Board that the Budget vs. Actual report will be presented and reviewed quarterly. The 3/31/22 report will be included in the May Board package. Mr. McBride also noted that the Finance Committee is tracking the long-range view of capital needs over a 10-year period to interpret current finances and plan for the future. Lastly, Mr. McBride reported that New Jersey is directing \$300 million in COVID relief money to “soft financing” of municipal 100% affordable housing LIHTC projects up to \$100,000 per unit. While Madison’s current project would not appear to be eligible for this funding opportunity, Mr. McBride urged the Borough planners to consider this for a future project.

Strategic Planning: Ms. Bhatt reminded the Board that the Strategic Plan outline, based on the work of the ad hoc committee, was reviewed and approved last month.

Public Comment

None.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Correspondence

None.

Resolutions

22-15-3-1 Resolution Approving Payment of Invoices

Commissioners Driscoll and Smith moved and seconded approval of the resolution; The roll call was unanimous, and the Resolution was approved.

CONSENT AGENDA – Resolutions 22-15-3-2 through 22-15-3-9:

- 22-15-3-2 Resolution Approving a Contract for Professional Services with Northwest New Jersey Community Action Partnership, Inc. (Norwescap) to Administer the Family Self-Sufficiency Program
- 22-15-3-3 Resolution Authorizing an Award of Contract to Novogradac & Company LLP. for Audit of Housing Authority's Financial Records for the Period of April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022
- 22-15-4-4 Resolution Authorizing Award of Contract to Breslin & Breslin P.A. for Professional Legal Services for the Period of April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2024
- 22-15-3-5 Resolution Authorizing Award of Contract to William Katchen Certified Public Accountant, LLC. for Professional Accounting Services for the Period of April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023
- 22-15-3-6 Resolution Certifying the 2021 Audit
- 22-15-3-7 Resolution Approving Revised Meeting Location for 2022
- 22-15-3-8 Resolution Confirming and Readopting the Resolutions Approved at the February 15, 2022, Meeting of The Board of Commissioners
- 22-15-3-9 Resolution Approving Advertising for Professional Services

Commissioners Bhatt and Chiarolanza moved and seconded the Consent Agenda; The roll call was unanimous, and the Consent Agenda was approved.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Bhatt moved for adjournment at 5:20 P.M.

Next meeting: April 19, 2022, at 4:30 PM in the 2nd Floor Committee Room of the Hartley Dodge Memorial Building at 50 Kings Road, Madison, NJ.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanya Van Order
Executive Director