

MINUTES
MADISON HOUSING AUTHORITY
April 18, 2023, REGULAR MEETING

Chairperson Jeffrey Smith called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM. The following Commissioners answered as present:

Commissioners Lois Bhatt, Mark Chiarolanza (phone), Diane Driscoll, Mark McBride, Caridad Reyes, Mary Sue Salko, and Jeffrey Smith

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

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 17, 2023, 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, posted to the Authority’s official bulletin board on January 17, 2023, and posted to the Madison Housing Authority website.

Approval of the Minutes

Commissioners Driscoll and Reyes moved and seconded approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 14, 2023. The minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

Council Liaison Report

Borough Council liaison, John Hoover, delivered the following report:

- The Borough is pursuing \$4.4 million dollars in supplemental funding from the N.J. Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) for the Walnut Street affordable housing development. Approval is anticipated at the NJHMFA June Board meeting which will allow construction to start in July.
- The Borough met with the President and seven members of the Trustee Board of Drew University to discuss the preservation/acquisition of the “Drew Forest.” The Borough submitted an \$18.8 million dollar purchase offer, and a response is pending from the Drew Leadership. The Borough intends to submit a \$10 million dollar grant application for this purpose to the Morris County Open Space Program. The submission deadline is June 9.
- Residential development proposals have been submitted to the Borough and the Giralda Open Space Management Association to convert the partially occupied Giralda #1 commercial office building and the vacant Giralda #3 building into residential developments.
- Drew University has executed a contract to sell 10.2 acres along Madison Avenue to Avalon Bay for a substantial residential development. Avalon Bay wants to build 490 units (49 units per acre) which far exceeds traditional residential densities in town.
- The Masons have listed the historic Masonic Lodge building on Main Street for a sale price of \$2.5 million dollars. The Borough is working with a development company named Bravitas who specializes in historic projects to purchase and preserve the structure.

Report of Chairperson

Chairperson Smith welcomed the newly appointed MHA Commissioner, Mary Sue Salko. Ms. Salko and the Board conducted introductions.

Report of Executive Director

Ms. Van Order noted that MHA's new fiscal year began 4/1/23. HUD funding occurs on a calendar year basis and our 2023 funding notice (received this week) provides \$3.4 million for HAP and administrative fees for our housing choice voucher and RAD PBV programs, as well as Summit RAD PBV program. This is an increase of 13% over our 2022 funding and does not include "HUD held reserves" of \$232,340. Nationwide, the funding for voucher programs is \$30 billion for 2023, a 10% increase over 2022 budget for the HCV program. This increased funding has allowed us to adjust our payment standards for the HCV program to achieve higher HCV program utilization within the Borough. Our HCV program assisted 190 families in April, the highest level of program participation we have achieved since 1999.

Ms. Van Order updated the board on the Belmont Avenue subdivision project, noting that she, Ms. O'Keeffe and Commissioner McBride recently met with attorney Steve Azzolini, engineer Andrew Clarke and architect Bill Charleroy. We reviewed and discussed critical elements of our application such as parking and storm water drainage. The engineer will make needed adjustments so that the application process can move forward into the review phase by Borough professionals. We are still contemplating funding the project with the national affordable housing trust fund, administered through the state of NJ Department of Community Affairs. If and when our subdivision and site plan approval is obtained, we will move quickly to apply for funding with the national housing trust fund program administered by NJ DCA. In order to develop the project in a more cost-effective manner, we will explore a temporary transfer of ownership to a non-profit partner since the national housing trust fund does not require prevailing wage.

Ms. Van Order reported on various capital projects: The new control panel for the sewer ejector pit system as the senior building was replaced last week and the contract for the flood door and flood panel installation has been executed. The contractor has informed us that there is a 23-week lead time for the flood doors. Once the order is finalized, we will request an additional extension of time to complete the project with FEMA. We also await a response to our CDBG funding application for moving the RTA transformer and redesigning the rear access driveway to further protect this vulnerable low-lying area. The Loantaka Way A/C project grant agreement has been signed and we are going out to bid this week. Lastly, Ms. Van Order referenced the report from Faust Engineering regarding RTA rooftop air handler units, projected lifetime (already past) and suggested upgrade scenarios. The estimated cost of replacement is approximately \$500,000 - \$650,000. There is an interim partial solution proposed in the report that would cost about \$150,000. We will be meeting with Faust and our HVAC contractor to review this report.

Lastly, Ms. Van Order noted that she and Ms. O'Keeffe attended the NAHRO legislative conference last month and had the opportunity to speak with Tom Davis, the Director of HUD Washington Office of Recapitalization. Ms. Van Order emphasized the need to provide higher RAD contract rents to smaller agencies like Madison that closed on RAD in the earlier years of the program. Small PHAs converting today through the new "Voluntary Streamlined Conversion" program receive substantially higher RAD contract rents than we received. Mr. Davis stated that HUD is receiving a lot of complaints from RAD program pioneers like MHA, who feel unfairly treated. He stated that HUD is considering how to correct this funding imbalance it has created.

Report of Deputy Director

Ms. O’Keeffe reported that 55 of 56 family units and 76 of 79 senior units are currently leased. Interviews are being conducted to fill the current vacancies.

Regarding the MTW program, Ms. O’Keeffe stated that there will be points in the MTW process where there will be opportunities for resident input. HUD recommends this input come through Resident Advisory Boards (RAB). While we have a RAB at the Rexford Tucker Apartments, we do not currently have one for our other RAD households and Section 8 voucher holders. Last week we sent letters to these households asking for residents interested in establishing and serving on a RAB to contact MHA by April 28th.

On April 12th we successfully completed work on swapping out the electrical panel for the sewer ejector pit at Rexford Tucker Apartments. The project involved shutting off the water at RTA for several hours. We benefitted from our strong relationships with the Fire and Health Departments who pointed out the need to provide portable toilets for residents while the water was shut off. We were able to quickly get the toilets through a provider on the State Contractor list for a very reasonable price. This made the inconvenience to our residents much more comfortable, and the project was completed seamlessly.

On March 28th Colleen Cunningham, an attorney with Legal Services of Northwest Jersey, presented information on the establishment of simple wills and health care and financial powers of attorney. Twelve residents attended the presentation and about ten are following up with LSNWJ to create these important legal documents. The presentation was well received, and we hope to offer this presentation on a regular basis going forward.

Atlantic Health will be doing a presentation called Nutrition as we Age on April 19th at the Rexford Tucker Apartments. It was posted on the Madison Eagle and is open to the public. The President of the Resident Council is coordinating the event with Atlantic Health.

We have established dates in May for an independent HQS inspector from Morris County Housing Authority to conduct the annual inspections of all RAD and MHA owned units.

Committee Reports

No reports.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Old Business

None.

New Business

MTW Supplement to the Annual Plan (DRAFT) Board Discussion

Ms. Van Order reviewed the summary of proposed MTW waiver activities, the comprehensive MTW Supplement Plan and the financial impact analysis of proposed waivers. These documents were included in the Board package. Ms. Van Order encouraged Commissioners to carefully review the

activities proposed using MTW flexibility and the anticipated funding impact. Commissioners are encouraged to ask questions and comment on the MTW Supplement Plan.

Chairman Smith asked if proposed activities require creating additional policies. Ms. Van Order responded that each activity requires creating a policy that must be clearly articulated in the agency Administrative Plan. Amendments to the Administrative Plan require Board approval, notice to tenants and a public hearing. Ms. Van Order clarified that we do not have to implement all MTW waivers requested the first year of MTW participation. To that end, identifying the priority waivers will be included in the resident engagement, public engagement and public hearing processes.

Commissioner McBride noted that many of the activities proposed will result in cost savings from an operational perspective, streamlining and simplifying processes. Ms. O’Keeffe added that the benefits extend to tenant families, such as the proposed standard medical deduction and true triennial recertifications for eligible families.

Ms. Van Order noted that MHA is required by the cohort selection notice to include in our supplement plan the Opt-Out Savings Plan activity. That is the only waiver/MTW activity that is not optional.

Correspondence

- MARC-NAHRO Letter Congratulating Tanya as Elected Treasurer
- Rooftop AHU Evaluation for Upgrade for 15 Chateau Thierry Ave Rooftop Air Handler
- Finance Center Article: As Fourth Round of Affordable Housing Obligations Nears, Municipalities Should Plan Accordingly
- NAHRO Certification for Karen O’Keeffe, Certified Specialist of Fair Housing
- PMCS Certificate of Achievement for Elaine Martino: Fair Housing Basics

Resolutions

23-18-4-1 Resolution Authorizing the Payment of Invoices.

Commissioners McBride and Bhatt moved and seconded approval of the resolution. The roll call was unanimous, the resolution was approved.

23-18-4-2 Resolution Approving a Contract for Professional Services with Northwest New Jersey Community Action Partnership, Inc (NORWESCAP) to Administer the Family Self-Sufficiency Program

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

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Smith moved for adjournment at 5:52 P.M.

Next meeting: May 16, 2023, at 4:30 PM in the 2nd Floor Committee Room of the Hartley Dodge Memorial Building at 50 Kings Road, Madison, NJ.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen O’Keeffe
Deputy Director