

MINUTES
MADISON HOUSING AUTHORITY
July 21, 2020 REGULAR MEETING

Chairperson Lois Bhatt called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM via Zoom video meeting. The office Conference Room was open and available for any public to attend the Zoom video meeting. The following Commissioners answered as present:

Lois Bhatt, Jeffrey Smith, Melissa Elias, Mark McBride, Gary Ruckelshaus, Diane Driscoll and Mark Chiarolanza.

Also present were Louis Riccio, Executive Director, and Tanya Van Order, Deputy Director.

Mr. Riccio read the NJ Open Public Meetings Act Notice.

Approval of the Minutes

Commissioners Driscoll and Smith moved and seconded approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 16, 2020. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

Council Liaison

No report.

Report of Chairperson

Ms. Bhatt reported that the housing authority's application to convert two units on John Avenue was heard by the Zoning Board of Adjustment and the application was approved. Furthermore, the Borough agreed to assist with the costs associated with conditions requested by the Zoning Board.

Ms. Bhatt also congratulated Mr. Riccio and Ms. Van Order on the recent award from the National Association for Housing & Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) for the improvements made to the common spaces of the Rexford S. Tucker Senior Apartments.

Report of Executive Director

Mr. Riccio reported that he was very pleased with the unanimous approval by the Zoning Board of the John Avenue conversion and expressed his thanks to the Borough's Zoning Board attorney Vince Laughlin professional planner Susan Blickstein and Ray Codey for presenting a clear and compelling case for the conversion. The resolution was adopted and memorialized at the meeting with minor changes to the plan. We will add additional landscaping along Station Road, doors will be provided for each patio enclosure and the entry of the two exterior patios will be moved to the side for more privacy. There will be some additional sidewalk work required to create a safe passage to the side entrances of the two exterior patios but the impact on impervious coverage is minimal. Mr. Charleroy, our architect, has to submit new plans with the revisions in order to receive the building permit. Our contractor, William Hotz, will apply for the required building permit as soon as possible so that work might begin before the end of the summer.

We continue to track the progress of our request to HUD for permission to subdivide our properties to allow for development of additional affordable housing on excess land. HUD has requested the metes & bounds for the properties as well as a legal description of the properties. Once HUD provides authorization to subdivide, we will need to go before the Planning Board for their approval. There is a possibility to develop between 22 -36 homes on excess land owned by the housing authority: 4 homes each on Belmont Avenue, John Avenue and Loantaka Way and 10-12 homes on Chateau Thierry/ Belleau Avenue. If the Board of Education subdivides their property near Community Place to meet the conditions of the sale of the Green Village Road School property, we could assist in the development and management of an additional 14-16 apartments at that location.

Report of Deputy Executive Director

Ms. Van Order's reports on RAD PBV rent collection, and RAD/Section 8 HCV recertification, units under lease and administrative fees are attached and made a part of these Minutes.

Ms. Van Order updated the board on the status of the senior building noting that our first phase of reopening to allow access to essential care givers, which began 6/15/2020, is going well. Several tenants have inquired as to when we anticipate further opening the building to visitors and guests. Discussion ensued and the consensus was that no further opening of the building is advisable at this time given the spread of Covid-19 outside of New Jersey as well as the recent spikes of the rate of transmission within the state.

Two of the 5 recently vacated units have been leased with two additional offers pending. The maintenance staff and Housing Manager Jackie Gray have worked diligently to prepare and lease these units in a challenging market, even for affordable housing. Rent collection remains stable and there are no substantial or unusual rent delinquencies at present. Unit inspections on the family site will take place at the beginning of August with proper safety protocols in place.

The wait list for senior housing will be opened July 30 and will remain open until September 15 or until 300 applications are received. Applications are being accepted through an online portal to our housing software program. Jessica Kirchenbauer is available to assist any senior who may have difficulties applying online.

Lastly, Ms. Van Order noted that the staff is taking an Unconscious Bias webinar offered free through our membership with the New Jersey Apartment Association.

Committee Reports

Finance: Mr. Riccio reviewed the Budget to Actual reports for FYE 3/31/2020 and FYE 3/31/2021 (through 6/30/2020). He noted that spending associated with the additional administrative fee funding received from HUD through the CARES Act will be accounted for separately on the budget to actual report. HUD has extended the deadline for our audit to the end of 2020 in response to the administrative challenges posed by the pandemic.

Public Comment

None.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Correspondence

Zoning Board Approval for John Avenue Conversion
NAHRO Award of Merit – Rexford S. Tucker Facelift
Thank you letter to Jacqueline Gray

Resolutions

20-21-7-1 Resolution Approving Payment of Invoices

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

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Bhatt moved for adjournment at 5:15 P.M.

Next meeting: September 15, 2020 at 4:30 PM via Zoom video meeting with conference call-in for public.

Respectfully submitted,
Tanya Van Order, Deputy Director