

Housing Authority Minutes

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 2, 2010 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING HELD
AT 87 MAPLE STREET, ORCHARD KNOLL, AT 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Emily Witkus, Asst Chairman
Joan Welsh, Treasurer
Eva Gambaccini, Asst Treasurer
Marcia Cairns, Secretary

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Richard Duguay, Chairman

OTHERS PRESENT:

Anita Sullivan, Executive Director
8 Orchard Knoll 667 Residents

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman, Richard Duguay.

Unfinished Business:

There is an issue pending in regards to an outside shed which a 667 resident wants to build behind her building. The proposed shed will be 8 feet by 8 feet and will be similar in design as those in the family areas. Anita gave verbal approval for the shed last Fall and the materials have been purchased by the resident. The matter came before because of tenant and Board member concerns. The Board had discussed the issue of storage boxes/sheds about a year ago and it was decided they would be permitted at the back of the buildings. There are several of the plastic type around the property. The Board voiced concerns about liability, ownership, maintenance, and construction. The resident who is proposing the shed agreed to be liable, carry insurance, and meet any building requirements. Chuck had spoken to the Building Inspector who said that a building permit was not necessary for a 8 x 8 shed. After a lengthy discussion Marcia Cairns made a motion to decline the approval of the wooden 8x8 storage shed. Emily Witkus seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 3-1.

There is another policy issue before the Board and that is the planting of flowers or vegetables on the property. It has been the past practice that flowers can be planted by any resident who wishes to maintain them. Some residents have kept potted vegetable plants in the front near their apartments and have discarded the pots after the season has ended. A policy needs to be formed addressing planting flowers, shrubs, trees or vegetables on the grounds. There was a discussion about a central community garden,

apparently there was one located behind the maintenance garage. It was suggested that perhaps a rain barrel could be used to water in a location where there was no water access. Chuck could routinely fill the barrels and then residents could help themselves. A subcommittee will meet before the next Board meeting to discuss to propose possible solutions to the issue of in ground planting throughout the property.

Anita receives ongoing complaints from residents in certain buildings that they don't like what the neighbor has put in the front hall or porch. This needs to be addressed by policy. These areas are shared by each (4) residents of each building. Presently there is no policy, only rules that prohibit anything from impeding and means of entry or exit to or from an apartment or building. As was discussed at the last Board meeting, Anita inspected every interior hallway. Most didn't have items impeding into the hallways. Anita was concerned about the non-folding plastic chairs which are stored on the porches. Marcia suggested the Fire Dept be contacted again to inspect the hallways. Anita will meet with them and report back at the next meeting.

Due to a resident inquiry, Allied Waste approached Anita about a recycling program. We are initiating a volunteer recycling program that SHOULD save us money. It will be a trial for a few months to see if money could be saved with the amount of recycling generated. The barrels have been set out at the elderly dumpster.. Anita will be meeting with anyone having any questions on Thursday morning.

After reviewing and discussing several options, Marcia Cairns made a motion to approve the West Boylston Housing Authority's mission statement as follows:
The mission of the West Boylston Housing Authority is to offer its residents a clean, safe, and well-maintained living environment in which to live. We will seek out opportunities to serve both the community and our residents. Eva Gambaccini seconded the motion, all in favor.

Anita attended a forum on the Community Preservation Act. Kopelman and Paige have issued an opinion supporting the use of CPC funds for projects like our roofs, as a means to support and preserve affordable housing. Fortunately Kopelman and Paige are also West Boylston's Town Counsel. Anita will get a copy of the letter from Rita Farrell of Mass Housing Partnership and that should be all we need to go forward with Community Preservation Board.

The new state wide Open meeting Law becomes effective July 1, 2010. The length of times that Notices must be posted and additional information must be posted with the notice each month. Anita has received the newly revised "Town of West Boylston Handbook for Elected and Appointed Officials" from the Town Clerk. A new requirement for Town Appointed and Elected Officials is to complete an Ethics program

on line. Each Official must print a certificate after successful completion of the program to the Town Clerk. Every Official must do this by July 1, 2010. Anita attended a forum on the new Open Meeting Laws at Seacrest and the changes are difficult to interpret at this point. The attorney General's office hasnt offered any guidance with the new regulations, but have promised to hold educational forums for public officials. Our regional Pilot Atty, Karen Ahlers will keep us informed of any updates.

Anita attended a forum at Seacrest relating to Community Block Grants. Anita learned a little more about the process. Most importantly, the Housing Authority cant submit a grant request, the Town must submit it. The Housing Authority can be named as a target area, addressing the needs of low to moderate income residents. It was suggested that Anita speak with Leon and Tim Hanson of Worcester Regional planning to see what types of projects might be suitable. Anita and Chuck need to brainstorm for a wish list of capital projects which need attention.

Marcia suggested the Board formulate some Short and Long Term Goals. She has found these Goals very helpful in seeing what has been accomplished monthly, and annually by the Council on Aging.

New Business

Anita gave an overview of the NAHRO Annual conference. The issue continues to be the lack of funding. The approved budget decrease has adversely affected the Housing Authority's ability to maintain their apartments effectively. Amy Scheetman, is leaving DHCD. Housing Authorities are being asked to do more with less.

Anita attended another session of formula funding for Capital needs. Again, the award letters were promised but undelivered.

Anita attended an informational session about the new role of DHCD Inspectors. They are no longer coming out to properties to document violations and leave without assisting. They have now formed a department which is available to assist in organizing, prioritizing or developing systems to help Housing Authorities become more successful.

Anita also attended a very interesting forum on legislation which is being proposed to completely eliminate 40B regulations. The general air in the room was not overly supportive of 40B. Although the speaker pointed out the all of the Housing Authorities had used the 40B regulations to get the state-aided public housing built, the general consensus is that 40B units are no longer affordable and only developers are getting rich. Anita has more information on 40B changes and they also can be found on the web.

Executive Director's Report

The June NAHRO newsletter was not received but will be distributed when Anita receives it.

The June checks were reviewed and signed by Treasurer, Joan Welsh and Asst Treasurer, Eva Gambaccini.

An ad has been running in the Banner for volunteers for help at Orchard Knoll. There have been no respondents yet.

Anita will be working with Franklin Daigneau to do a show on Orchard Knoll in the upcoming month.

Review and Approval of Minutes

Marcia Cairns made a motion to accept the minutes of the April 14, 2010 Regular Board meeting as written. Joan Welsh seconded the motion. All in favor.

Marcia Cairns made a motion to accept the minutes of the May 18, 2010 meeting as written. Joan Welsh seconded the motion. Three in favor with Emily Witkus abstaining.

Adjournment

Eva Gambaccini made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35. Marcia Cairns seconded the motion. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Sullivan
Executive Director