



SHELBURNE HOUSING AUTHORITY
Highland Village • Shelburne Falls, MA 01370
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SHELBURNE HOUSING AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting
August 12, 2020

Commissioners Present via Zoom (by roll call):

S. Flaccus M. Payne K. Levitch R. Bowen Weld

Commissioners Absent: R. Maccini

Staff Present: G. Govoni P. Parmakian J. Carey

Public Attendees: J. Gens N. O'Brien R. Biley B. Hoffman P. Clark

1. Call to Order

There being a quorum present, Commissioner Flaccus moved and Commissioner Levitch seconded a motion to call the Regular meeting of the Shelburne Housing Authority Board of Commissioners to order at 4:40 p.m. which was held via Zoom.

******Note:** All votes were taken via roll call.

2. Actions

Minutes: Commissioner Levitch moved and Commissioner Bowen Weld seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2020 regular and annual plan meeting as prepared.

17-131 Vote 4 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

SHA FY2021 Amended Annual Plan: Commissioner Levitch moved and Commissioner Bowen Weld seconded a motion to approve the SHA FY2021 Annual Plan as amended.

The removal of the \$755,000 mistakenly added by DHCD was removed.

17-132 Vote 4 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Equal Housing Opportunity



Review the SHA Non-Smoking Policy as amended: Commissioner Payne moved and Commissioner Bowen Weld seconded a motion to approve the Shelburne Housing Authority Non-Smoking Policy as amended.

This policy has been amended to include much of the same language that was used in the Non-Smoking Lease Addendum which was approved by the Board in May.

After deliberating on whether or not to keep the section in the policy that refers to “Ceremonial Use Exemption” it was unanimously decided to keep it in as it shows inclusiveness and serves as a model for SHA should there be another person or group that had a similar practice.

G. Govoni attended a Clean Air for All: the Smoke-Free Housing Project webinar that was put on by National NAHRO which focused on smoking in the age of COVID. They discussed having a little more leeway in enforcing the non-smoking policy due to the stress of COVID, but in doing so, recommending cessation support for those in need.

HRA enforcement protocol is currently more stringent than the protocol recommended by the Clean Air for All advocates. Clean Air for All is advocating PHA's to give leniency towards a tenant during COVID because maintaining housing is so critical during this public health pandemic.

Some concerns raised by the public attendees are that individuals continue to smoke on the property which endangers those who have medical issues and/or use oxygen and the long term effects of second hand smoke, specifically for individuals who are compromised.

It was recommended that there be additional communication about the policy.

G. Govoni suggested that more be done with LifePath to advocate for cessation programs, as well as, post flyers around the facility with this information.

G. Govoni emphasized that Highland Village is independent living, and is not designed to provide round the clock care or watch. There has been concern about individuals smoking in their vehicles. An addition to the policy addresses this issue. While smoking can be banned from the property, smokers cannot be banned from the property.

G. Govoni proposed posting the policy in several places and feels confident that P. Parmakian and her team will continue to enforce the policy and address issues as they arise.

17-133 Vote 4 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining

Update on Regionalization project:

G. Govoni reported that while the Regionalization Grant was approved by the Board in February, there have been delays in moving the process forward due to COVID. The deadline for submitting the grant has been extended but the hope is to submit it within the next few weeks.

G. Govoni reported that at a minimum, the grant will explore governing options for HRA and SHA. HRA is also exploring relationships with Hampshire County Regional Housing Authority and GHA. She reminded the Board that this grant is for planning only. It in no way binds SHA to move forward with merging with HRA.

A question was posed about regionalizing with Montague Housing.

G. Govoni stated that at this time while there is currently no discussion between HRA and the Montague Board, but we would welcome the opportunity to begin the discussion if Montague's Board showed interest.

3. SHA Monthly Report for the month of July 2020 will be distributed in advance and reviewed at the meeting. Report includes updates on parking lot line painting, Building A vestibule project, walkways and tree removal project.

P. Parmakian reported that the tree removal plan was presented to the Board in December as part of the Capital Improvement Plan Health and Safety Initiative. A list of health and safety items was provided to DHCD, tree removal being only a medium level priority. Upon their visits to Highland Village which occurred throughout the Kitchen and Bath renovations, DHCD determined that out of the listed items provided to them, the tree removal took precedence. Two Birches, 1 Maple and 2 Ash trees will be removed as they are a hazard due to falling branches and debris on walkways which impairs safe mobility of all residents. This project was planned to occur in the spring, but COVID delayed this. The removal is now being pushed beyond Labor Day and needs to be completed by September 30 in order to be fully paid for by DHCD or the money is lost

It was expressed that removal of the trees would have a negative impact on the health of the residents and their activities.

A question was posed as to whether or not the current health of the trees poses a risk to people and property, and/or, if the roots pose a threat to the sidewalks that could create a tripping hazard. Some of the public participants, along with several of the board members, ask that the trees be evaluated by an arborist before they are removed. If the reason for removal of these trees is due to overgrowth, it was deemed that could be controlled by removing necessary branches without resulting in the entire tree being removed.

G. Govoni will speak with DHCD and ask someone from the Capital Team to work

with H. Mackay to visit the site to confirm what danger the trees post. She believes that long-term cost of the upkeep of the trees will cost more than removing them, and this is likely why DHCD prioritized this project. However, she agrees there is a middle ground and will move forward with getting the trees examined either by the capital team or a local arborist.

A concern from a public participant was regarding the lack of communication to residents regarding property projects. While the board was provided these materials in December, residents are unaware of pending projects.

P. Parmakian stated that the new Annual Plan process was designed by DHCD to encourage public input. Specifically, the Annual Plan gives an overview of capital projects, those immediately past and for the forthcoming three years. This information should summarize what has been discussed at board meetings on a monthly basis.

G. Govoni suggested that a tenant organization is one way in which residents might be involved in the capital improvement planning process. It was noted that one was formed in the past that wasn't successful due to several reasons, now resulting in residents not wanting to form another.

Staffing Update:

P. Parmakian reported that a letter for residents of staffing changes will be forthcoming. Jason Malek has accepted the Property Maintenance position. He will be staying on as Property Manager for Highland Village through August. Michael Taylor has been hired as of Tuesday, August 11, as the new Property Manager. He comes with 20 years of housing and social services experiences. While at this time his property assignment is unknown, he may at times be at Highland Village with J. Malek.

P. Parmakian also noted that while J. Malek has been on site, processing paperwork, the office is still officially closed due to COVID. HRA is working closely with DHCD to ensure everything is safely in place for the office is re-opened to residents by appointment.

Concerns were raised about the high turnover of staff. G. Govoni responded by saying that she stands behind the hires in management that have been made since she became the Executive Director a year ago. She feels that we are building a strong team that is experienced and mission driven. Commissioner Flaccus remarked that having P. Parmakian as the director of Property Management has been a great change. She expressed that she's very fond of J. Malek and based on the hires made, she is less worried than in the past.

The parking lot painting project is a priority project and has been put out to bid again as no responses were received the first time.

4. Ongoing Concerns

No updates at this time:

- a. Review and approve the SHA Handbook V.7 as presented
- b. Review and discuss the SHA Animal Policy
- c. Bad Debt
- d. Review SHA by laws
- e. Discuss and approve website links to be added to SHA Website
- f. Information binder for community room

5. Documents for Informational Purposes sent via Email:

- * PHN 2020-21A: ADDENDUM #2: Guidance on End of Rent Cap Policy
- * PHN 2020-24: Design and Funding Guidelines for Adapting LHA Office Spaces for Social Distancing and Indoor Air Quality
- * PHN 2020-27: Recommendations for Safe Reopening in Phase 3 & 4
- * NERC Journal July Newsletter

6. Documents used:

- * July 8, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes
- * SHA Property Summary Report
- * SHA Non-Smoking Lease Addendum (marked & clean version)
- * SHA Non-Smoking Policy (marked & clean version)
- * SHA Revised Annual Plan, questions, comments

7. Other business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance

None

8. Resident and Public Participation

9. Adjournment:

There being no additional business, Commissioner Bowen Weld moved and Commissioner Levitch seconded a motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 5:55 PM. The next regular meeting of the SHA Board of Commissioners is scheduled for September 9, 2020 via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,



Gina Govoni
Secretary ex officio