

**MINUTES  
MADISON HOUSING AUTHORITY  
September 15, 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 Smith and Driscoll moved and seconded approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of July 21, 2020. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

**Council Liaison**

No report.

**Report of Chairperson**

Ms. Bhatt acknowledged the staff for helping to keep residents safe this summer. She congratulated Jackie Gray, Housing Manager, for completing a recent course relevant to her new responsibilities.

Ms. Bhatt introduced discussion on the Borough's settlement with Fair Share Housing, which includes an agreement to build 147 affordable homes. This finalizes the Borough's Round 3 obligation under the state Mt. Laurel Housing law. Ms. Bhatt reported that she has reached out to Mayor Conley to regenerate an affordable housing working group/task force to coordinate our efforts, energy, expertise and talents to move forward together. The former task force was comprised of Borough elected officials & staff and MHA Commissioners and staff. Ms. Bhatt recommended to Mayor Conley that Mr. McBride and Mr. Smith serve on this task force as well as Mr. Riccio and Ms. Van Order. Mr. McBride noted that the settlement agreement includes a deadline to identify a site for a 40-unit development of 12/31/2020. He also suggested that the Board create a Development Committee to include all Board members' voices and expertise in the discussion and planning for future affordable housing. Lastly, Mr. Riccio stated that the Loantaka Way A/C installation will assist the Borough to meet half of their required rehabilitation obligation. We can claim 10 credits with the \$100,000 CDBG grant, or \$10,000 per unit for 10 units.

**Report of Executive Director**

Mr. Riccio reported that we are awaiting the building permit to begin work on the John Avenue conversion. The permit has been delayed by a Borough code official who questioned whether a fire sprinkler suppression system is required. Our architect, Mr. Charleroy, has provided additional details

of the existence of an 8” block wall that exists clear to the roof top with three-hour fire rating, which meets code. We expect the Borough to approve the plans and issue the building permit in the near future. Regarding the Loantaka Way capital improvement plans, Mr. Riccio noted that we are seeking a HVAC engineer to create the bid specs for the second floor A/C installation project.

Mr. Riccio provided an update on the status of our request to HUD to subdivide the properties at Loantaka Way, John Avenue, Belmont Avenue and Chateau Thierry Avenue for constructing additional affordable housing in the future. The engineer has finished the property surveys and the architect is working with the engineer to create the subdivision plots with metes and bounds and a legal description. Once this is complete it will be sent to HUD Washington for approval. If HUD approves the request to subdivide the properties we will have to go before the Planning Board to present the details of the plan and obtain municipal approval for the subdivisions.

Mr. Riccio provided an update on our request to transfer administration of Summit Housing Authority’s PBV RAD program to the Passaic County Housing Authority. He noted that the Board package includes a letter from HUD denying our request based on a jurisdictional requirement in a 2018 HUD RAD Notice. The HUD attorney at the Field Office will not approve the transfer stating that Passaic County Housing Authority does not jurisdictional control to operate a Section 8 program in Summit as required under New Jersey law. Our attorney has opined that this is permissible under New Jersey’s Shared Services Agreement law, which exists for the purpose of creating efficiencies in government, and that a legitimate business reason exists to support the proposed transfer. The parties involved in this effort, Madison Housing Authority, Summit Housing Authority and Passaic County Housing Authority, will be seeking assistance from Washington in this matter. In the meantime, it is unlikely that our contract with Summit Housing Authority will be terminated 1/1/2021 as anticipated.

Lastly, Mr. Riccio reported that Madison has spent \$45,000 of the \$104,000 additional administrative fee funding received under the CARES Act. Our portion of this total is \$65,000, with the balance going to the Summit Housing Authority.

### **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. She noted that the senior building is fully leased for the first time since March, there are no unusual rent delinquencies at present and our receivables are good notwithstanding the pandemic circumstances. There is one tenant family who would ordinarily be referred for eviction, which is not possible at present due to the state eviction moratorium.

Ms. Van Order updated the board on the status of the senior building. Tenants would like to know when they might be allowed to use the Community Room and when visitors will be once again permitted to enter the building. Regarding the Community Room, we have investigated a standalone, portable plug-in air purifying system with MERV 13 filters and UV set up (estimated cost \$7,395) and an air scrubber system with UV light and oxygenator, which would attach to the air handlers of the Community Room A/C (estimated cost \$2,000). Both systems require biannual maintenance. Regarding allowing additional access to the building, we are waiting to see what happens as we move into the fall season before making that determination.

Unit inspections on the family sites were done in August and the maintenance staff is working through the repair lists generated from that activity. The units were found to be overall in good shape and only one tenant family refused entry due to concerns about the COVID-19 virus.

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 reported that today the wait list for the senior building is closing and we will be randomizing the applicants to create our new senior wait list with a regional preference per Borough ordinance and amendments to the housing authority Administrative Plan approved in 2016.

### **Committee Reports**

**Family Self-Sufficiency:** Ms. Bhatt noted that we have had a recent graduate to the FSS program and a nice escrow check was earned through the tenant family's advancement in earnings during the course of program participation.

**Publicity:** Ms. Driscoll reported that she is working on a feature article to the Madison Eagle showcasing the authority's accomplishments and highlighting the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

**Personnel:** Mr. Riccio reported that the state requires the board to post the position of Executive Director in a regional newspaper. The position will be posted in the Star Ledger and a job description and information about applying will be posted on our Borough web page.

**Finance:** Ms. Van Order noted that the auditors were present this week to work on the FYE 3/31/2020 audit.

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event:** Ms. Bhatt reported that we will commemorate the authority's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary at an event to be held on Friday 10/23/2020 at 10:00 AM on the steps of the Hartley Dodge Memorial Building. The Borough will provide a podium and microphone for the program, Ms. Driscoll will assist with publicity and an evite will go out to approximately 500 people in the next week. We will continue to solicit donations from sponsors toward our fundraising goal of \$100,000 toward building a home in Lou's honor. The Borough is allowing us to use the downtown vertical banner space and banners proclaiming the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Housing Authority will appear downtown throughout the month of October, which is Affordable Housing Month.

### **Public Comment**

None.

### **Old Business**

None.

### **New Business**

None.

### **Correspondence**

Letter from Theresa Arce, re: MHA Transfer of RAD Administration  
Legal Opinion, DeCotiis, Fitzpatrick, Cole & Giblin, LLP, re: MHA Transfer of RAD Admin  
Borough of Madison Resolution Approving Settlement Agreement with Fair Share Housing Center  
Madison Eagle Article: Borough Council Approves Affordable-Housing Settlement  
Thank You Note for COVID-19 Safety Procedures at Rexford Tucker

Training Certificates for Jacqueline Gray  
FSS Participant Graduation Letter  
PHADA Advocate Article; re: Lou  
Employment Requirements for Executive Directors

**Resolutions**

20-15-9-1 Resolution Approving Payment of Invoices

Commissioners Driscoll and Bhatt 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 5:35 P.M.

**Next meeting: October 20, 2020 at 4:30 PM via Zoom video meeting with conference call-in for public.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Tanya Van Order, Deputy Director