**Boston Housing Authority RAB Meeting 8-10-17, at 125 Amory Street**

Family Public Housing: *Members* Val Shelley, Concetta Paul, Phyllis Corbitt, Betty Rae Wade, Meena Carr. *Alternates* Janis McQuarrie (Alt 4): 6

Elderly/Disabled Public Housing: *Members* Michele McNickles, Jeanne Burke Patterson, Marlena Nania, Betty Cutler, Modesta Ballester, Richard Gurney, Eugenia Smith,David Turney. *Alternate:* Alex Rosin: 9

Section 8: *Members* Edna Willrich, Lennox Tillet, Tara Ruttle, Jung Wing Lee, Judith Frey, Lerona Diggs, Stephen Tracey, Yvette Moore. *Alternates*: Theresa Brown (Alt \*), Robin Williams (Alt \*): 9

Absences excused: John Maloni, Norman Younger, Arlene Carr, Betty Carrington, Pamela Lewis Hoyt

Others: John Kane, Edna Rivera Carrasco, BHA; Mac McCreight, GBLS; Georgia McEaddy (Section 8), Arthur Alexander (Franklin Field); Ethel Hall Section 8); others

The meeting was chaired by Michele McNickles; Marlene Nania was Timekeeper and Phyllis Corbitt was Sergeant at Arms. Minutes of prior meeting were approved. It was noted that Mayor Walsh could not attend, so that portion of the agenda was omitted. (There was some discussion later in meeting about efforts to arrange for him to attend a later meeting.)

1/  **Committee Reports**

*a. Policy & Procedures—*David noted that there had been no meeting since the last Board meeting, but there was to be a joint Policy & Procedures and Budget Committee meeting to be held on Wednesday, Sept. 6th from 6-8 at Orchard Gardens, 25 Ambrose Street; site has parking. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the various tabled items from the last RAB meeting (per diems, travel policy, other issues where budget and policy issues intersect.) While all are to sign the Travel Agreement, other aspects of the Travel Policy are part of the Joint Committee discussion, and might change (for example, per diems)**.**

*b. Budget:* Concetta had an updated budget report, and noted that since that report, BHA had issued the next payment of $15,000.

c. *Conference Coordination*: Concetta reported that everything is set for NARSAAH, and there is a conference packet which chairs can get to their members. Some special accommodation arrangements need to be made for Anita Morris-Merriman with the hotel, and RAB won’t get word on that until 2 weeks prior to the conference. It was agreed that the per diem was $75/day for this conference, but future per diems would be subject to the Joint Committee discussion and RAB approval. Val noted that the costs for NARSAAH were high ($10,000), even factoring in that there are less people going than in the past. This is one of the subjects she’d like to discuss at the Joint Committee discussion—are there other conferences that might be beneficial but less expensive. The idea of the RAB itself having local training sessions was floated.

d. *Outreach*: Concetta reported that she, Richard, Judith, and Lenox had volunteered for this Ad Hoc Committee. Had decided to screen the 70 Acres in Chicago Cabrini Green film, which the RAB had purchased, and go around different developments to discuss this with residents and invite them to participate with the RAB. The first screening will be at West Ninth Street community room on Aug. 17th at 1 p.m., and then will be going out to other sites (and solicit Section 8 tenants to also participate).

2/ Filling Assistant Secretary Position: It was noted that at the last RAB meeting, the position of Assistant Secretary wasn’t filled. Since then, there were further discussions, and Lenox Tillet was nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary. There were no other nominations, and this was approved by acclamation.

3/ Announcements/Old or New Business, etc.: Phyllis noted that Mass. Law Reform had published a new book, Legal Tactics, which could be valuable about tenants’ rights and has useful break out booklets; it would cost $25. Mac offered to bring one to a future meeting.

*ITOA:* Val’s sense was that this had gone well since our meeting, and others indicated no cab problems. There may be need to get a van rather than a cab for Anita to travel from Lynn.

*Grievance Panel Training*: A few members (Marlena, Meena) had participated in the Grievance Panel training and had sat on their first hearings and said it was very informative and challenging and learned a lot about what BHA managers, etc. face and how matters are resolved. Phyllis and Concetta said they were waiting for their sessions. Mac said the RAB might want to ask BHA for a formal report about: (a) when will the Grievance Procedure revisions (about the choice between a panel or hearing officer) be implemented; (b) when will notices to tenants be changed (lettering them know of these options). David added that a 3rd concern was about whether the panel members are selecting their chairs. Richard asked if the new panel members had elected the chairs, and Marlena said this hadn’t happened yet. Phyllis asked if this was required by DHCD regs; Mac said no, but it has been in BHA policy for a while but wasn’t enforced. There was a motion, second, and vote to ask BHA to report back on all three of these matters.

*Assessment of Fair Housing:* Stephen and Mac reported on the session at the Hailey Apts. and Mac also reported on the Charlestown AFH meeting. There were about 25 people at the Hailey meeting and about 30 in Charlestown. At Hailey, BHA (Wilbur Commodore) and the City (Bob Gehret and Janine Anzalota) did presentations that were a bit more expanded on the data and issues; there were comments submitted, but attendance was low (about half those at the public hearing were City/BHA/agency staff). The Charlestown session was a bit more interactive and more like the Roxbury session, where a series of questions were posed to the audience; the newly elected Charlestown resident board was actively involved. Stephen noted that another public hearing is due on Aug. 22 on the next draft of the AFH. Mac asked John if he had heard any more word on the new draft, since it was supposed to be out by now; John agreed, but said he hadn’t gotten any word.

*Our Homes Our Voices Rally*: This was the rally on July 31st to bring attention to proposed federal housing cuts. Phyllis said it wasn’t bad (good attendance, a number of speakers including the Mayor, Rep. Honan, Cong. Clark), but that it would have been good if CHAPA had asked RAB or BHA public housing/Section 8 tenants to be speakers—they capped who could speak.

*Officer Training*: This will be next Thursday, August 17th from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Amory Street training room (usual RAB location). It is for newly elected officers and assistant officers, but is open to any RAB members who wish to attend. John asked non-officers who plan to attend to either let him know tonight or before the session for the purpose of ordering food. Mac will do the piece on Officer Responsibilities, Bylaws, and Tips for Officers. Jerry Halberstadt, who’s come to the RAB in the past and has been instrumental in getting the State to set up a commission on bullying in public/assisted housing, will speak and a focus will be on relating Groundrules and how to foster a non-bullying community. [Val indicated she wouldn’t be available for the training due to a conference she’s attending with NeighborWorks for Madison Park in Philadelphia.]

*Advanced Property Management support; bus trip to DC*: Edna reported that a few people (herself, Val, Lerona, and Lennox) had attended the press conference last month to support residents at Advanced Property Management in Mattapan/Hyde Park who were faced with rent increases above what their Section 8 will pay. It was raining, but it was important to stand up for people. She and others also reported on the bus trip to DC, that they met with Elizabeth Warren, and there was an excellent speech from the newly elected Washington Beech chair (Cheryl Semmack) about what her experience had been waiting to get housing for many years. The RAB asked to hear that speech and she described going through foreclosure & homelessness and being lucky that she was still grandparented on the Washington Beech list so she got housing there.

4/ Adding Additional Section 8 Alternate: Edna said that there might be two additional Section 8 tenants interested in serving as alternates; one, however, deferred for now. Georgia McEaddy spoke and said she was a resident at Stony Brook Commons (and had previously been in BHA public housing in Charlestown in 1967] and was interested in serving. The Board voted to approve her as an additional Section 8 Alternate (next in the Alternate order).

5/ Evaluations: All positives—best meeting since 8/16, civil, let’s have more like this one, people respected each other. As part of the presentation, Eugenia asked if she could borrow the RAB’s audio equipment for the Bridging the Gap event, and RAB members/alternates were invited; she said she’d take responsibility for this. This was OK’d. Meeting was adjourned earlier than usual.