

Boston Housing Authority RAB Meeting 12-5-19, at 10 Lamartine St. Ext. (Anna Mae Cole Center, Hailey Apartments, Jamaica Plain)

Family Public Hsg: *Members* Val Shelley, Meena Carr, Betty Rae Wade, Ron Johnson, Aracelis Tejeda, Concetta Paul, Arlene Carr, Cheryl Semnack. *Alternates:* Nicole Beckles (Alt 1), Meriem Arachiche (Alt 2): 10

Elderly/Disabled Public Hsg: *Members* Michele McNickles, Dave Turney, Arthur Alexander, Jeanne Burke Patterson, Eugenia Smith. *Alternate:* Anita Pleasant (Alt 1): 6

Section 8: *Members* Edna Willrich, Stephen Tracey, Lennox Tillet, Therese Browne, Minnie Jackson. *Alternates:* Robin Williams (Alt 1), Georgia McEaddy (Alt 2): 7

Absences excused: Jung Wing Lee (leave of absence), Leron Diggs, Phyllis Corbitt, Arlene Coleman, Jeannie Archibald, Dan Horne, Rik Gurney

Others: John Kane, BHA; Mac McCreight, GBLS; Charita Francisco, interpreter

The meeting was chaired by Therese Browne with assistance from Robin Williams. Arlene Carr was sergeant at arms, and Val Shelley was timekeeper. Minutes of the 11/19 meeting were approved; later in the meeting, when it was realized that the minutes from the 10/19 meeting hadn't been approved, it was agreed to approve those as well.

1/Annual and Five-Year Plan Notes/Comments, and Planning for the Public Hearings on Dec. 9th: Mac went through notes that he had prepared for the RAB on the Template, the Supplement, changes to the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP—only 1 change proposed), the Section 8 Administrative Plan (more changes), and a piece that refers to RAD rights. HUD had issued a revised RAD notice this year, and so BHA needed to revise a bunch of things to match up with what HUD had done. Mac noted that last month, Randi had presented on the Capital Plan, and BHA had done what had been requested by the RAB in prior years, providing a summary of capital expenditures in the past few years. He noted that there were still discrepancies between the number of Asian households served by the public housing program (roughly 12%) and Section 8 (roughly 1%), and BHA had agreed to convene a group to look into this and to figure out if revisions in priorities were needed, but so far, it didn't appear that it had taken place. For example, it could be that because so much of Section 8 admissions are controlled by Priority 1 homeless category, and fewer Asian families go into shelter but may instead stay in very overcrowded situations, this might be an explanation, and then the question would be, should there be a shift to include the very over-crowded situations. He noted that as BHA had presented during the summer, there were more proposals to convert properties to either RAD or Section 18 demo/disposition so that there would be more money to support renovations, but not all of the policies that would protect tenants had been fully explored. For example, HUD has said for the RAD program that if a public housing family was getting the Earned Income Disregard (special treatment on increased income due to employment) for a 2-year phase in, the balance of the phase in should be carried over after RAD conversion, but there wasn't something similar on Section 18 conversions, and BHA should try to get similar policies so that people aren't treated differently depending on whether it's RAD or Section 18. BHA has done this on Mixed Finance Grievance Procedure. The 5-year plan sets out a number of long range goals and

people should look at that, like high performer status, improving Section 8 opportunities to move to other communities, supporting resident initiatives and healthy housing, supporting BHA staff, and having good customer service. BHA had done the Section 8 small area FMR improvements which increases housing options, but there should be updates on when figures will be revised this year. It was hard to get BHA PHAS scores up, and occupancy remains a challenge because of the amount of relocation needed to help support renovations. In looking at demand for unit sizes, BHA should also consider not only what the waiting list says, but also the needs of those already in housing who have identified the need to get different unit sizes (this isn't captured in the data, and it should be, since families often have to wait for years). BHA has also identified that while a lot of renovation and public-private partnerships are needed, it does not want to go out of existence as an organization or employer, and there is a question of the right balance between what's handled in the partnerships and what BHA retains. RAB members may want to think about how they can help get involved with customer satisfaction evaluations, etc.

John noted that a revised 5-year template had been provided along with the Limited English Proficiency Four Factor Analysis, and that Amendment 2 to the FY 2019 Plan (revising the Mixed Finance list) was approved by HUD. It was noted that normally at this RAB meeting, we figure out which RAB members can help attend the two public hearings on Monday, Dec. 9th, both to greet those attending or wishing to speak and to speak about the RAB role (as well as to make any comments on issues). Edna volunteered for the morning (at the Copley Branch library), and Betty and David for the evening (at Boston City Hall); Arlene said she needed to check her schedule.

2/ Reports Back from Oct. 2019 Mass. Union Convention: There hadn't been time to do this at last month's session, so there were oral reports (in addition to any written reports submitted) by Anita, Nicole, Concetta, Arlene, Michele, and David. A number of people spoke to the value of the pieces on legislative lobbying and practical tips and materials will be made available to the RAB as a whole. State reports discussed the financial condition of state and federal housing programs. Right to counsel discussed the need of tenants for representation (and a Harvard program spoke to how they help public housing tenants). Mac did a workshop on HOTMA and proposed HUD rent changes (Mac offered to forward the comments he did to HUD for Mass. Union and City Life, as well as those from the National Housing Law Project). It is important for people to know who their state reps are, and they will often come to meetings like this. Eric from CHAPA spoke to the importance of getting good turnout for 2020 lobbying efforts at the state house. There was a piece about how tenants (public housing and Section 8) get on local housing authority Boards. David Hedison from Mass. NAHRO spoke about Partnerships to Expand Housing Opportunities PEHO. Amy Stitely from DHCD spoke about funding for climate change resilience, and there was a whole piece on what Mass. Union is developing as a policy on public/private partnerships and making sure residents keep basic protections (similar to what we've been doing for a few years in Boston). There was a discussion of children & foster care. It was noted that if there is RAD conversion, existing MOAs get changed, and people have to be careful to make sure that the guarantees are carried over (Michele and David noted that there is to be a BHA/St. Botolph meeting on 12/18).

2/ Committee Reports:

Policy & Procedures Committee: Given Rik's absence, Mac did this report. There had been no committee meeting in November, but there were items that were tabled at the last RAB meeting,

so this was to report out those other items. There will be a Policy & Procedures meeting on Wed. Dec. 11th at 6 p.m. at West Ninth Street (earlier this month due to the holidays). (a) Pooling for Travel Arrangements: The committee had discussed this as requested by the 10/19 RAB meeting, but hadn't yet come up with firm recommendations, and it would be beneficial to have thoughts from the Budget Committee. While pooling has advantages (discount rates for booking larger groups for travel/accommodations), there are potential liability issues where the RAB advances funds for those not traveling as RAB-authorized representatives, and how this will be reimbursed, and questions whether all such arrangements need to be paid in advance by LTOs, etc. Val said that Budget Committee had discussed this this evening and could get something to Policy & Procedures. (b) Minimum Attendance Requirements to Run for Officer Position: The committee had discussed, but didn't have a formal proposal, the idea that it might be desirable, in the years after the first RAB/officer election, to require that officers meet the same attendance requirements as full members, or at least have that be a preference (falling back if there were candidates who met that). This will be discussed further and any proposal will be brought back to the Board. (c) Whether There Needed to be a Regular Election of Committee Heads: The Board had asked that the question of regular elections for committee heads be done. For Budget, where membership of the committee is chosen each year by election, this makes sense since membership often changes, and Budget had done this. For Policy & Procedures, it's different, since all members are volunteers (are not elected), and the committee members chose the chair after the RAB election in 2016. The committee is always free to remove the chair and select someone new, and the RAB as a whole can also elect a new chair if needed (this happened a number of years ago when a prior chair wasn't calling the meetings). Rik had suggested doing a periodic "vote of confidence", with the committee chair to step down if s/he didn't get the vote of confidence. Board members thought this was not necessary for Policy & Procedures, and the existing bylaw provisions were sufficient. There was a motion, second, and majority to leave things as they are for Policy & Procedures.

Budget Committee: David reported that RAB had just gotten the last \$13,000 payment from BHA for this fiscal year (ending 4/1/20), and he's working on preparing a draft budget for next year which he hopes will match actual needs. He was suggesting that the RAB amp up NLIHC attendance (to 9 members) and reduced NARSAAH (to 3) based on the greater focus NLIHC has put on RAD and the limited utility of the last few NARSAAH sessions. Cab vouchers also need to be increased, given that the RAB is already at 93% of the full year's proposed allocation on that (with another quarter yet to go). There had been some discussion whether to do a conference similar to what we did this spring, and David wondered about having someone from HUD. Arlene reported that there were still a few people on the no fly list pending approval of expense reports (which just got to chairs, and then have to go to Arlene and David). Meriem and Concetta got in their reports & are off the list; ones from Minnie J, Michele M, Anita P, Cheryl S and Robin W are being reviewed. Concetta asked if Policy & Procedures could also review what the consequences are for not turning in expense reports timely, and there should be a consequence (such as not being eligible to go to the next conference).

4/ Other Business:

Val noted that Mr. Lee wanted to extend his leave of absence for a month, until January, because of his recovery schedule, and this was approved.

John noted that Kate Bennett had asked to be on the RAB agenda for January, and on that agenda should also be the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee to plan the RAB election process for 2020. In addition, City Life had proposed an idea to be on the agenda for the February 2020 agenda to discuss a proposal in Congress for green retrofitting in housing, and there is a group called SunRise that's focused on Climate Justice issues that would do the presentation. It was moved, seconded, and approved to have these items on.

Anita Pleasant indicated that she would be submitting her resignation to the Board. [It should be noted that the resignation was not yet accepted by the Board, and this step would be necessary after it's submitted. In addition, Anita is the Assistant Secretary, and the Board might want to do a vote to fill that position, if/when the resignation is accepted.]

Georgia suggested there would be value to setting up a meeting to which David Gleich and all Section 8 participants would be invited to discuss changes in the Section 8 program. Edna said that there were already zip code meetings set up, and the problem with inviting everyone was finding sufficient space and the challenges of a bulk mailing. In addition, it's up to people who get the mailing to decide whether or not to attend.

Val asked if the Board could approve removal of Anita Morris Merriman as an alternate, since she hadn't been in attendance and hadn't responded to various notices about reimbursing the RAB for unaccounted per diems. This was approved.

Evaluation: Good meeting, well run, one of the best we've had. Had a budget meeting before the RAB meeting without any scars. People do need to raise their hands and get recognized and not talk over others. One person said she was spoken to rudely and didn't appreciate it, and didn't think she was heard in the discussion.