

MINUTES
Housing Authority of the Town of Darien
February 26, 2013

A Regular Meeting of the Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Darien was called to order at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 26, 2013 in Room B-1 of the Darien Town Hall.

Present were: Commissioners Jan Raymond, Joe Warren, Cyndy Ashburne, Peter Bigelow, and Property Manager Ford Gardner. Absent was Commissioner Allen Delaney. Also in attendance was Co-Developer Arthur Anderson.

The recording of the minutes from the January meeting was incomplete due to a mechanical issue. It was determined that the only matter not recorded was a discussion by Arthur Anderson on the West Avenue houses. The minutes will be revised and resubmitted for approval. On a motion from Joe Warren, the approval of the January 22, 2013 minutes was tabled.

Joe Warren questioned the payment to Aquarion Water for replacement of a water meter at Old Town Hall Houses. Jan Raymond agreed and asked Ford Gardner to follow up. The paid bills reports for January, 2013 and February, 2013 (through 2/22) for AON Development and Old Town Hall were approved on a motion by Joe Warren.

Executive Report – Ford Gardner reported that on the morning of February 26th he, Joe Strate and Allen Delaney met with Brian Leachy from Clearstory Architectural. Clearstory Architectural has been retained by the state to examine the physical plant of OTHH and to determine the age and life expectancy of the structures and an estimated replacement schedule. Joe Strate and Allen Delaney were able to provide data concerning prior improvements and completion dates. Joe Strate and Allen Delaney were also able to provide access to an efficiency unit, a one-bedroom unit and a handicapped unit.

With the exception of two, all tenants scheduled to move into The Heights during April have been contacted and appointments made for their certifications. Tenants scheduled to return during May will be contacted during the week of March 4. All returning tenants have been notified of their tentative return date. Dumpsters have been delivered to the remaining houses and Helping Hands Agency has been contacted regarding tenants that may be in need of assistance to pack.

The renovation of Apt #43 and Apt #66 at OTTH should be completed by the end of the week of March 4. Materials for apartment renovations have been purchased from Home Depot. When a bulk material order is placed, Home Depot offers a “Bid Room”, which allows discounts to the bulk order. For example, the cost to renovate an apartment before using the “Bid Room” was \$3,268. When pricing through the “Bid Room” the cost of materials would have been \$2,664, a savings of \$600. Jan Raymond agreed that purchasing material through this program is cost effective, and that all future orders should be purchased through this program.

The Directory of Commissioners has been submitted to CHFA. All remaining CHFA documents that are required to be submitted have been forward to Arthur Anderson. Jan asked about the opening of the Senior waiting list. Ford is working on the ad for the newspapers to announce the waiting list and also working on a list of community contacts, which are primarily are Senior Community Centers in the surrounding towns.

Jan Raymond expressed that the list needs to be open as soon as possible, especially since the number on the list has been reduced to approximately 30 names following the January 2013 purge letter. Cyndy Ashburne asked about new rules that the DHA is required to follow. Arthur stated that the only requirement is approval from DECD.

Jan Raymond stated that it is necessary to write a new lease agreement for Old Town Hall Houses.

Jan requested that Ford Gardner purchase a “work” cell phone so that he would not have to use his personal cell phone for DHA issues. He will determine the cost and report his findings at the next meeting. Cyndy Ashburne stated that the DHA credit card signatories need to be updated to reflect DHA personnel changes and also to include Patricia Santorella and Ford Gardner as authorized signers.

Redevelopment - Arthur Anderson reported that the return of the AON residents would begin during April. The limit of 400 applications was met and the waiting list closed on February 25, 2013. Arthur noted that it is always possible that once an application is reviewed, the applicant may not qualify. The website has been updated, and newspapers and community contacts have been notified of the list closing.

There are no issues on the construction side, but returning tenants have asked about how the apartments are finished as to color of cabinets, flooring, window treatments, and carpeting. It was the original plan to construct a “board” to display samples of these items, but it was decided that it would be too difficult. The alternate plan is to complete a “model” and photograph the unit. These photographs will be displayed only to returning tenants. Joe Warren clarified that this display is not open to the public or the press. The “model” and its pictures should be ready within a few weeks.

Jan Raymond commended our Co-Developers on a beautiful project. Along with Cyndy Ashburne, Jan toured The Heights and was extremely impressed. Cyndy suggested that since The Heights was such a controversial project, it may be beneficial from a public relations standpoint that non-residents be allowed to tour the project. Arthur Anderson agreed to provide a non-resident tour, but not until the units are ready. He said that scheduling the moves of the returning tenants will take precedence over tours.

Arthur Anderson said that the lottery for the approximate 400 applicants would be performed during the week of March 4, and invited the Commissioners to oversee the procedure. The lottery will be conducted as follows: several employees of Imagineers who are not affiliated with the rental division will physically pull applications to determine the applicants’ places on the priority list. The employees doing the drawing will be representative of both genders and multiple races.

Jan Raymond asked if the landscaping would be completed before the April move-in dates. Arthur Anderson explained that it will be started and completed as the weather permits.

Allen-O’Neill Association – No report
Senior Association – No representative, no report

Jan Raymond asked Joe Warren to report on his findings regarding the tree at seniors. Joe is still working on this matter, along with Allen Delaney, and will have a more definitive report at next month’s meeting.

Cyndy Ashburne volunteered to work on the rewriting of the Senior Lease. She had suggested that it would a good reference to contact other housing authorities and request copies of their senior leases.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m. to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing resident matters.