

## MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners of the Dracut Housing Authority met in regular session on February 24, 2014 at 971 Mammoth Road, Dracut, Massachusetts. Chairman F. Russell Taylor opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and upon roll-call vote those present were as follows:

Present:        Brian J. Bond  
                     Kenneth Cunha  
                     F. Russell Taylor  
                     Debra DeWitt Ahern  
                     George M. Nangle

### **MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

Commissioner Bond made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2014 Board Meeting. Said motion was seconded by Debra DeWitt Ahern and upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Commissioner Cunha made a motion to approve the warrant. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Nangle. Upon roll call vote passed unanimously. Commissioner Cunha made a motion to place the financial report on file for the audit. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Nangle and upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

a.        **A vote to adopt the FY2014 Income Limits.**

Commissioner Bond made a motion to adopt the FY 2014 Income Limits. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner DeWitt Ahern and upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

b.        **A vote to approve construction of 45 – 60 units of elderly housing on the Richardson Property.**

This item will be discussed under the Housing Sub-Committee Section.

c.        **A vote to allow Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company to survey the Richardson Property for the potential expansion of additional gas pipelines.**

A recommendation was made by Glen Edwards to attend an upcoming presentation that

Tennessee Gas Pipeline will be giving to the Board of Selectmen in the next couple of months. Chairman Taylor commented that if they put this gas pipeline on the Richardson Property we would not be able to build anywhere near the pipeline. The Director agreed and stated that at this point they just want to do a survey. The housing authority does not have to give them permission. This work is going on all over town. The Director stated that we should table this vote until we get additional information through the upcoming presentation.

d. **Phineas Street – window bid.**

The Director informed the Board that we are installing new windows in 44 apartments as well as the all the windows in the community room at Phineas Street. The bid opening is scheduled for 2/28/14. The project will be funded through the Capital Fund Program.

e. **Update on additional parking spaces at Parker Avenue.**

The Director informed the Board that through the State Formula Funding Program we will be adding parking spaces at Parker Avenue. Parking has been an issue at this development for quite some time.

f. **Vacancy Report.**

The vacancy report was given to the Board.

g. **Work Order Report.**

The work order report was given to the Board.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Housing Sub-Committee Report:**

The Director gave the Board an Update on the Housing Sub Committee Meeting that took place on February 20, 2014. The sub-committee was given the scenarios that were previously distributed by the Women's Institute for Housing and Economic Development. The four scenarios outlined a 13, 24, 45, and 60 unit project. There was some concern from Selectman DiRocco and Selectman Cox about the small number of applicants who would come off of our waiting list. Many of the units will be fair market rent or close to it. We will be putting 12 project based vouchers into the development. Chairman Taylor also had some issues based on requesting \$3,000,000 from CPC but we would only be getting 12 applicants off of the waiting list. The Housing Sub Committee asked if we could have Ms. Tsongas give a presentation to the committee. The Director spoke with Ms. Tsongas and scheduled the meeting for Thursday, March 6, 2014. Commissioner Cunha asked if we could get more project based vouchers down the road. He asked if we were to build 24 units now (with 12 vouchers) and another 24 unit building down the road would there be the possibility of getting additional vouchers for the second 24 phase building. The Director stated that might be a possibility. Commissioner Cunha stated that we have known this from the beginning. We have spoken to many consultants and they have all told us the

same thing. We knew we would never be able to take 100% off of our list. Commissioner Bond asked how Chelmsford Housing Authority was able to build their developments. The Director stated that they did it the same way we would, all these developments are mixed financing and mixed income projects. Commissioner Bond stated that he agreed with Commissioner Cunha that building 24 units is best. Commissioner Bond stated that we would at least be getting 12 people off our list. Chairman Taylor stated that when we stood up before Town Meeting we told everyone that we would be putting 60 units on that site. Chairman Taylor stated that the current scenario is not what he envisioned and not what he supported, and the fact that we will only be taking 12 people off our list is a concern. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern stated that she was equating affordable housing with people from our list. She stated that we made representations to the Selectman and to the townspeople that people would be coming off our list. She stated that we need to get as many people as possible off the list. Chairman Taylor stated that we need to be thinking about the taxpayers. We will be spending almost \$7,000,000 to only get 12 people off of our list.

Commissioner Cunha stated that this project has been underway for three years. Back then we were accessing 202 funding which would be subsidized and tenants would only pay 30% of their income. That type of scenario no longer exists. We have sat here and listened to five consultants tell us that we will not get 60 people off our list. Those type of projects no longer exist. Commissioner Cunha stated that he thought we should start with the 24 unit scenario and phase in additional units later. Every single unit that we put on that property is going to be senior housing even though only 12 people will come from our list. It is still senior housing. To scrub the project and say we are not going to do it because we cannot get 60 units does not make sense. The people who are going to live in these units are going to be seniors, maybe they make a little more income than the seniors that live here and they can afford market rate. We cannot just sit here after three years, after the Town purchased that property for \$900,000 and deeded it to us, and just dismiss this project. How can we go from 60 units to zero? I think that we need to get as many as we can even if it is just 12. We will still be housing seniors. Commissioner Cunha stated that we should phase it in, build it in phases; take as many as we can off our list and the rest will be for seniors who can afford it. To just give it up does not make sense. We own this property and we need to do something with this property. How did we go from we like it but now we do not want to build. Chairman Taylor stated that he thinks the issue is the money. Chairman Taylor stated that if we are going to do 24 units he wants to have citizen input. He stood up in front of Town Meeting stating that we were going to put 60 units on this property. Commissioner Bond stated that he thinks over time we will get 60 units on that property. He said that we need to start somewhere. We should start with 24 units and move on from there. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern stated that if we build out the first 24 units maybe we can build additional units with the reserves. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern stated that we need to do this in phases, that we need to put 30 – 40 people from our list into housing.

The Director stated that based on the per unit development costs of \$292,500 if we were to multiply that by 12 it would cost approximately \$3.5 million. The argument could be that the \$3,000,000 from CPC would be going to units that would be occupied by people from our list. Commissioner Bond asked the Director what her opinion was on the 24 unit scenario. The Director stated that it is more feasible than the 45 – 60 unit scenario, we would control it, and that we would be able to phase it down the road. We would have built a reputation that we build affordable housing and it could be easier to get funded down the road based on that history. The Director stated that when you request funding from the state you can also request an additional 8 project based vouchers. That is all part of the funding process, it does not mean that we will get it but we would absolutely try.

Chairman Taylor recognized Selectman Cox who was in attendance at the meeting. Selectman Cox stated that he came to see what was discussed at the meeting tonight. He stated that he did not know where the notion that the Housing Sub Committee went from 60 units to zero because he does not believe that to be the case. Selectman Cox stated that his opinion at the Sub Committee Meeting was that he could not support it as it was presented but he never said that he went from 60 units to zero. Commissioner Bond asked Selectman Cox what his thoughts were on the 24 unit scenario. Selectman Cox stated that he would support it if the funding was in place. He said that right now the funding is iffy. CPC has not allocated funds and the State has not. At this point all the funding is hypothetical. Commissioner Cunha asked if it made sense to have the Consultant come and present to the Housing Sub Committee and Selectman Cox said that that would be good. Selectman Cox stated that it has been put out that the meeting was negative and Selectman Cox stated that that was not true. Selectman Cox stated that I know we need additional housing this has been something that I have been working on since I became a Selectman. Commissioner Cunha stated that he agreed Selectman Cox has always been a proponent for additional housing. Commissioner Cunha stated that the Selectmen need additional information which is why the Consultant will present at the next Sub Committee Meeting. Commissioner Nangle asked when we would be going in front of CPC to ask for the funding. The next CPC meeting will be March 18, 2014. Commissioner Nangle stated that he wants it on the record that he has also been for additional housing. He stated that he was one of the Commissioners that voted to approve Louisburg Square.

Commissioner Bond made a motion to move forward with the 24 unit scenario with the plan of phasing in additional units. Commissioner Cunha seconded the motion and upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

#### **Demolition of 1530 Bridge Street**

The Director stated that the asbestos has been removed and we are just waiting on National Grid to cut the gas line. Commissioner Nangle stated that he would also call National Grid to get this done. The Director stated that once that is done the permits would be issued and the building will be taken down. Commissioner Bond asked that we make sure that we let the abutters know when the property will be taken down.

#### **Heating Committee**

The Director stated that she sent the Board the updated cost estimates. The original cost was 1.5 million and it has been brought down to 1.3 million so that is a decrease of \$200,000 on the estimate. The Director has been exploring funding options. The Director stated that the project cannot move forward without funding. Commissioner Bond asked whether or not we could fund the conversion ourselves. The Director stated that we are looking at different scenarios.

#### **Security Committee**

The Director stated that she met with Lou Divarris on the camera installation at 971 Mammoth Road. Mr. Divarris is putting a proposal together and it will be submitted to the Board at a future date.

#### **Old Business**

Commissioner Bond asked about the lighting meeting at 65 Phineas Street. Brian Martin stated that he met with a distributor who would be putting a package together on pricing and installation. The Electrician is also going to be installing some lights, specifically on the community room building. Chairman Taylor asked if some of the lights could be put on a dimmer sensor.

#### **New Business**

None

#### **Resident and Public Participation**

None

#### **Executive Session – Security**

A motion was made by Commissioner Cunha to enter executive session. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner DeWitt Ahern and upon roll call vote passed unanimously. The Chairman informed those present that a security issue was going to be discussed in Executive Session. At the completion of Executive Session they would come back in to open session and adjourn then.

#### **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned 6:45 p.m.