MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners of the Dracut Housing Authority met at a regular meeting on September 15, 2014 at 65 Phineas Street, Dracut, MA 01826. Chairman Russell Taylor opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and upon roll-call vote those present were as follows:

Present: Brian J. Bond

Debra DeWitt Ahern

Russell Taylor

George M. Nangle

Jesse Forcier

**MINUTES**

Commissioner Nangle made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 2014 Board Meeting. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner DeWitt Ahern. Under discussion, Commissioner Bond stated that the roll call vote at the last meeting was not correct. He stated that it was not a unanimous vote but rather a four to one vote. The motion was changed to read to approve the minutes of the June 2014 Board Meeting subject to the roll call vote to be changed to a four to one vote. (See attached) Said motion passed unanimously.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Forcier to approve the financials for May 2014, June 2014, and July 2014. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner DeWitt Ahern and upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner DeWitt Ahern to approve the July 2014, August 2014, and September 2014 warrants. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Nangle. Under discussion, Commissioner Bond asked if the bills have already been paid. The Director stated that the bills have been paid. Commissioner Bond stated that he thought the practice of the Board was to approve the

bills before they are paid. The Director stated that the Board approves the warrant but the bills have already been paid. The Director stated that she cannot hold off paying vendors. The Director stated that the Board approves the warrant and they have the authority to question the warrant but the bills from July and August need to be paid. The Director stated that she is accountable to the vendors. She is also accountable making sure that the bills reflect what is on the warrant, that she signs the checks as well as the Treasurer. Commissioner Bond said that he believes that the Board should vote on the warrant before the vendors are paid. He stated that is difficult to do when we did not have a meeting in July and August. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern said that she wanted it on the record that Commissioner Bond is making this sound very nefarious. She asked if in the past, if there has not been a meeting does the housing authority pay the vendors and the Board votes on the warrant at the next meeting. The Director answered yes. Commissioner Bond asked if we have ever paid bills before the warrant was voted on and the Director stated that yes if we do not have a meeting one month that is what happens.

Commissioner Bond asked about the bill for Owl Stamp. The Director stated that it is for letterhead, envelopes, and signature stamps. Commissioner Bond asked about the bill for Dillon Landscaping and asked if they are still doing all the landscaping at the sites. The Director stated that they are doing the landscaping at 971 Mammoth Road and 65 Phineas Street (two sites). He questioned July which was for $3400 and another $1700 in August and $2500 in September was paid to Dillon Landscaping. The Director stated that the bills may overlap. Commissioner Bond suggested hiring a part timer in the future. Commissioner Bond inquired about Pest End and ProTech Lawn Care which the Director stated that that bill was for extermination treatments. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

a. **A vote for Certification by Board Members to sign Lead Based Paint Legal Compliance**

**per Department of Housing & Community Development.**

Motion by Commissioner Forcier to have the Board certify the Lead Based Paint

Legal Compliance Form. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Nangle. Under

discussion, Commissioner Bond inquired about the record keeping that is notated on the

certification. The Director stated that every new resident that moves in signs a Mass

Lead Form. The Director also stated that we also have to inform residents and give them

reports on any unit that has had lead removed from it. Upon roll call vote passed

unanimously.

b. **A vote to implement a policy to exclude all but $1,800 of the annual income received by**

**a disabled veteran who became disabled in connection with military service. This policy**

**would only impact residents of state aided housing.**

Commissioner Nangle made a motion to implement this policy. Said motion was seconded

by Commissioner DeWitt Ahern. Under discussion, Commissioner Bond asked if we currently

have any residents that fall under this criteria. The Director stated that she cannot say for

sure but she does not believe that we currently do. Upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

c. **Work Order Report**

The Board reviewed the Work Order Report.

d. **Vacancy Report**

The Board reviewed the vacancy report.

e. **Independent Auditor’s Report**

The Board reviewed the Auditor’s Report. There were no findings.

f. **Information to be added to the monthly agendas.**

Commissioner Forcier requested that this item be put on the agenda. He requested that

additional information be put on the agendas. He stated that many of the Boards in town

including the Selectmen have added this verbiage to their agendas. Commissioner Forcier

said that this is being implemented throughout town. Commissioner Forcier made a motion

to add this language to the agenda. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Bond.

Upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

g. **2015 Budget**

The Director informed the Board that the budget guidelines have not been issued. We are

hoping that they will be in soon. The Director asked the Chairman if he wanted to put

a sub-committee together. Chairman Taylor stated that he would like to have the entire

Board sit on the Committee. That was the way it was done last year.

4. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

* **Minutes from the July 28, 2014** Housing Sub-Committee Meeting. These minutes

were dispersed to the Board.

* **Housing Update**.

Commissioner Forcier stated that there was a meeting on July 28th which the new

members Jesse Forcier and Tami Dristillaris were brought up to date on the Richardson Property and the Lakeview Property.

Commissioner Forcier stated that there was another Housing Sub Committee Meeting

held earlier this evening on September 15, 2014 at 4:30 p.m. In attendance were

Selectmen Joe DiRocco, Selectwoman Tami Dristillaris, Commissioner DeWitt Ahern, Town Manager Jim Duggan, Assistant Town Manager Glen Edwards, and Attorney Jim Hall. Also, Commissioner Bond and Selectwomen Richardson and Hughes.

Commissioner Forcier stated that he has been in a few meetings with Mr. Duggan and

Selectman DiRocco to discuss the Town Hall Annex which he believes is a good location

for elderly housing. He has also met with the Building Inspector. There was some

discussion tonight about possibly going to CPC for some seed money for this project. It was decided that we did not want to go to CPC until every question is answered on this property. The Richardson Property was also discussed and everyone in the room agreed that at some point housing should be built on that site. Commissioner Forcier said that we are looking for a consensus. We cannot bring it to a vote tonight but a discussion

should be had. He believes that the Spring Park project should be looked at on its own merits and he believes it is the perfect project to kick off the building of senior housing. We are looking at 13 units, it is close to the market, Town Hall, Doctor’s Offices etc…

Commissioner Forcier believes that the make-up of that neighborhood would be more

conducive to a senior housing development rather than a business. Commissioner

Forcier stated that we also met with Jack Crowley who is on the Zoning Board of Appeals who suggested that we go with a comprehensive permit which allows us some leniency in set-backs, etc… It is a flat site we would have to demolish the building on the site and we are not sure what that would entail. Commissioner Forcier believes that we should move forward with a unified front to build senior housing on this site. This does not mean that we will not build something on the Richardson site when funding becomes available. Commissioner Forcier stated that the Town Manager said that the Spring Park

site is the best bang for your buck. Commissioner Forcier stated that he would like to put this on a future agenda so the Board can vote on it. Commissioner Forcier said that he would like to open it up for discussion.

Chairman Taylor stated that he is behind this project as long as the Richardson

Property is not taken off the table. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern said that everyone

thinks that the Richardson Property should be developed at some point. She

stated that it was discussed that there would be a lot less work involved in

developing the Spring Park site, the roads are there, the water and sewer lines

are there, so the site work would be much less. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern said that

she would also like to see the Richardson Property developed. The consensus is that

it has been 25 years since we have constructed new housing. She believes that this

site would be a good starting point.

Commissioner Forcier also said that after speaking with the Town Manager we

would be either purchasing the property for $1.00 or signing a 99 year lease. This

is something that the Town owns and can be moved from one municipal body to

another. Commissioner Nangle congratulated Commissioners Forcier and Dewitt Ahern

on getting something together that will allow us to build sooner rather than later.

Commissioner Nangle asked if we have any money to do a feasibility study on the

site and the Director stated that we would have to get that money from an outside

source.

Commissioner Bond stated that at Town Meeting the town spent $900,000 on the

Richardson property with the intention of building senior housing. We have done a wetlands delineation report on the site which showed that we could put 60 units of senior housing there. We spoke with the Town Engineer who said that we could put the road in for $500,000 which included the wetland crossing. We can build 13 units at Richardson and put 13 people off the list into those units for a very similar cost

as Spring Park. There is a tear down cost on Spring Park and we will probably have

to spend $200,000 to $300,000 to get that to be a site ready for construction.

Commissioner Bond suggested that they sell the Spring Park site and take the proceeds

and put it towards the Richardson Property and move forward on what the Town

voted on at Town Meeting. We have a conceptual plan that shows we can get

60 units of housing. We can build 13 units on Richardson and it has all the amenities

that the Spring Park Site has but it is a better location. This way you are not cramming

the units on the site. Commissioner Bond stated that Phil Thibeault believes that you

could possibly get nine or ten units on the Spring Park site. If you put the 13 units at Richardson you would have future expansion for additional units on Richardson that could be built in the future. Commissioner Bond stated that you can get a comprehensive permit but that just skirts the zoning by laws and takes the folks out of the process. Commissioner Bond believes that the building on Spring Park should be sold and it would generate revenue. Commissioner Forcier stated that we do not own that property so how could we sell it.

Commissioner Bond stated that Spring Park is 28,000 sq. ft. and the Richardson

Property is 17 acres. Commissioner Bond stated that there has been months and years of discussion on the Richardson Property. Commissioner Bond asked if anyone knows how the neighbors feel about senior housing being built in their neighborhood.

Commissioner Bond suggests that if the Town is willing to give us the property to

build on then why don’t they give us the property and we can sell it and use

the proceeds towards developing the Richardson Property. We all know that we

cannot go back to CPC for additional funds. Chairman Taylor stated that we do

not have the money to develop Richardson. Commissioner Bond stated that we

can use the $3 million from CPC and take out a loan. It is the same scenario

for each site. Chairman Taylor said we started off telling the people that we

would put 60 units on Richardson Property. Chairman Taylor addressed Commissioner

Bond stating that we know that you have a passion to build on the Richardson Property and we appreciate that. We believe at some point Richardson will be a good thing to

develop but we do not have the funds to build what we initially said we would.

Commissioner Bond disagrees.

Commissioner Bond asked what Commissioner Forcier meant by stating “we went

to numerous meetings”. Commissioner Bond asked who went to these meetings.

Commissioner Forcier stated that he had discussions with Selectmen DiRocco,

Jim Duggan, and Jack Crowley. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern said that Commissioner

Forcier had discussions with people, he did not sit down with three people and have a

meeting. She stated that there was no Open Meeting violation.

Commissioner Forcier stated that the CPC was not interested in giving us additional

money for the Richardson Property when we went to them for $3 million dollars.

We took it off the table because they were not interested. At the time we

didn’t have all the answers. They wanted to know if we give you all this money

are you going to follow through with it. Commissioner Forcier stated that all he

was doing was reporting on what transpired at the Housing Sub Committee Meeting. This is not a debate and Commissioner Bond is no longer on that sub-committee.

Commissioner DeWitt Ahern wanted to make it clear that if we were to get the funds

to build 60 units of senior housing we would not own the buildings, we would only manage 13 of those units. These would not be housing for our Town Residents. That was one issue with the Richardson Property. In addition, if we built the 13 units with

CPC funds and took out a loan for the rest it would be unlikely that we would get

any additional funds for the rest of the units. We want Richardson developed but

financially we cannot get funding at this time. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern believes

that we have a viable project and no one should be going out on their own to hire

an architect. It is time to put aside our personal issues. Commissioner Bond believes

that we should agree to disagree but debate is healthy.

* **HEATING COMMITTEE**

The Director reported that BLW Engineers has done a report on the Air Source

Heat Pumps. The Director stated that the Air Source Heat Pumps came in at

1.5 million. Option 2, 3, & 4 are basically close to the same cost. The Director

stated that she spoke with the Engineers and requested that they give us a

cost of replacing the existing wall units.

* **SECURITY COMMITTEE**

The Director reported that all the cameras are up and running.

5. **OLD BUSINESS**

* **Letter that the Dracut Selectmen sent to Aaron Gornstein, Undersecretary, Department of Housing & Community Development in regards to charges made against Commissioner Bond.**
* **Reply from Aaron Gornstein to the Dracut Selectmen.**

The Director stated that the letter from the Dracut Selectmen to DHCD and the

response from DHCD is in your packets. Under discussion, Commissioner Bond

stated that he has had several discussions with DHCD and they are saying that they

are not going forward with this. Commissioner Forcier made a motion that the Chairman through the Director draft a letter to Aaron Gornstein, Director DHCD

and find out what the status is on the investigation and to find out if DHCD thinks

this type of behavior is acceptable. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner

Nangle. Under Discussion, Commissioner Bond agreed that this letter should be

sent so that it can be put to bed. Upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

* **Dracut Housing Authority Summer Meeting Schedule.**

Commissioner Bond stated that he asked for this to be put on the agenda because

he was disappointed that the Board decided not to meet and that there was 95

days between meetings. He thought that there were things that should have been

done. He thinks that going forward this should change. Chairman Taylor stated that

when you voted not to have the meetings in the summer you were in favor but looking

back now you think that we should. Commissioner Bond said that moving forward

he thinks that we should have meetings in the summer. Commissioner Forcier asked

if the summer schedule was voted on unanimously by this board. The Director stated

yes. Commissioner Forcier stated that if a Board Member wanted to have a meeting

during the summer months they would just have to get in touch with the Director and a meeting would be scheduled. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern said that she thought

it was understood that if anyone thought that there was a reason to have a meeting

then that would happen. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern stated that she knows from

the years that she has been on the Board they have skipped meetings in the summer.

Commissioner Forcier asked if other housing authorities skip meetings in the summer.

The Director stated that some skip summer meetings, some just skip one, and some do

not skip any. Commissioner Bond stated that he does not want to skip meetings in the

future. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern said that business progressed as usual at the

housing authority and there was no issues.

* **STIPENDS**

Commissioner Bond stated that the Town Pays the Board of Selectmen, School

Committee and the Moderator a stipend. He said that they feel as though they

are responsible because they are getting paid. Commissioner Bond thought that

the housing authority should look into paying the elected officials a stipend. Chairman

Taylor stated that this is out of order. We are moving on. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern

asked if this board even has the authority to vote on this. Commissioner Bond said that

we should pay this housing authority a stipend so that we feel obligated to do our jobs.

Commissioner DeWitt Ahern stated that she does not need a stipend to feel obligated.

She does not believe that this is a proper conversation. The Director stated that this

Board could not get a stipend. Unless you have c.200 family housing you do not meet

the criteria.

* **LINDA KAWA’S LETTER**

Commissioner Bond stated that this goes back to the Chairman’s letter that he believes

was not truthful. The Chairman referenced Linda Kawa in his letter and the letter that I

am about to recite is from Linda Kawa. Commissioner DeWitt Ahern stated that if you

are going to read this letter into the record then the rest of the Board has a right to see

it. Commissioner Bond read Linda Kawa’s letter (see attached). Commissioner DeWitt

Ahern said that this has been forwarded to DHCD and Commissioner Bond should

send the letter to DHCD.

* **DISCUSS, REVIEW, REVISE & UPDATE DHA BYLAWS.**

Commissioner Bond requested that we take a look at the DHA by-laws and update

them. Commissioner Forcier suggested that a sub-committee be put together

to address the by-law changes. Commissioner Forcier requested that this be put

on the agenda for the next meeting.

7. **RESIDENT AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

* **Letter from Anonymous.**

The Director stated that she put a letter in the Board’s packet from an anonymous

person. Chairman Taylor stated that he has a problem with anonymous letters. If

someone does not put their name on it then you do not know their agenda or where

it is coming from. The Director stated that the issues in the letter were addressed.

Any other issues in the letter were capital projects that we do not have funding for.

* Jacqueline Chausse, 971 Mammoth Road 11A stated that she does not like how the

Board is going . You are not supposed to be arguing about everything. The Board

should stop arguing.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Bond. Said motion was seconded by

Commissioner Nangle. Upon roll call vote passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned: 7:10 p.m.