

TRUMBULL HOUSING AUTHORITY
February 26, 2013

The Trumbull Housing Authority met for a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 26, 2013 in the Community Hall of Stern Village.

Members Present: Russ Friedson, Chairman
Joanna Leone and Diane Pomposello

Also Present: Harriet Polansky, Acting Director and Attorney Darrin Callahan

A quorum being present the Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

The meeting began with a presentation by the interim Executive Director, Harriet Polansky.

Ms. Polansky provided an overview of her observations, findings and suggestions on how we can work together to improve the quality of life for the residents of Stern Village (copy attached).

The upcoming election of the Board's tenant Commissioner was the next item for discussion.

Jean Rabinow and Gloria Francesconi of the League of Women Voters were introduced and reviewed the election process.

Eligible residents may vote either in person on Election Day or by absentee ballot. On the day of voting a member of the League will be on the premises to assist in the election process. In order to insure that the people voting are entitled to vote, residents will be asked to present some form of identification. Their names will be cross referenced against an accurate up-dated list of legitimate tenants. At the end of the hours of voting, the ballots will be sorted and the candidate with the largest plurality will be seated.

Voting will take place in the Community Hall. If you cannot come in person to vote, absentee ballots may be obtained from the Director. In addition, if you are unable to obtain the absentee ballot in person, arrangements can be made to have one hand delivered. Residents were advised that the deadline for the submission of an absentee ballot will be the day before the election.

Ms. Rabinow informed that anyone who would like to be a candidate should submit their name to the Director. The list of candidates will be posted in the Community Hall. Ms. Francesconi suggested that the candidates be made aware of the duties and responsibilities of this Board so they are clear as to what their role will be. It was agreed to have a description of what is required of a Commissioner posted alongside the list of candidates.

The Chairman commented that he would prefer to hold the election prior to next month's meeting so the elected Commissioner could be seated at that time.

It was agreed that the election be held on Wednesday, March 20th between the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Absentee ballots will need to be received by the 19th. If a run-off is needed, it will be held on March 27th. Nominations for the tenant Commissioner vacancy will be closed on Wednesday, March 13th at the end of business day, 5:00 p.m.

Members of Board as well, as the residents in attendance, thanked Ms. Rabinow and Ms. Francesconi for their time and most informative presentation.

Public Comment

Dov Cazary informed that the lock to his unit is loose and needs to be replaced. Mr. Cazary was advised that a work order will be issued.

Dan Cronin inquired if the attorney for the Housing Authority would be able to provide representation to the Tenants Association, as well. Attorney Callahan responded that this could possibly present a conflict of interest but he would be willing to look into it.

Sandy Fisher suggested that, in addition to Community Hall, notices be posted in the laundry rooms. Ms. Fisher also requested that a simple map of Stern Village be made available. Board member contact information was also asked for.

Paul Littlefield noted that there are several corrections that need to be made to the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 13, 2013. The Chairman advised that this would be addressed at the next regular meeting.

Other issues of concern included the following.

The stop sign, located at the entrance to the complex, is obstructed resulting in vehicles going through at a fast rate of speed.

The Board was advised that tenants would prefer to be at home, when home inspections are made. The need for an additional dryer in the laundry rooms was also mentioned.

A suggestion was made that someone look into whether there would be a financial benefit in having the Housing Authority in charge of the washers and dryers instead of contracting it out to a laundry service.

Paul Littlefield then addressed the Board on behalf of the Stern Village Tenants Association. Mr. Littlefield detailed the concerns of the tenants, as listed in the Association's report.

There needs to be better mobility in Community Hall for disabled residents. The table arrangements are too close together for wheel chairs and walkers to have complete access of the room. The unsafe conditions of the roadways must be addressed. He inquired if the Director could contact the Public Works Department, to see if cold patches could be applied to the existing potholes. There is great concern on the ability of tenants to exit their units in the event of a major storm. Many calls were received from residents who were unable to open their front and back doors due to the huge amount of snow. The Association asks that the contractor be instructed to have the accesses cleared.

The Chairman responded that the safety concerns have been duly noted and would be addressed in the Housing Authority's Emergency Response Readiness Plan. The residents were further informed that a back-up contractor is now in place to assist with snow removal, if necessary.

The status of the procurement of additional generators was brought up for discussion. Commissioner Leone informed that right now the top priority is to install a generator in the Community Hall building. At some point in the future the Board will be taking a look at replacing the generator at the Congregate, as it is very outdated.

Mr. Littlefield then referred to Dan Cronin's published letter in the Connecticut Post, in which Mr. Cronin pointed out that the more practical answer for avoiding further outages would be to trim the trees.

On the subject of safety, the tenants have requested the installation of an electronic system that would connect all the alarms to a central location. This would allow responders to know of exact location of the resident in need of assistance.

The Chairman responded that the issue will be looked into with the alarm company. Dan Cronin also noted that the alarms often go off, when tenants are cooking and that he will address this in the next newsletter.

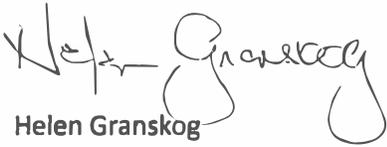
At an inquiry from Thelma Burr, the instances where rented units remain unoccupied will be looked into.

As the next scheduled meeting conflicts with the Passover holiday, Commissioner Leone motioned to move the March meeting to Wednesday, March 27th. This was seconded by Commissioner Pomposello and unanimously carried.

There being no further business to discuss a motion was made by Commissioner Leone and seconded by Commissioner Pomposello to adjourn. The February 26, 2013 meeting of the Trumbull Housing Authority adjourned at 8:40 p.m. with unanimous consent.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Trumbull Housing Authority will be held on Wednesday, March 27, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Hall of Stern Village.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helen Granskog". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "G" at the end.

Helen Granskog
Clerk

List of Observations from Harriet Polansky,
Acting Executive Director of Stern Village
From Tuesday 2/19/13 – Saturday 2/23/13

These are my findings, observations and suggestions, including but not limited to:

1. Cell phones for the Executive Director or Maintenance Manager should be purchased so that tenants can reach the Executive Director or Maintenance Manager in the event of emergencies (e.g. weather related emergencies like Hurricane Sandy and NEMO; and/or any major problem or emergency). I have already purchased an Executive Director cell line and will be providing all tenants with my work-cell contact information. I will be purchasing a cell phone for the maintenance manager as well.
2. Computer Technology is outmoded and needs to be updated. The THA needs to take better advantage of technology which will allow staff to operate Stern Village in a more efficient and effective manner.
 - a. The THA should implement a database system for vendors, suppliers, financials and the like, that would pertain to operating Stern Village. At this point, no such database exists.
 - b. The THA should implement a tenant database populated with tenant information currently maintained in hard copy format.
 - c. I have concerns that some tenants appear to be afraid to speak up and voice problems. A tenant complaint process should be implemented. One does not exist at this time. I will be implementing software that several CT housing authorities use to bring Stern Village within best practices of other housing authorities.
 - d. The Maintenance Manager needs a laptop. We have 2 full-time maintenance people, Jeff and Bob. We will be hiring another person.
 - e. Work orders should be done through computer database. In the past, they were done by hand. Use of technology will allow the THA to better manage its operation; specifically from a cost standpoint.
3. The currently lottery procedures for tenant selection need to be reviewed to ensure that Stern Village is selecting tenants in conformity with Fair Housing Regulations. I have asked counsel for the THA to advise on the same.
4. Cabinets and File Drawers need to be organized in a standardized easy to access manner.
5. Employee supervision process needs to be updated.
 - a. Employee evaluations need to be conducted on a regular basis. Performance evaluation sheet needs to be updated.
 - b. Staff training is necessary to ensure they know how to maintain THA property and files. e.g., I found apartment keys in drawers and keys lying around. The keys should have been placed in Tenant Apartment Key Lock Box.
 - c. All existing job descriptions need to be reviewed and updated.

6. The tenant directory needs to be updated on a regular basis. e.g. A deceased tenant was listed as a tenant on the existing tenant directory. I am working on bringing the directory up to date.
7. Robo telecommunication calls are being initiated by tenants. I strongly recommend that the commission adopted appropriate regulations regarding the use of robo calls directed to all tenants of the THA, e.g. limiting robo calls initiated by the ED only to avoid confusion to the tenants when robo call technology needs to be used to provide tenant with emergency information.
8. Key reference manuals need to be updated to keep current on housing authority regulations and laws for compliance purposes.
 - a. e.g., CHFA (CT Housing Finance Authority) manuals
 - b. e.g., DECD (Department of Economic and Community Development) manual
9. General clean up of the offices are needed.
 - a. e.g., Outside office needs to be cleaned up.
 - b. e.g., in and around file cabinets need to be cleaned up
10. Procedures should be implemented to ensure better protection and maintenance of confidential tenant information

e.g., Applications for apartments that have already had background checks were bundled in rubber bands and were visible to public.

e.g., There are no cover sheets per each application regarding the results of the background check. Remarks are hand-written.

e.g., Files in my Assistant's office were locked using a lock with a code. Anyone could have the code. That lock has been replaced with a key lock
11. Phone system should be updated as it is currently outmoded.
 - a. I do not have a manual for changing the recording. In fact, phone calls have not been answered or messages returned. Ex. someone had been calling to get a lease sent to her and no one has responded since February 16. I spoke to the person on Saturday, February 23.
12. Leases need to be reviewed and updated.
13. Updated processes and procedures are needed in connection with employee hiring, discipline, and termination.
14. Capital Improvement Plan: I will work with the town to develop a capital improvement plan:
 - a. Cracks near the ceiling of the Community Room need to be repaired.
 - b. Paths are not well lit. We need solar lights on paths.
 - c. Mold issues in some of the apartments.

- d. Several apartments do not have name tags on their mailboxes
 - e. Numbers on the apartments/quad are not in a logical order and it is extremely confusing. We need some type of street signs.
 - f. There is lack of storage space for equipment and other items.
 - g. A new roof is needed on the congregate building.
 - h. Additional security measures for people entering Stern Village and entering the congregate need to be evaluated.
 - i. Roads and parking lots need to be repaved.
 - j. We need to repair water damage and leaks.
 - k. Sidewalks need to be repaved.
 - l. Ramps are in need of repair.
15. Recertification
- a. Consideration for recertification in each apartment rather than in the office, this way we can conduct an inspection at the same time. We will bring a laptop to each apartment and conduct the recertification on premises.
 - b. I would like to make Stern Village Green and Environmentally Friendly, e.g.
 - i. Washers are not energy efficient. We are using top loaders which are inefficient.
 - ii. We are not using energy efficient lighting in the congregate.
 - iii. We need to replace shower heads with those that save water.
16. Several apartments appear to have no one living in them. Mail is in Stop and Shop bags and mailboxes have taped business card. Jeff Holt our Maintenance Manager and I will be inspecting apartments, to make sure residents are safe. I will get the Resident Service Coordinator for the Village involved. (If one exists, if not, we will get one.)
17. Need to make the Community Room an Emergency Command Post for Stern Village.
18. Need to procure a Generator and the requisite emergency supplies and food. The generator for the Congregate Building is outdated and has broken down in the past. Need to procure a generator for the Congregate Building.
19. Additional emergency outlets need to be installed.
20. Recommend that every resident has an Emergency Vile in their freezer for first responder purposes.
21. A safety handbook is needed for all existing tenants and incoming tenants.
22. Create a "neighborhood watch" for each quad.

23. Security Audits, Facility Audits and Financial Audits will be completed.

24. Activities and Events

- a. Create partner programs. Work closely with the Senior Center, CES (Cooperative Educational Services), Kennedy Center, Trumbull High School, local churches and synagogues, Trumbull Library and others in order to provide services, activities and events.
- b. Little touches: If a tenant is in the hospital or died, we will send a feel better or sympathy card.
- c. Partner with local business to support programs for Stern Village.
- d. Develop grants to get monies for ongoing services.