

Trumbull Housing Authority Special Meeting – November 5, 2014

Trumbull Housing Authority
Special Meeting
November 5, 2014
4:00 pm
Community Room of Stern Village

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Janice Kopchik, Commissioners Suzanne Donofrio and Susan Fatse

Also Present: Executive Director, Harriet Polansky

Commissioners Absent: Linda Nassrah and Thelma Burr

The Special Meeting was called to order at 4:00pm by Mrs. Kopchik. Roll call was taken.

Old Business

Motion was made by Mrs. Kopchik to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with the Union and the separation agreement with Ms. Lorraine Miller. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Donofrio and approved unanimously.

New Business

Mrs. Polansky presented the vetting process used to find attorneys for the Trumbull Housing Authority. She thanked those individuals involved in looking into different attorneys. Several websites were reviewed, several attorneys were brought in for interviews and the list was narrowed down. An attorney for General Counsel is needed. The THA also needs an attorney that is capable of doing all the CHFA financing, preparing anything that has to do with the contractual agreements that CHFA expects and the DOH low income housing tax credits. An attorney for land use is also required.

Mrs. Polansky noted two attorneys are being recommended to the Board. Attorney Raymond Rizzio has a firm in Fairfield. He has worked with the Trumbull Planning and Zoning Commission, made presentations on projects and has done litigation with them. To use him for land use would be ideal. As general counsel, he has done work for Bridgeport Housing, he is local and knows individuals involved, he is aware of Stern Village by being a resident of Trumbull and Mrs. Polansky feels he would be fine for that as well.

Attorney James Scaramozza was present. He is proficient with the low income tax credits and the other areas of financing that the CHFA would require. He has a recommendation from Millennium, which he has worked with on other financial projects. Carol Martin, Executive Director of Fairfield and Westport Housing Authority has been involved in many CHFA projects for many years. She is very well known in the CHFA circles and has given Attorney Scaramozza an incredible recommendation. Betsy Crumb, a part of the Housing Coalition that sponsors the academy that Neil, Paulette and Mrs. Polansky are

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attending, also thinks he is top-notch. Mrs. Polansky recommends Attorney Scaramozza. Mrs. Polansky requested Attorney Scaramozza give some background and review the steps to be taken with this project.

Attorney Scaramozza noted his firm does a substantial amount of low income housing projects in and outside of CT. It is a pleasure to represent other housing authorities and not-for profits in this area. He has approximately 20 years in this field and is proud they do everything in an efficient and expeditious manner as possible. He suggested that as the process begins and Millennium submits the application in April, due diligence be done. His firm would assist in this. This process will take approximately 2-3 years. Stern Village has a high priority status designation so hopefully it will be less than that. He would assist in the formation of the entities. Mrs. Polansky forwarded to the Commissioners an organizational chart with other information to give a broad picture of what is involved. In the event the funding is secured, his firm would form the entities the THA would have affiliations with and members would have an influence. As we proceed with these closings, we will have to produce required documentation and work with Mr. Rizzio, if needed. With this collaborative approach, we will eventually get to a closing.

Phases of the project were reviewed. Mrs. Polansky noted they would ideally like the money for the entire complex. However, reality is that we will have to do the project in phases as we will not get enough money to do the entire project all at once. The easiest phase is the east side. This is a straight rehab. There will be no tearing down of buildings, but we will be adding a little bit to the existing footprint with perhaps a screened in porch and are looking at other concepts. Residents want more room, more storage and washers and dryers. She noted there are sanitation issues as to how much the sewers can hold and that is the reason for the testing now to see what is on our property and what we can do with it. Even though we are presenting our entire plan, it has been recommended that it be done in phases. The pro forma was presented to the financial people at the housing academy and it only addressed Phase 1. Phase 1 has fees regarding what would be done and fees for the attorney that would cover everything for that particular phase. It made sense to place Attorney Scaramozza's fees into Phase 1 rather than Phase 2. Phase 2 could be a few years down the road based on the money situation.

Neil Gerhardt noted that the entire project is approximately \$30 million and that would take all the funding from the state. The indication they gave as a critical housing authority is to apply for Phase 1 and then reapply for Phase 2. The state is very willing to do that but there is no guarantee that we will receive money for Phase 1 until the Attorney General signs off on it. We need to go through the process and spend the funds we need to spend to get the funding for the project. There is no guarantee for Phase 2 either. Phase 2 requires a complete repeat of the Phase 1 project. Mrs. Polansky noted the state is spending a lot of money to get us ready and all the indicators are there that say yes. Therefore, we are moving forward. Mr. Scaramozza noted other housing projects have been done in phases, in particular, Stamford and if Phase 1 is done properly, it will be evidence to the state you are capable and have the expertise and experience to move forward to the next phase.

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Phase 1 is 86 units to be rehabilitated. Mrs. Fatse questioned the \$125,000 in legal fees presented for Phase 1. Mr. Neil Gerhardt noted he worked out a budget with Millennium for legal fees which also includes Attorney Rizzio's fees should there be any. Attorney Scaramozza's fee will be billed as the work is performed. In Attorney Scaramozza's opinion, this fee is the outside number and he does not expect it to be that high at the completion of the project. Any questions regarding the monthly billing can be discussed and evaluated. He is not basing the fees on the size of the project but the scope of the work that needs to be done. If we are not reinventing the wheel in Phase 2, the estimated fees could come down.

Page 2, 5b of the document provided should read "the to-be-formed entity". Schedule A --question was asked about travel time. No fees will be charged for travel for any purpose. General retention policy should remain the same as Attorney Rizzio which is 15 years.

Motion was made by Mrs. Kopchik to approve Attorney Raymond Rizzio for general counsel for the THA as well as counsel for land use for our Stern Village Revitalization and Redevelopment Project. Motion seconded by Mrs. Donofrio. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion was made by Mrs. Kopchik to approve Attorney James Scaramozza for low income housing tax credits and other applicable financing for Stern Village Revitalization and Redevelopment Project. Motion seconded by Mrs. Donofrio. Motion approved unanimously.

Executive Session

No Executive Session was necessary.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Mrs. Kopchik, seconded by Mrs. Donofrio, to adjourn the meeting at 4:22pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk