

Brookline Housing Authority
Meeting Minutes
May 12, 2020
By Teleconference
4:00 PM

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Jacobs at 4:10 PM. Those present included Ms. Dugan, Ms. Katz, Ms. Sullivan, and Ms. Cohen.

Board Report

Ms. Katz reported that Steps to Success' virtual fundraiser exceeded their original campaign goals by about 20%.

Executive Director Report

Mr. Dober reported the following:

- Ms. Katz should be commended for her leadership role on the Board of Steps To Success. BHA Director of Leased Housing and Admissions, Carlos Hernandez, should also be commended, as he has stepped in as interim BHA staff representative on their Board.
- The BHA has seen exceptional support and collaboration from the Town of Brookline during the pandemic.
- The Advisory Committee's Subcommittee for Planning and Regulation voted to support the option of directing the Welltower/Newbury College campus redevelopment project's inclusionary zoning funds to the BHA to go towards the redevelopment of Col. Floyd Apartments and the addition of 40 new units of affordable housing. The subject will be discussed at a joint hearing of the Select Board and the Planning Committee this evening, and will be up for a vote at Town Meeting in June.
- The three traditional polling locations at BHA developments will not be utilized in this election cycle because of the risk posed to the elderly and disabled populations residing in these buildings. The Town Clerks Office has been very accommodating to the BHA's concerns.
- There have been zero cases of BHA staff testing positive for COVID-19. The numbers remain in the single digits among BHA residents.
- The select Board approved \$72,000 in CDBG COVID-19 funding to the BHA for coronavirus related costs.

Redevelopment Report

BHA Director of Redevelopment, Maria Maffei, reported the following:

61 Park Street

- Work is suspended at least until the current emergency order by the Governor expires on May 18, 2020.
- Construction Manager, Colantonio, has submitted a construction safety plan to the Brookline Building Department.
- As a result of coronavirus related construction delays at O'Shea, the BHA will be unable to deliver tax credits in 2020 as planned. This will result in a reduction in tax credit equity proceeds.
- In an effort to reduce project costs, the Construction Project Manager is now billing on an hourly basis.
- Colantonio has applied for federal Payroll Protection Plan funding.

- Resident relocation consultant, HOU, is working on a resident relocation plan for resuming operations.
- LEAN grant money will help cover some of the unexpected coronavirus related project costs. The considerable amount of remaining construction contingency will also help.

90 Longwood Avenue

- A guaranteed maximum price proposal was submitted by Colantonio. There are increased coronavirus costs associated with the work.
- The estimated start of construction has been moved from June to August. Reconstruction of BHA offices and community spaces are now expected to be scheduled simultaneously.
- Colantonio will soon be authorized to begin the lead-time work.
- BHA Staff are planning to take the lead this time for initial tax credit file processing. Beacon Communities will remain in a consulting role.

Ms. Cohen asked how additional COVID-19 related costs will be absorbed into the 90 Longwood LLC project. Ms. Maffei said that the significant amount of contingency funds within the budget will help cover costs associated with potential time delays.

Mr. Jacobs said that it would be helpful to have a resident relocation plan worked out at 61 Park Street prior to the 90 Longwood Avenue closing. Ms. Maffei said that HOU is working on a plan and has engaged an environmental health consulting group in the effort.

Consent Agenda

On a motion from Ms. Cohen and a second from Ms. Sullivan, the consent agenda was unanimously approved and authorized the following: the minutes of the meeting held on April 14, 2020.

Resident Services Report

BHA ESOL Director, Danielle Mendola, reported the following:

- The BHA resident services team had a strong start to the year, as evidenced by the January through March quarterly report. The consolidated statistical data from 10 programs, including BHA run programs as well as services from Brookline Center for Community Mental Health (BCCMH), Springwell, and Alston Brighton Community Financial Management Program (free tax preparation) showed an increase in services provided to residents compared to the last quarterly reporting period.
- There was strong attendance at the BHA-run after school and ESOL programs, and a well-attended series of Next Steps computer classes.
- The BHA received a \$20,000 grant from the Brookline Community Foundation for youth programming.
- The free tax preparation program has to date processed over \$400,000 tax refunds for residents.
- Family Learning Center Director, Lisa Brown, worked with the Public Schools of Brookline to streamline the financial aid approval process for BHA residents.
- The onset of the coronavirus health emergency necessitated the adoption of new methods of service delivery to BHA residents.
- The BHA has focused much attention on sharing social service program information along with guidance on healthy social distancing practices with residents.

- Springwell is reaching out by telephone and through mail to all BHA residents in elderly developments. BCCMH is reaching out in a similar manner to their BHA consumers.
- A team from the BHA, Brookline Food Pantry, and Public Schools of Brookline has worked together to put into place new methods of food delivery to BHA residents. Brookline Food Pantry has seen their demand triple.
- Reusable cloth facemasks, some donated and some purchased, have been distributed to all BHA residents. Much of the cost of this effort has been covered by Kids Clothes Club and the Brookline Safety Net.

Mr. Jacobs asked about food delivery to those unable to visit the Brookline Food Pantry locations. Ms. Mendola said that Brookline Food Pantry staff, BHA staff, and volunteers are coordinating food parcel deliveries to BHA residents. Public Schools of Brookline staff are now utilizing a refrigerated van for free student lunch pickups at BHA family developments. Deliveries directly to residents can also be arranged for these lunch packages.

Section 8 Administrative Plan Amendment

BHA Director of Leased Housing and Admissions, Carlos Hernandez, said that the CARES Act provides financial support to businesses and individuals during the coronavirus pandemic and to housing authorities through increased operating subsidies and administrative fees. It also provides administrative support through program administration waivers. BHA staff recommends the adoption of waivers to defer Section 8 Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections, and to perform Section 8 briefings remotely.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Katz, the temporary waivers to the BHA’s Section 8 Administrative Plan in accordance with PIH Notice 2020-05, were unanimously approved.

Other Business

Joan Lancourt, the Chair of Brookline Commission for Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Relations, said that the Housing Affordability Forum that had been scheduled for March 29, 2020 will now be a Zoom conference on June 14, 2020. Topics will include: housing affordability; racial equity; climate sustainability; economic development; and transportation.

The Board confirmed that the next meeting will be held by teleconference on June 9, 2020 at 4:30 PM.

On a motion from Ms. Sullivan and a second from Ms. Cohen, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 4:50 PM.

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**Patrick Dober
Executive Director**