

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK
TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2024
MILLS PARK TOWER
7:45 AM**

OFFICIAL RECORD

QUORUM

PRESENT: Commissioners Walz, Teitelman, Kelm, Socall, Sood, and Chairperson Muse

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Pope, Swaggerty, Burgos, Carpenter, Cobb

Chairperson Muse called the meeting to order at 7:47 AM.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR OPHA APRIL 9, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

Chairperson Muse asked if there were any corrections to the April 9, 2024, OPHA regular meeting minutes. There were none.

It was moved (Teitelman) and seconded (Kelm) to approve the April 9, 2024, meeting minutes of the Housing Authority of the Village of Oak Park. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Muse opened the floor for public comment. She asked that those with comments please state their name and unit # for the record and limit their comments to three (3) minutes. She also asked that they use the microphone so they could be heard.

Resident Council President Lloyd (11H) stated that the Resident Council election will be held on June 17, 2024, and that nominations are now open. She stated that Peggy Kell and volunteers from the League of Women Voters (LWV) of Oak Park will oversee the election. She added that in the last two years, the Resident Council has accomplished a lot of things with more to come and that the Council has been instrumental in getting MPT's residents more involved with the community. She stated that Management notified the Resident Council of the Resident Advisory Board (RAB) kick off for the month of May and that the Council and residents are looking forward to participating in the process. Ms. Lloyd summarized the accomplishments to date of the current Resident Council and emphasized the important role

the Resident Council plays in representing MPT residents. She thanked management for their transparency meetings and open communication with the Council. She reminded management to keep the new Resident Council up to date on the refurbishment of the elevators as this is an important issue for all of the residents.

Executive Director Pope thanked her for her comments and reported that there is new code compliance required for backup power to the elevators which is being addressed. He stated that the new code requires a change to the electrical system which will allow both elevators to be able to power up in any emergency. He reported that bids are being received for the equipment needed to provide the dual backup system and once we have received all of the bids, a request for approval will be sent to the Board, the equipment will be ordered, and we will be back on track with the elevator project. Commissioner Socall asked if board approval could be provided electronically to save time and keep the project moving forward. Executive Director Pope answered yes it could be presented electronically for approval to keep the project moving forward.

Resident Scott (11C) asked when the Meeting Minutes for February, March, and April would be posted on the website. Ms. Swaggerty stated that she would check on that as soon as she got into the office.

Resident Reeves thanked the staff and Commissioners for all their help with the Council and the residents. He stated that if he is chosen to serve on the Council again, he looks forward to continuing the work and to making MPT an even better place to live.

Commissioner Kelm (12D) asked if a new Resident Council board member orientation would be appropriate so everyone would be up to date. He then asked when the remaining light posts in the front of the building would be updated. Mr. Burgos stated that we have all the necessary materials on site and are now just waiting to hear back from the electrician, but we will continue to push so the work can be done as soon as possible.

Chairperson Muse asked if there were any further public comments. There were none.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

MILLS PARK TOWER

MPT Property Manager, Carpenter briefly summarized the administrative, maintenance and resident activities for the month of April. She highlighted a lease-up rate of 94% and reported that there are several applicants coming to a briefing following the Board meeting to complete paperwork and hopefully establish move-in schedules. She stated that of the twenty-six (26) applicants selected from the waiting list, eleven (11) are being reviewed and two (2) have been offered and have accepted units. She added that a new cleaner/property assistant, James Russell, has been added to the team.

Commissioner Walz asked what we could do for residents who do not have window AC units. She expressed concern for the residents' health and safety during the upcoming anticipated

very hot summer. Executive Director Pope stated that an update on the issue would be provided at the next Board meeting, adding that during previous summers, we have taken additional steps to assist residents who do not have air conditioning and we will continue to do so.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER

Director Cobb briefly summarized the Housing Choice Voucher Program activities for the month of April. She highlighted a lease-up rate of 98% for regular vouchers and stated that we have received a total of three (3) referrals for the FYI vouchers. She reported that one of those referrals has been verified as eligible and she hopes to issue a voucher to them sometime in May. She added that two (2) voucher holders from the 2022 Waiting List leased units in April and 22 further households from the 2022 list are currently searching for units. Year-to-date ten (10) new landlords have been added to the program, two (2) of which were added to the program in April.

HCVP 2024 WAITING LIST UPDATE

Executive Director Pope briefly summarized the HCVP Waiting List Activity. He stated the total number of waiting list pre-applications received had been corrected to 18,396 after 85 duplicate pre-applications had been identified. He reported that the demographics of the two applicant categories – those with a local preference and those without a local preference – are very similar. He stated that most of our applicants are far more likely to be female, single-person households. Oak Park has a lot of one-bedroom apartments that would be able to service that portion of the community. He added that he is interested to see how many larger households we end up with and how we can assist them in their housing needs. 90% of the applicants are households of 1-3 persons, while a very small percentage need housing larger than 3 bedrooms. He stated that we could end up with 15 or so households that require units that are 3 or 3+ bedrooms. He stated that it initially appears that the average income of households claiming the local preference is just over \$24,000, while the average income for non-preference households appears to be \$21,000. He noted that there is a large contingency among the non-preference households who make \$10,000 or less which skews the average somewhat. He added that once the applicants are selected, we will be able to provide more accurate information on all the different characteristics.

Executive Director Pope explained that Director Cobb and her team have begun the process for verifying applicants' claims of local preference to be able to identify 135 qualified applicants. He stated that 556 pre-applications claiming the local preference have been randomly selected for verification and the HCVP verification team will continue verifying each local preference claim until we get 136 applicants who qualify. Those applicants will then be randomly prioritized and placed on the final waiting list.

Commissioner Walz thanked Director Cobb and her team for all their work. She said the team's efforts are greatly appreciated. She asked if there was any sense of how many of the applicants selected for the list might have accessibility needs requiring special accommodations or ADA compliance. She noted that finding such units has always been a

challenge in Oak Park. Director Cobb stated we did not know at this time, adding that while the pre-application asks the applicant to identify if they are a person with a disability it does not request further information about needing an ADA compliant unit or a special accommodation. She stated that requests for an accessible unit or any special accommodation are addressed during the actual interview process. Commissioner Walz thanked Director Cobb for her answer and suggested that as we continue to work through this process we can also work with The Village to make accessible housing a priority along with family housing.

Chairperson Muse congratulated Director Cobb for the addition of the new landlords to the program. She asked if there were any further comments or questions. There were none.

OLD BUSINESS

Senior Property Manager, Burgos, reported that we are pushing to get the proposals for the dual backup equipment so we can finalize a start date on the elevator project and inform all of the residents. He stated that notice of when the work on the elevators will begin will be posted on the bulletin board(s).

Executive Director Pope explained that part of the annual planning process is providing residents with information regarding the function of the Resident Advisory Board (RAB) and how the annual RAB meetings work. He stated that there will be an initial meeting held on May 22, 2024, with MPT residents to walk through the process so residents can gain a full understanding of the RAB process, including the public meeting for comments from residents. He added that this will also be discussed in the Management/Resident Council meeting following today's Board meeting. He added that further information about the schedule and process will be sent out to residents shortly.

Commissioner Kelm shared that several residents have complained about the on-going issue of secondhand smoke coming into the building. He stated that smokers tend to "light-up" using the protection of the back door shelter on windy days before heading to the current designated smoking area and also light up near the exit door on the North side of the building. He added that residents on the lower floors have experienced secondhand smoke when they open their windows. He then shared with the Board information on outdoor domes that he believes would be beneficial to prevent any second-hand smoke.

Commissioner Teitelman asked what the required distance from the building for smoking is and is that distance being maintained. Executive Director Pope explained that the required distance is 25ft from any entry, exit, or window. He stated that we need to go back and look at those infiltration points and determine how it can be effectively addressed. He explained that he and Chairperson Muse were discussing this as part of the exterior enhancements and what the implications would be for violations regarding the issue.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairperson Muse explained that HUD through the Housing Opportunity Modernization Act of 2016 streamlined their changes which she found very interesting. She stated that the OPHA Board has been in discussions around conversations at The Village regarding affordable housing which aligns with this Board's strategic plan. She stated that this Board plans on engaging with The Village around their affordable housing strategy, however the HUD changes include increased supply of affordable homes and reducing barriers in the HCV and PBV programs. She added that it allows the project-based voucher assistance to be paired with manufactured housing. She noted CHA's down payment assistance of \$20,000 to CHA residents, or the option to use the voucher toward a home mortgage. She explained that some OPHA Board members, as part of their day jobs, are working on a project around manufactured housing. The HUD changes also included establishing project-specific waiting lists to help families move into units more quickly, codifying important tenant protections and ensuring families can find units in the local rental market. She stated she is very interested in how these changes will be enacted, and how they can bring a positive change to the work we do. She stated she would love input from other Board members regarding these changes.

Commissioner Walz stated that she is also curious about the progress we may see as a result of the HUD changes. She shared that the biggest challenges for PHAs are the changes to recertifications and that it takes time to recertify residents and hopes that this process can be effectively streamlined. She stated that she does agree with Chairperson Muse in terms of looking at some of the new rules and having discussions with The Village. She noted that there are success rates of tenant-based vouchers (TBVs) in Oak Park, and she would want to continue to maintain that balance.

Executive Director Pope agreed that TBVs are successful in Oak Park, but we may be able to expand the total available housing without decreasing the availability of tenant-based vouchers. He stated he believes that could be through a potential partnership with surrounding authorities if they are willing. He added that he believes it would be a much more fruitful conversation at this point with the Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC) than it would be with Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). He added that HACC has been relatively open to that idea, and it would be more helpful working with them in accessing additional vouchers to help facilitate or support project-based voucher efforts in the community. He stated that the work that is being done throughout the country with manufactured and prefab development has been very interesting and innovative. He stated he believes there might be some opportunities in these areas as well. He added that in terms of HOTMA, it is having more impact in how we are handling our recertification and intake processes as well. He reported that Director Cobb and her team recently attended a two-day offsite training on HOTMA and are making necessary modifications to the administrative plan that will be presented to the Board for approval. The changes related to HOTMA will officially go into effect on January 1st, 2025.

Director Cobb stated that her team will be meeting with program participants and residents to provide an overview of the various HOTMA changes that will affect them and also be made part of the administrative plan.

Chairperson Muse thanked everyone for their comments. She added that the timeline for producing manufactured and prefab homes is much shorter than traditional homes and that is why there has been a rise in interest in these dwellings. She stated that because these homes are manufactured within a factory without interference from outside conditions they can be manufactured and delivered to the site in as few as six weeks. She added that contingent upon the subcontractors, finishing work would take anywhere from 1-2 months. A traditional dwelling can take anywhere from 6-8 months to build and make ready for habitation. She stated that prefab homes could also be an alternative to traditional ‘stick-built homes” but there has not been the same rise in interest in prefab due to ongoing delays in the supply chain as well as the materials can be more expensive. She added if the cost of the materials could be resolved, then the prefab homes would be less expensive. She stated a model is being tested in Chicago with a Modular company called Connects located on the West and South sides of the city. She said if anyone was interested in seeing those homes, she could arrange it. She stated that a \$1.2 billion bond was passed for housing in Chicago and what is happening right now is critical to the future of the working poor and the unhoused that also aligns with Mayor Johnson’s initiative “Bring Home Chicago” that is focused on the South and West sides of Chicago where we have the biggest concentration of vacant lots. What we’re trying to do is figure out together how that can be supported in the work in Oak Park as well. Habitat for Humanity is doing a lot of work in the Austin community, but how can we receive some of the funding to support the work that we’re doing and look at that model of home ownership as a component of that as well. She stated again that it is all part of the strategic plan that the board worked on last year, so it is now being realized.

Commissioner Sood added that the building process is much more efficient in terms of waste and material costs. He stated he believes the challenge would be finding spaces for these homes, but it would be a huge step forward.

ADJOURNMENT OF May 14, 2024, REGULAR MEETING

It was moved (Teitelman) and seconded (Walz) to adjourn to the May 14, 2024, regular meeting. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Teitelman, Secretary