

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION  
AND REPORTS  
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2024  
MILLS PARK TOWER  
7:45 AM**

**OFF THE RECORD**

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Teitelman, Walz and Chairperson Muse

**ABSENT:** Kelm, Socall, and Sood

**STAFF:** Pope, Swaggerty, Carpenter, Cobb, and Jones

**GUESTS:** Various Mills Park Tower Residents

Chairperson Muse called the meeting to order at 7:48 AM.

**IT WAS DETERMINED THAT A QUORUM WAS NOT PRESENT. THE BOARD COULD NOT PROCEED WITH ANY FORMAL DECISIONS OR VOTING.**

**INFORMAL RESIDENT DISCUSSION**

During the board meeting, Property Manager Carpenter provided an update on the annual inspections conducted to identify and address pest issues, including bed bugs. She explained that as part of routine preventive maintenance, all units are inspected each year. This year, six units were identified as having bed bugs. Upon discovery, residents in the affected units were notified, and treatments were scheduled. Ms. Carpenter also clarified that preparation sheets and guidelines were provided to residents to assist in containment and readiness for treatment.

The discussion transitioned to concerns from residents about the inspection process and follow-up when evidence of bed bugs is discovered. Resident Charene Lloyd (Apt 11H) (also speaking as President of the Resident Council) expressed frustration about perceived delays in scheduling treatments and the potential spread of bed bugs to neighboring units. She strongly supported inspections of surrounding units whenever bed bugs are detected and highlighted that prevention measures should be more comprehensive. Ms. Lloyd and other residents shared concerns about response times and treatment schedules for bed bugs. They also felt that management needed to provide clarity on current procedures.

Linda Harris (Apt 4F) raised a general query about unrelated activities on Lake Street, which was addressed separately by the management team.

Nora Natof (Apt 9F) expressed her dissatisfaction with the frequency of inspections and the time taken to address infestations compared to private housing standards. She noted inconsistencies

in the inspection process, including cases where inspections appeared to not include the resident's bedroom.

Ms. Carpenter and Executive Director Pope addressed these concerns and stressed that treatments and follow-up actions are based on professional guidance which may vary depending on the level of infestation. Executive Director stated that a follow-up inspection process, often called a "cloverleaf" approach (inspecting units above, below, and adjacent to the affected one), is standard for significant infestations, but is not always deemed necessary for lower-level cases. Executive Director Pope explained that scheduling delays often stem from the need to work with external contractors who ultimately coordinate inspections and treatments. Ms. Carpenter reassured residents that additional information and prevention tips would be distributed to help them safeguard their units and minimize potential spread of infestation.

Commissioner Socal recommended implementing consistent post-treatment inspections of surrounding units, regardless of infestation levels, to provide residents with a sense of security and ensure thorough action. This suggestion was supported by Commissioner Andy Teitelman, who emphasized the importance of initiative-taking measures to build and maintain residents' confidence in management.

Residents also shared their own insights. Rev. Dora White (Apt 14D) highlighted the importance of individual accountability, such as maintaining cleanliness and taking personal steps to prevent bed bugs from spreading. She stressed the role of education in empowering residents to protect their living spaces. Similarly, Zenovia Miller (5J), mentioned that clutter within apartments can worsen infestations and encouraged residents to take responsibility for maintaining organized and clean environments.

Management pledged to provide updated educational materials on prevention strategies and said they would explore budget adjustments that could enhance inspection protocols and incorporate more consistent post-treatment follow-ups. Improved communication processes were also highlighted as a priority to address resident concerns more effectively.

The board and management reiterated its commitment to working collaboratively to address these issues. Residents were assured that timely updates and initiative-taking measures would be implemented to safeguard the well-being of everyone in Mills Park Tower.

## **HOUSING FORWARD LEASING UPDATE FOR 112 S. HUMPHREY**

Executive Director Pope provided an update on the proposed lease of the property at 112 S. Humphrey, a space previously occupied by Accolade Adult Daycare until late 2023. After the daycare vacated, the Oak Park Housing Authority held the space for several months while considering its use to support the Village of Oak Park's efforts to provide temporary housing for migrants. When that need was resolved over the summer, attention shifted to alternative uses for the property.

Discussions began with the Village of Oak Park and Housing Forward, focusing on addressing the persistent need for temporary overnight shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness. Executive Director Pope explained that Housing Forward had transitioned from a pre-pandemic rotating shelter model, which moved between houses of worship, to a residentially based model during COVID-19. This change allowed them to offer longer-term transitional housing at locations like the Write Inn and Carlton Hotel. However, the ongoing demand for temporary shelter prompted Housing Forward to explore additional shelter options.

The 112 S. Humphrey space was identified as a suitable site for temporary overnight shelter. It features a commercial kitchen, existing showers with room for additional installations, and space to accommodate up to 42 cots. The layout also allows for the division of space, such as areas designated for women and children.

Executive Director Pope informed the board that the project required a special use permit and a text amendment to the Village of Oak Park's zoning code. These were presented at a Planning Commission hearing, where the proposal received unanimous approval. With this milestone achieved, Housing Forward is preparing for renovations, including the installation of sprinklers and other modifications. The organization is working with the Village of Oak Park and Cook County to secure funding for the project, with plans to begin renovations in the first quarter of 2025. The shelter is expected to open in the second quarter of 2025.

Commissioner Andy Teitelman expressed his full support for the project, commending it as an excellent example of collaboration. He emphasized how partnerships like these enable the Housing Authority to increase housing options without constructing new buildings, and maximizes the value of existing resources. He praised the initiative as a creative and impactful way to address homelessness in the community.

Although the agenda originally included a vote to authorize the lease's execution, the lack of a quorum prevented the board from proceeding. Instead, the vote will be conducted later.

## **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

### **MPT REPORT**

Property Manager, Carpenter briefly summarized Mills Park Tower's occupancy, leasing, resident demographics, waiting list, building activities, and maintenance for the month of September. She noted that the October occupancy rests at 184 and stated staff was continuing to process 4 individuals pulled from the waiting list in October. She reported that all had accepted units, with move-ins scheduled or already completed for November.

She also reported that the waiting list comprises 681 individuals (158 with a residency preference and 623 without). There were 57 application requests, 23 of which were returned.

Ms. Carpenter reported 47 work orders were submitted in October, all of which were completed. There are currently 14 vacant units, with six ready for leasing.

Resident engagement activities continue to thrive while Ms. Brooks, Ross Service Coordinator, attended a four-day training in Indianapolis to enhance her skills and knowledge in providing resident services.

Ms. Carpenter also addressed the ongoing work on the elevator, which had been down overnight for repairs. Residents were notified in advance, although some expressed confusion about the timeline. Repair technicians were on-site and completed the necessary work to finalize the first elevator's repair.

### HCV REPORT

Ms. Cobb, Director of HCVP, reported that in October, the lease-up rate reached 100%.

The program for non-elderly disabled participants includes four active vouchers, representing a 27% lease-up rate. For the Foster Youth to Independence program, there is one leased voucher, resulting in a 7% lease-up rate, with three families actively searching for housing under this initiative.

Ms. Cobb also shared operational updates. A total of 29 inspections were completed in October, and year-to-date, the program has added 23 new landlords, with two added in October. Currently, the Housing Authority is billed by other HAs for 12 program participants while billing other HAs for 25 of its participants.

### HCVP WAITLIST UPDATE

The 2022 waiting list, the process has been exhausted and 21 individuals have successfully leased up. Director Pope provided context, noting that the 2022 waiting list initially included 51 individuals after eligibility screening. This resulted in a lease-up rate of approximately 40%.

He explained that the 2024 waiting list, which contains 150 individuals, may follow a similar trend. If the same 40% rate applies, around 60 individuals from the 2024 list could be anticipated to lease up over the next few years.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

NONE

### **NEW BUSINESS**

NONE

**NOTE: NO VOTES OR DECISIONS WERE MADE DURING THIS MEETING.**

**ADJOURNMENT OF NOVEMBER 12, 2024, BOARD MEETING**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 AM by Chairman Muse