



Sarasota Housing Authority (SHA)
269 South Osprey Avenue
Sarasota, Florida 34236

Annual Board Meeting
McCown Towers Board Room
July 24, 2024
4:30 P.M.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Jack Meredith called the regular meeting of the Sarasota Housing Authority Board of Commissioners to order at 4:35 pm.
- II. **INVOCATION**
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Chair Jack Meredith, Vice Chair Ernestine Taylor, Commissioner John Colón, Commissioner Duane Finger (Virtual), Commissioner Carolyn Mason and Commissioner David Morgan

Commissioners Not Present: Commissioner Turquoise Dillard (Excused)

General Attendees: Vice Mayor Jen Ahearn-Koch, Attorney Ric Gilmore, Valerie Buchand (SHAARC), Joanie O’Haver (SHAARC), Agnes Kirkland (SHAARC) and Alison Rini (Star Lab)

SHA Personnel: William Russell and Andrea Keddell
- V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - A. SHA Regular Board Meeting – May 22, 2024
 - Chair Meredith put up the minutes from the May 22, 2024, Regular Board Meeting for approval.
 - Commissioner Mason made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
- VI. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
 - A. SHA Board Agenda – July 24, 2024
 - Chair Meredith put up the agenda for the July 24, 2024, Board Meeting for approval.
 - Commissioner Colón made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Mason seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
- VII. **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**
 - A. Star Lab & Janie’s Garden (Alison Rini)
 - Ms. Rini passed out a Star Lab brochure on the new school and addressed the board on the services that Star Lab provides and their move into the space at Janie’s Garden. They are currently serving 10 area children and have capacity for 20. The goal is to provide services at no cost to the family.
 - It was also discussed that the Janie’s Garden community center site wasn’t up to state code (no sprinkler system) to house a school, versus a pre-school. So, they are working to raise the \$66,000 needed to have sprinklers installed. SHA has been trying to reach out to various philanthropic agencies to assist.

VIII. PUBLIC PRESENTATION

- A. Ms. Elvira Prince, SHA Waitlist Applicant, addressed the board regarding the difficulty for seniors to find housing in Sarasota. She is urging the Sarasota Housing Authority to build more affordable housing projects. Building one (1) development per year is not enough, no agency that she contacts can help her (at 74 years of age) and she's sleeping in her car.
- B. Ms. Susie Williams, Former Waitlist Applicant, addressed the board that she was on the OCB Waitlist, one of SHA's waitlists, in 2018 and was purged from the waitlist stating she was contacted to supply confirmation of her continued interest, but that she never responded. She states she was living at the same place for years and didn't receive any notices. She is requesting help with housing.
- C. Pastor Wesley Tunstall Jr., Founder of Newtown Community United Ministry, reports being active in the community and with support programs with JFCS and wanted SHA to know he is interested in supporting this community in developing more low-income housing. Many families have vouchers but can't locate places they can afford. He reported that Mr. Russell has been helpful whenever they reach out and he wanted the board to know he's all in to help, but the money is not there, and the work for his trucking business is limited in the area lately.
- D. Ms. Joanie O'Haver, Resident Council Member from the Annex, addressed the issue of cleanliness of the Annex and common areas of the buildings. No sweeping, dusting and mopping are being done by the current cleaning company. She's been having her personal cleaning person do cleaning around the building and recommends her to be hired. She also suggested a \$5 fine to residents who are caught littering on the renewed property. Lastly, she is requesting garbage cans be placed at each row of the parking lot in the middle, one by each set of benches and one by the pavilion. They also need seating in the pavilion.
- E. Ms. Valerie Buchand, Resident Council Member from Janie's Garden, shared the SHAARC report was mistakenly not forwarded to the SHA office, so it was not in the initial board packet that was distributed, but that it is in there now. Ms. Buchand stated she feels the Gazebo needs to be moved out of the sun because it's too hot to sit under. Ms. Buchand was asking SHA to assist them in applying for an upcoming ROSS Grant, to pay for a Service Coordinator position for 3 years. She's since found that SHAARC isn't eligible to apply but believes the Newtown Nation is eligible and would like SHA's assist with the \$2,000 needed to put in their application. Ms. Buchand states that SHAAR is still waiting on negotiations for the 3% development fees from the Housing Authority so they can operate SHAARC like a business. Budgets have been submitted, along with the MOU, and they need to be approved. She acknowledged that a meeting needs to be scheduled with Mr. Russell to finalize this so it can be brought before the board. Finally, the vending machine issue has still not been fixed and they are not working. They're being told it's in the works but there's been no progress.

- F. Mr. James Hendrix, Former Waitlist Applicant, moved here 4 years ago from Georgia and was living at Amaryllis, on a friend's lease for 1 year and on their waitlist for 4 years. He's now homeless. He tried to apply at new development (Cypress Square) and feels he's being scorned by the staff there and that he was assaulted. He got Ms. Buchand involved and thought all was sorted but he was denied a car detail for his car and it was towed. Mr. Hendrix reported that even though he's no longer a resident he still needed a temporary sticker so his car wouldn't be towed. The other staff member, Candy, did end up giving him a temporary sticker. But the rep at Cypress was curt with him and feels threatened by him. He's 68, has health issues, is on social security and needs a place to stay.
- G. Pastor Danny Preston, questioned the 25 units designated for the lowest income people out of 85 units, leaving the bulk of the units for people who make more money. Pastor Preston questioned why a housing authority isn't make more units for the lower income persons to combat the rising homeless population. He states the federal money should be used to assist the poorest people.

IX. NOMINATION & ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A. Nominations for Chair/Vice Chair:

- Commissioner Colón nominated Ernestine Taylor for Chair. Commissioner Mason seconded the motion.
- Hearing no other nominations, the nominations were closed. The nomination was voted on and passed unanimously.
- Commissioner Taylor agreed to serve as Chair.

B. Nominations for Vice Chair:

- Commissioner Meredith nominated Commissioner Colón for Vice Chair. Commissioner Morgan seconded the motion.
- Hearing no other nominations, the nominations were closed. The nomination was voted on and passed unanimously.
- Commissioner Colón agreed to serve as Vice Chair and addressed the group on the role of Chair to run the meetings.

X. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- A. Resident Interest
- B. Development
- C. Administration & Finance
- D. Bylaws

Commissioner Mason brought up for discussion the possibility of moving from standing committees to Ad Hoc committees. Attorney Gilmore confirmed that the standing committee are listed in the Bylaws and that the Bylaws can be amended at this Annual Meeting. Attorney Gilmore further stated that only 3 of the 30 housing authorities that he represents currently utilize standing committees and that most utilize Ad Hoc committees that can be appointed at any time, to allow for more targeted discussions.

Discussion: Commissioner Meredith stated that committees were discussed at the last Board Retreat, that some standing meeting are poorly attended by Commissioners and, although the Development Committee holds some good discussions, many times the committee ends up bringing the discussion before the entire board at the next board meeting. Additional discussion took place on the pros and cons of Ad Hoc committees and the need to continue with quarterly meetings for Resident Interest meetings. Mr. Russell brought up the possibility of holding quarterly meetings with the Resident Council to discuss resident concerns and issues at the various properties that Commissioners could attend and that would be less formal and allow for more of an open discussion versus a formal committee meeting of the Board.

- Commissioner Mason made a motion to amend the Bylaws to eliminate the standing committees and replace them with Ad Hoc committees. Commissioner Morgan seconded the motion.
- Additional Discussion: Commissioner Finger expressed that wasn't sure he'd made his mind up about Standing versus Ad Hoc committees, but stated he believes the standing committee served the purpose of getting a lot of work done and saving the group from having long board meetings. Attorney Gilmore explained that for an Ad Hoc Committees to be set up, the Board votes to establishing an Ad Hoc Committee, a Chair is appointed or volunteers for the committee, and the Chair then recommends how often they are to meet. The meeting still needs to be noticed and run under the Government in the Sunshine regulations. Commissioner Meredith stated that if the Ad Hoc Committees don't prove to be enough, the Standing Committees can be brought back.
- The motion was voted on and passed unanimously to eliminate the standing committees and replace them with Ad Hoc committees.

A. Resident Interest Ad Hoc Committee:

- Commissioner Mason made a motion to establish an Ad Hoc Committee, quarterly, to discuss resident interest issues with the Resident Council. Commissioner Colón seconded the motion.
- Discussion: The question was raised on if this quarterly meeting was to be a formal committee of the board, and subject to formal committee protocols or a quarterly meeting that would be between Mr. Russell and the Resident Council that could be publicly noticed and attended by members of the board. Vice Mayor Jen Ahearn-Koch provided comment that she feels the Resident Interests meetings are helpful and allow for community engagement, likes the formality of the minutes and meeting notices and believes it should remain as a standing committee. The decision was made to establish a formal Ad Hoc Board Committee to discuss Resident Interests issues. Commissioner Mason asked for and received clarification that the residents will not lose their platform to meet and discuss their issues.
- The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
- Commissioner Taylor offered to act as Chair of the Resident Interest Ad Hoc Committee and will determine its' frequency.

XI. RESOLUTIONS – ACCEPTED BY CONSENT

- A. Res 24-13: Significant Amendment to Annual Plan, HCV Admin Plan & ACOP
- B. Res 24-14: HCV Admin Plan Amendment
- C. Res 24-15: Approval of Annex Building Upgrades

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- Commissioner Meredith pulled Resolution 24-13. Commissioner Mason pulled Resolution 24-14. Commissioner Morgan pulled Resolution 24-15.

- A. Res 24-13: Significant Amendment to Annual Plan, HCV Admin Plan & ACOP
- Mr. Russell explained the Housing Opportunity Modernization Act (HOTMA) was approved by HUD in 2016 and is now being implemented in 2024 and that agencies now need to amend their Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Admin Plan and ACOP (Admissions and Continued Occupancy Plan) with the HOTMA provisions. HUD determined that the HOTMA changes amount to a Significant Amendment to SHA's Annual Plan.
 - Commissioner Finger made a motion to accept the Resolution 24-13. Commissioner Morgan seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
- B. Res 24-14: HCV Admin Plan Amendment
- Mr. Russell explained the addition to Chapter 17, regarding Project-Based Vouchers, to add Cypress Square to the plan and list a preference for Sunshine Health (Link) referrals. The referrals are usually extremely low-income individuals with special needs. The other addition proposal is to add a referral program for victims of domestic violence, called "Survival Vouchers." The proposal is to designate 20 vouchers for this purpose and to partner with three (3) local organizations to refer the individuals who would then get this preference. This could also be increased if the need was found to be greater.
 - Commissioner Morgan made a motion to accept Resolution 24-14. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
- C. Res 24-15: Approval of Annex Building Upgrades
- Commissioner Meredith requested that the board be notified of any bid, proposal or quote going out over \$100K and that they be allowed to see the documents submitted.
 - Commissioner Finger made a motion to accept Resolution 24-15. Commissioner Mason seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

XII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Lofts on Lemon II – Possible Redesign
- Mr. Russell reported that SHA did not receive the Resilient SRQ funding they were hoping to receive even though the three (3) applications submitted were ranked 2, 3 and 4 and are now being required to redesign this project to stay within the funding budget. Mr. Russell also informed the board that in order to keep the \$7 million in ARPA funding, SHA is being required to report at the County's September meeting, finalized design plans, a signed construction contract and the final financing plans for the project. So, time is of the essence to finalize the plans for this project.
 - Mr. Russell reported that the Lofts on Lemon II will now need to be a pedestal building with parking on the ground floor and then four (4) levels of residential units on top of that. This will be the same as Lofts on Lemon I. The design is losing the 2-bedroom units. It will now be 100, 1-bedroom units, which has always been the most needed type of unit in this area. There will also be no additional parking deck.
 - Commissioner Meredith commented that SHA put forth a great effort and, although it's not what SHA wanted, everyone should be grateful that 100 affordable housing units will still be added to the area.

* Commissioner Mason made a motion to extend the meeting by 30 minutes. Commissioner Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

- Mr. Russell added that there used to be 36 units on this site and with the 100 additional units, SHA will have put back 228 new, affordable units there.
 - Commissioner Colón expressed his disappointment that the County jumped over the SHA applications and funded other projects, and that the funding deficit is by no means due to the City and applauds the City's support for SHA's development projects. Commissioner Meredith advised that a meeting should be set up with Commissioner Moran prior to their September meeting.
- B. Cypress Square II (Courts II) – *Added Item to Agenda*
- Mr. Russell reported SHA was hoping to receive Resilient SRQ funding for this project as well but did not. The funds were to add a 4th building and to have part of this building house the Youth Thrive program. The project will now only be three (3) buildings, 108 units. This project already has site plan approval.
- C. Central Gardens - Scattered Site
- Mr. Russell reported that this project will not be able to be included in Cypress II as a scattered site. The changes would delay Cypress II, and the plan needs to close this year. The plan for Central Gardens is to apply to the State for competitive SAIL funding for this project, along with the next phase of Cypress Square, which would be Phase III. The project is still \$4 million short.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Resident Council ROSS Grant Application
- Mr. Russell reviewed the grant requirements and SHA, Resident Council and any 501(c)3 are not eligible to apply to assist McCown Tower/Annex residents because the grant funds are designated to assist Public & Indian Housing programs.

XIV. PROGRAM UPDATES – ACCEPTED BY CONSENT

- A. Monthly Financial Statements
- B. Board Committee Meeting Minutes
- C. Housing Choice Voucher Report
- D. Housing Management Reports
- E. Capital Improvement Report
- F. Resident Services Monthly Report
- G. Resident Advisory Board/Sarasota Housing Authority Agency-Wide Resident Council (SHAARC) Board Report

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- Commissioner Colón made a motion to accept the Program Updates Consent Agenda. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion.
 - The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

XV. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS / COMMENTS

- A. None

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

The Sarasota Housing Authority Board of Commissioners meeting was adjourned at 6:34 pm.