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STATE OF NEW JERSEY
NEWTON HOUSING AUTHORITY
32 Liberty Street
Newton, New Jersey 07960

MARCH 17, 2025

(Condensed taped minutes of Regularly Scheduled Monthly Meeting of
Newton Housing Authority - Commencing at 5:18 P.M.)

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chairman Richard Bitondo
Vice-Chairman Karen Crossley
Commissioner Mary Ann Carlson
Commissioner Joseph Ricciardo
Commissioner Wendy Vandermaas

Also Present: Executive Director William F. Snyder
Deborah Alvarez, Secretary/Transcriber

Absent: Commissioner Mark Fiedorczyk

FLAG SALUTE

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by the filing of a Special Meeting Notice with Municipal Clerk, posting on the official bulletin board and delivery of same to New Jersey Herald & Star Ledger on December 10th, 2024. The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have an advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Newton Housing Authority has caused notice of this meeting to be advertised by having the date, time and place posted on the Newton Housing Authority website.

Members of the public are welcomed and encouraged by the Newton Housing Authority to comment during the public comment portions of the meeting. There will be two public comment sections of the meeting. Residents can address the Board of Commissioners on Agenda items during the public comment agenda items portion of the meeting and general subjects of interest during the public comments general items portion of the meeting.

All questions and comments from the public will be directed to the Chairperson. When addressing the Board of Commissioners, please provide your name and address. All members of the public should be cognizant to of the rights and feelings of any individual they feel compelled to discuss at an open public meeting. General comments and statements should be made in a calm and civil manner. Comments that violate the rights of employees, residents or members of the public could be subject to a civil law suit for damages. The individual making such statements will be personally liable for any monetary damages resulting from their statements.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – ED WILLIAM SNYDER

Annual Recertification – Notices have gone out; 4th floor is almost finished, then we will do the 5th floor. Everyone has been cooperative in getting paperwork together so Office can recalculate the rents.

Internship we spoke about and still have no one to help us. I've reached out to several local colleges using CHAT. Now looking at a high school student working hours out around their schedule at school.

Roof replaced here. One subcontractor did damage to our wall, withholding a portion of money to have that wall repaired. The architect has reached out to him this week; we're waiting for a call back as spring is a time to get it repaired. If they don't follow up, we have their money and make repairs ourselves before summer arrives.

Vacancy – We only have 1 vacancy now. Ed is fixing up the unit.

Request for Proposals - We've issued RFP for HVAC plumbing contractor. They are due on April 9th. Ed is reaching out to contractors in the area; several have come in. Also, we are sending RFPs directly to them for bids and it's posted on our website.

Power Outage – We had a power outage here last week. When the generator when on, the battery sparked and blow up. Ed contacted EM Electrical to let them know about the situation. They arrived quickly and replaced two batteries. It's up and running again and we have new style batteries.

Rental Assistance Demonstration Program – We are using that to make major repairs to this building. I've updated most of the documents in portal that's necessary in order to get to next stage. Next stage is scheduled for July. Unfortunately, HUD with everything that's going on there, so everything is pretty much in place with exception of Capital Needs Assessment. If Rick or Joe knows anyone at HQW, as they've not been responsive to me, speak to them. I sent them a list of items about 6 weeks ago that we wanted to include. CHAIRMAN BITONDO: I knew HQW, but they've all retired or passed away. COMMISSIONER RICCIARDO: I'll speak to the one I know.

Capital Needs Assessment is document everything works around and I need it to put together financing plan. Once I get that, the Committee will reconvene. We'll go over the items and then make a decision in terms of financing. My personal opinion is that we should close the deal, as we're a small authority without any financing at all. When we get HUD out of the picture, at almost the same time we'll go to banks, solicit our own financing and won't have to deal with HUD in reviewing financial documents. That is my current view on it.

Resident Association – Ann is back. Tomorrow is St. Patrick's Day party. Next Resident Advisory Board meeting is May 12th. Hopefully, we'll have information about the Capital Needs Assessment and work that we're actually doing.

Activities – Division of Senior Services: Still doing "Matter of Balance" here through March 24th. Last month County did a presentation on food stamps for those needing them. There will be a game social here on March 25th from 6:30-7:30 PM. County has been active here in doing things. There was a presentation from Rutgers Master Gardeners on March 12th. I heard it was fantastic; many people here really enjoyed it. Rec Center had the ice cream social back in

February. COMMISSIONER CROSSLEY: They are having tech classes, just had senior luncheon with many Liberty Towers residents.

Parking - Everyone here has a copy of something discussed last month about **parking**. First page (indicating) is sketch of parking lot; directly outside Community Room door on our side and other side, there are 25 spaces. Asterisks next to them indicate those are **assigned**. Attached to sheet is Parking Policy and list of every resident and parking spot they're in. Spot #1 is not taken; a cone there because of fear that whoever got it couldn't get in/out. Karen today reached out to someone here who has a smaller car. Spot was offered to her; moving someone from top to place down here. We'll wait a few days to see if it's okay with the woman. At rear of building we have 2 handicap spots, designated as HC-1 and HC-2, currently being used by people at top lot. Technically, they should not be in there, but do park there.

Looking at our list on last page, 9 people are on waiting list currently parking on top lot. Top lot, I have proposed, and you see numbers. There are no numbers up there now. I'm suggesting we number those 10 spots; 8 spots behind that will be **visitor parking**. Karen parks back there in corner spot. Ed/Maintenance parks his truck back there too. We will assign spots to people on the list as a result of Phyllis complaining about cleaning snow off her spot in the back; she pulled out, someone went in the spot and she got stuck cleaning another spot. That's my thought and we can do by motion, authorize change to parking plan that we'll have 10 more designated spots per my sketch. CHAIRMAN BITONDO: I'm surprised handicap spaces are so far from entrances. They have to be within X-number of feet. 1-2-3 should be where handicap spaces are located.

ED SNYDER: We can do it now or when we redo parking lot. Whoever does parking lot should know regulations. I don't know if we're in compliance with handicap requirements. No one is complaining. As you know, most of our residents have a handicap placard. Please someone tell Phyllis we're moving ahead. CHAIRMAN BITONDO: We can defer relocation of handicap spots until we redo parking lot. COMMISSIONER CROSSLEY: What is timeframe if someone does not utilize the parking spot? ED SNYDER: That is why I attached the actual parking policy. It was adopted in 2024; it doesn't say there's a time limit, but everyone has to have a valid driver's license, registration and insurance. During annual recertification of income, we ask for an update. If someone doesn't have it, technically, they forfeit the spot. If you don't have a vehicle, you don't have a parking spot. If a parent gives their car to a child, does not give up the spot, and every time they come to visit, they have a personal spot. We have one car here with flat tires; car has to be in good condition. Office has notified them, person is trying to sell car. If we have a situation like that, we'll ask them to move car to the back and give a spot up front to someone who's still driving. COMMISSIONER CROSSLEY: Are they really physically being used by a resident and -- ED SNYDER: My understanding is most are being used -- once a week/every day. One person is not using it as car has flat tires. Car is going up for sale.

OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Bitondo asked about HVAC specs for HVAC contractor to provide services. Does that include regular maintenance as well as troubleshooting? ED Snyder said yes.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Bitondo asked about indemnification resolution from last month. Can it become policy and part of policy book? Reason being if it is neglected a particular year, it is still in policy. ED Snyder said it's normally done annually, but could say its established policy. Format

would be changed. Let me try and convert that into a policy document, then consider it at next meeting.

Chairman Bitondo asked about generator. Is that run routinely for maintenance, tested routinely; and no sign of battery disintegrating? ED Snyder answered yes, weekly; no sign of that. Maintenance changes the oil. Whatever the chemical action was – when you test it, there's no load on. When building goes down, it puts a load on the generator. It was a new style battery, and probably don't have same chemical reaction. I never saw it happen anywhere else. Ed said size of hole in battery was size of bowling ball.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 10, 2025

Motion to approve minutes of February 10th, 2025 made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Vandermaas.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (4)
Abstain: Ricciardo

Absent: Fiedorczyk

RESOLUTIONS

1. RESOLUTION #2025-11 – APPROVAL OF BILL LIST FOR MARCH 2025

Motion to approve Bill List totaling \$63,347.05 made by Commissioner Ricciardo; 2nd by Commissioner Crossley.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Fiedorczyk

Commissioner Crossley has reviewed Executive Director's invoice and approves.

2. RESOLUTION #2025-12 – APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR SPECIAL LEGAL SERVICES

Motion to approve DeCotiis, Fitzpatrick, Gluck & Coles as Special Legal Services made by Commissioner Crossley; 2nd by Commissioner Ricciardo. Cost is \$225/per hour with estimate not to exceed amount of \$55,000.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Fiedorczyk

3. RESOLUTION #2025-13 – NEW PARKING PLAN AS A TEMPORARY FIX, INCLUDING DESIGNATION OF 10 SPACES IN UPPER LOT FOR RESERVE PARKING AND 4 HANDICAP SPACES NEAR COMMUNITY ROOM DOOR, UNTIL SUCH TIME THAT DRAINAGE AND RELINING OF PARKING LOT ARE FINALIZED

Motion to approve New Parking Plan as a **temporary fix**, including designation of 10 spaces in upper lot for reserve parking and 4 handicap spaces near Community Room door, **until such time that drainage and relining of parking lot** are finalized made by Commissioner Vandermaas; 2nd by Commissioner Carlson.

Discussion among Chairman and Commissioners regarding new parking plan including 10 spaces in upper lot for reserve parking and 4 proposed handicap spots near Community Room door. It was then decided to make it temporary fix to parking plan until parking lot is repaved and relined and regulations for ADA investigated. Four handicap spots depend on number of apartments at Liberty Towers.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Fiedorczyk

PUBLIC COMMENTS – GENERAL ITEMS

ANN MARIE - #5N – There was a candy and soda machine in the Lobby. People are asking if it's possible to have that again. People also asked about an ATM machine. COMMISSIONER CROSSLEY: ATM costs money. You have to pay to use it. ED SNYDER: They charge \$3.50 to \$4.00 per transaction. It isn't like going to the bank. CHAIRMAN BITONDO: There are no banks in downtown Newton any more. We'll ask ED Snyder to research possibility of bringing in vending machines for snacks and drinks. COMMISSIONER CROSSLEY: Perhaps ask Provident Bank as it is NHA bank, if they'd put an ATM here, but there will be a fee for maintenance, to put money in machine. You have to pay to have it here. CHAIRMAN BITONDO: I will research it when I go to Provident. ED SNYDER: There is a vending machine in the back and was being used, but not enough so potato chips and other items would get stale. I'll check with a company, but there must be volume and I don't think it will happen here. CHAIRMAN BITONDO: Maybe the Tenant Association would want to take care of that. ED SNYDER: That's a good idea. I'll meet with group, show you machine and move it to where you'd like. It looks like a good machine. You could use it for fundraising. Get supplies at Costco, put them in there. Make some money. Stop in next Wednesday. We'll see if it works.

MARILYN MILLER - #4L – Only tenants can get in at Community Room door; if visitors are handicapped, they would have to go to front door and buzz in to a tenant. You might keep that in mind.

KATHLEEN - #2L – Do we have to wait for the pavement to be done before we can get the numbers done? CHAIRMAN BITONDO: No, this will be taken care of now. Folks will be assigned numbers 32 to 41. ED SNYDER: When I looked today, you can hardly read numbers and see the lines. We're putting in new lines as part of this; put new numbers; put some visitor parking on the ground up top.

GEORGE - #2P – Will Department of Government Efficiency take any steps to reduce HUD personnel or funding and will that affect us? ED SNYDER: Rumor is that they're going to be cutting half of HUD staff. As to whether or not it affects us, we don't know. Right now, no, funding is still the same. CHAIRMAN BITONDO: Quicker we move to RAD, the better off we all are.

MARY - #3D – Is structure of our building going to be changed; will some of the rooms be made into additional apartments? CHAIRMAN BITONDO: There's no thought of changing configuration of the space. We're talking about renovations: new roof, HVAC, parking, drainage, and those things.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Ricciardo; 2nd by Commissioner Vandermaas.

VOTE: AYES/All Present Commissioners (5)

Absent: Fiedorczyk

Respectfully submitted, Deborah L. Alvarez