

Brooklyn Housing Authority

Mailing: #87 Quebec Square Brooklyn, CT
062234

Brooklyn Housing Authority Meeting Minutes Wednesday, February 21, 2024, at 10:00 am Clifford B. Green Building

Roll Call – Bruce Parsons called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

Members Present:

Chairman	Bruce Parsons
Vice Chairman	Sandra Brodeur
Member	Lisa Arends
Member	Anna Whalon Ramos

Others Present:

Connecticut Housing Finance Authority/ Selectman	Joe Voccio
Putnam Housing Authority Executive Director	Kathy Carter
Recording Secretary	Lisa M. Lindia

- Approved minutes from January 17, 2024. Motion to approve made by L. Arends.
Seconded by A. Whalon-Ramos.

Old Business:

Anna Whalon Ramos – information on Rental Cap Commission

- A. Whalon-Ramos - Rental Cap Commission – Discussion took place. A Proposal to Establish a Fair Rent Commission was passed out along with a ToolKit from HOMEConnecticut.
- Any Town with a population of 25,000 or more needs to have a Fair Rent Commission.
- Any Town with a population of 25,000 or less does not need to have a Fair Rent Commission. The Towns that are around us all have less than the 25,000 which do not require a Fair Rent Commission.
- A. Whalon-Ramos proposed that a Fair Rent Commission be established in Brooklyn. The process is straight forward. The ToolKit from HOMEConnecticut provides comprehensive guidance and best practices for establishing a Fair Rent Commission. It includes a model ordinance, factsheet, FAQs, and other relevant information.

- A Town legislative body would have to adopt the ordinance. If adopted, it is at this point the number of volunteers and how they are elected that would be established.
- This Commission would respond to tenant and landlord complaints.
- If the Town Brooklyn did not want to establish a Fair Rent Commission on their own another option is that they could partner with neighboring Towns below the 25,000 population.
- B. Parsons – suggested that the Selectman should review.
- S. Brodeur – The commission will review the proposal and discuss it at the next meeting.
- L. Arends - Would like to review the proposal before a decision is made. Also, feels that people need to be educated in order for a program to be established.

Discussion about future meeting dates for TEEG Homelessness; Charette to see if anyone is interested in attending a meeting.

– Not discussed. Patty did not respond before the meeting was held.

New Business

Joe Voccio will be present to participate in the discussions.

- B. Parsons - Inquires is there funding available from the Housing Authority.
- J. Voccio – There is funding available for the Housing Commission as well as the Town that would be partnering with a developer. The Department of Housing has an open-door policy. There is a different approach now has Development and Engagement Program. This consists of a concept with developers. If the concept sounds promising, there may be predevelopment money. Once the proposal takes shape it could be slotted for funding. Allowing an opportunity for a proposal to grow organically without breaking the bank.
- B. Parsons – If the Commission were to submit an application, we would need to have land in mind first. Understanding from past experience we would have to look at 40 Units.
- J. Voccio – That is not the only model. The large project of 40 Units would be practical if you were going to use Lower Income Housing, Tax Credits or Champ funds. There has been a change to create housing using smaller amounts of money through the National Housing Trust Fund, Housing Tax Credit Contribution Program, Capital for Change to handle smaller projects. There has been an initiative for small developments, not every project needs to be 40 Units.
- B. Parsons – Can scattered site be accepted for a Housing Authority versus a site where there would be a development of 40 units in one location.
- J. Voccio - The state has been willing to do scattered properties.
- B. Parsons – Inquired if it would be more expensive to maintain scattered sites versus having a larger unit development.

- K. Carter – Yes, it would be more money to maintain properties scattered through the Town if the properties were to be maintained by the Housing Authority rather than individuals.
- K. Carter – What can the Fair Rent Commission do if a landlord raised the rent substantially?
- A. Whalon-Ramos – Explained that nothing can be done now without the Fair Rent Commission. The Commission would have legal powers to force the landlord to appear.
- J. Voccio – Currently no real enforcement authority except the state courts for residents to raise concerns. Before anyone with Fed assistance can move in/have unit approved, the landlord must have housing quality standards review performed by housing authority or disinterested third party.
- J. Voccio - Suggested the housing authority move into an advocacy territory which could include homebuyer education fairs for potential first time home ownership.

Discuss a possible referendum to give the Housing Authority the Right of First Refusal to purchase properties being foreclosed or already owned by the Town for possible sites for low-income housing.

- J. Voccio – Possible referendum CHAPTER 128* DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING surplus properties that the Town puts up for sale would go to the Housing Authority for the Right of First refusal. Town would give the Authority time to secure a partner or another entity i.e., Habitat for Humanity or contractor.
- J. Voccio – The Town can donate; See CHAPTER 128* DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING: MUNICIPAL HOUSING PROJECTS. Properties need to be secured before a request or receiving any funds from the State are issued.
- B. Parsons – Would the property be sold or given to this Authority?
- B. Parsons – Does the Town have a consultant to apply for C.B.G. funds?
- J. Voccio – There is someone. We are currently working with them.
- S. Brodeur – Motioned that Joe Voccio draft an ordinance. Seconded by L. Arends there was no further discussion. Motion passed 4-0

Request for review of financials from the Putnam Authority that is managing Quebec Square and information concerning refinancing of Quebec Square housing. Need for transparency of ownership and status update.

- K. Carter – Explained that the Housing Authority does not own Quebec Square. They do own 11 Units on Tiffany and Front Streets; this is called Upper Village. As soon as the Housing Authority closes their meeting, they open the Quebec Square meeting discussing the financials. Has a copy of the by-laws, last audit, and review financials. Their mortgage has been paid for the last few years.
- S. Brodeur - Offered to send everyone's email to K. Carter for the by-laws and financials be sent to the Commission.
- K. Carter – Stated that Navigate has taken over for CHA.

Are we interested in pursuing bonds to finance low-income housing?

- J. Voccio- Typically the individual who buys the bond provides a great deal of oversight to ensure requirements of the bond are being met by the developer.
- Developer and bondholder asked to certify consistency with requirements. No need to designate specific staff to oversee construction.
- S. Brodeur - Inquired who is responsible for certifying the percentage done.
- J. Voccio - Whoever purchases the bonds would be responsible for metering out the proceeds to the developer.
- S. Brouder - What if they certify they are doing it, but it appears they are not?
- J. Voccio - The housing authority issues bonds; if the IRS deems the requirements are not being met, they will take the tax-exempt bonds and turn them into taxable bonds which would increase the interest rate. No need for us to do anything to recapture the funds.
- L. Arends - Left at 11:02
- B. Parsons - In response to purchasing bonds, do we have a potential developer before you apply for bonds?
- J. Voccio -Yes, but only for large scale projects, other available funding would be used for smaller projects.

Public comment – none.

- The motion to adjourn was made by A. Whalon-Ramos and seconded by S. Brodeur at 11:17 am. Next meeting will be March 20, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
 Lisa M. Lindia
 Recording Secretary