

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF ANNAPOLIS  
February 16, 2012 4:45 p.m.**

**Roll Call**

Commissioner Carl O. Snowden, Chair  
Commissioner Cynthia Carter, Vice Chair  
Commissioner Richard Callahan, Treasurer  
Commissioner Phyliss Gibbs  
Commissioner Elizamae Robinson  
Commissioner Deborah A. Johnson  
Commissioner Jeffrey Henderson

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Commissioners**

Chairman Snowden asked for a motion to retain the officers of the Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority as is currently in place. Commissioner Carter motioned to retain the same officers; Commissioner Gibbs seconded the motion. All approved.

Commissioner Carter motioned to adjourn the Annual Meeting. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. All approved.

The Meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

**Minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting of the Board of Commissioners**

**Roll Call**

Commissioner Carl O. Snowden, Chair  
Commissioner Cynthia Carter, Vice Chair  
Commissioner Richard Callahan, Treasurer  
Commissioner Phyliss Gibbs  
Commissioner Elizamae Robinson  
Commissioner Deborah A. Johnson  
Commissioner Jeffrey Henderson

**Moment of Silent Reflection**

**Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes as written for the January 11, 2011 Board of Commissioners meeting was made by Commissioner Gibbs. Commissioner Carter seconded the motion. All approved.

**Resolutions**

**Resolution No. MOD 021612-02:** A Resolution awarding a contract for air conditioning unit sleeves for the Robinwood Community.

**Action:** Commissioner Callahan moved to approve MOD 021612-02; Commissioner Carter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Resident Council Comments**

Ms. Carolyn Keene, President of the Robinwood Resident Council, stated beginning March 1, the David J. Harris Community Center is planning to offer activities for the Senior Citizens of the community.

Ms. Debra Odum, President of the RAB, stated that she would like a ruling on the RAB election held in September 2011. Ms. Odum was elected the President of the RAB and although not a resident in a HACA public housing community, Ms. Odum is a HACA Housing Choice Voucher recipient and currently lives in the Annapolis Gardens community. Ms. Odum stated that the RAB will be meeting on February 21 at the Morris H. Blum building to go over the Annual and Five Year plan.

Ms. Sandra Chapman, President of the Morris H. Blum Senior Apartments stated that there is concern among the residents regarding the No Smoking ordinance that HACA plans to implement in July 2012. Ms. Chapman inquired as to when the residents will see the final plan, what resources will be available to residents who wish to quit smoking, and how HACA will enforce the ban of smoking within the HACA units. Mr. Vincent Leggett stated that as HACA moves towards the implementation date, the final plan should be available for review in April 2012. He also stated that he is meeting with resource agencies to identify programs that are available. Mr. Leggett stated that sanctions and/or penalties will be assessed to residents who are found in violation of the smoking ban. Mr. Leggett reminded the audience that the HACA is not trying to force stewards to quit smoking; HACA is implementing an ordinance that will prohibit stewards and their guests from smoking in the HACA units.

Ms. Chapman stated that the Resident Council is planning a Black History program to be held on Sunday, February 26 at 3 p.m. She invited all residents and the commissioners to attend the free event. Ms. Chapman asked Mr. Snowden to come and provide some Black History moments to the audience.

Chairman Snowden asked if a reduction in the prostitution and drug activity at the Morris H. Blum building has been seen. Ms. Chapman stated that things are moving in the right direction. She stated that the training the security monitors received is working well.

### **General Comments**

Ms. Yosette Diggs, a resident of the Harbor House Community stated that she has made 10 - 12 complaints about the steward who lives above her yet nothing has been done to satisfy her complaints. Chairman Snowden stated that this is a perfect opportunity for people who are residing in Public Housing to understand that: 1) Property Managers are working on tenant problems; 2) that someone who uses a HACA address but is not on the HACA lease as a member could have ramifications for the lease holder to the unit whose address is used; 3) if you have a complaint against a steward who is infringing upon the peaceful enjoyment of your unit and documentation has been provided to the Property Manager but you feel that the complaint has not been satisfied, that you are to bring your documented complaint to Chief Joseph S. Johnson first, then to Mr. Leggett if not satisfied by Chief Johnson, and then finally to the Board if you feel that you are still not satisfied by Mr. Leggett. Chairman Snowden stated he will find out what is going on with the complaint Ms. Diggs brought to the Board. Ms. Diggs stated that a grievance meeting was held but didn't work well.

Mr. Ulysses Aiken, Acting Vice President of the Harbour House/Eastport Terrace Community Association, stated that a talent show is being planned for April.

Robert Eades asked if a steward becomes a “no right of redemption” steward after four late notices or four court dates. Chairman Snowden stated that a stewards who receive notices in the mail but don’t go to Court that a judgment is entered for nonpayment of rent. When the fourth notice is issued, the steward becomes a “no right” and a judgment is entered by the court allowing HACA to remove the steward and reclaim the unit.

Mr. Eades asks how a steward can defend themselves if someone uses their address illegally. Chairman Snowden stated there are ways HACA can check on the allegation, such as someone having a driver’s license using the address. Chairman Snowden stated that if a steward feels someone has used their address illegally and the steward is going to be held accountable, that the steward should grieve the allegation.

Mr. Eades asked how a lease holder can remove an adult member from a lease if the adult member refuses to sign off with HACA. Chairman Snowden stated that a new Grievance Panel has been put in place to hear cases such as this.

Mr. Eades stated that he received the letter regarding the contractors working at Annapolis Gardens and Obery Court/College Creek Terrace. Mr. Eades asked what process HACA used to select Landex and Pennrose. Chairman Snowden stated that the agreements to use Pennrose and Landex were entered into by a previous Board of Commissioners and the former Executive Director. A previous Board of Commissioners instructed Mr. Eric Brown to enter into agreements and the Board signed the agreements. Copies of the agreements are to be sent to Mr. Eades.

Mr. Eades asked about a replacement television for Ms. Ruth Snyder. Chairman Snowden that Chief Johnson will respond to that issue upon his return from training.

Mr. Eades asked about having Ms. Debra Odum as President of the RAB even though she does not live in a public housing community. Chairman Snowden stated that HACA has asked legal counsel to review HUD’s opinion and determined that it is up to the Board to make a decision. As part of the Annual & 5 Year plan, the Board will ultimately make that decision. Mr. Eades asked if that meant that any person residing in subsidized housing can be President of the RAB. Chairman Snowden stated that HUD indicated that it is up to the Board to decide if a Housing Choice Voucher recipient can be RAB president. The Board will make the determination.

Ms. Margaret Leonard of the Legal Aid office asked why HACA is no longer sending an attorney to court when a breach of lease case is to be heard. Chairman Snowden suggested that Ms. Leonard direct her inquiry directly to HACA’s attorneys, Hyatt & Weber, with a copy to Mr. Vincent Leggett, for a formal response.

Ms. Jane Lawrence of the Eastport Civic Association stated that she is working on a grant for the Eastport Girl’s Club under their umbrella 501(c)(3) organization “Seeds 4 Success” Chairman Snowden thanked Ms. Lawrence and the Eastport Civic Association for their support to the HACA youth.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Vincent O. Leggett stated that the Resolution passed earlier for air conditioning unit sleeves to be installed in the Robinwood Community would satisfy one of the 5 remaining HUD target items and he thanked the Board for their affirmative vote.

Mr. Leggett stated that a new Martha Wood Leadership Award committee was formed in January. Chairman Snowden stated that the purpose of the Martha Wood Leadership award is to recognize those unsung individuals who quietly go about their business while making life better in HACA communities.

Mr. Leggett attended a training class in Florida which detailed HUD's new scoring system for PHAS. Commissioner Henderson asked for a synopsis of the training to be sent to the Commissioners so the Board can become familiar with the new scoring process.

During January, Mr. Leggett worked on the Annual & 5 Year plan and attended a work session with the RAB on the draft plan. Mr. Leggett reminded the audience that the Public Hearing on document will be held on Thursday, March 1 at 6:00 p.m. in the Rosalie E. Mitchell Community Center. He encouraged all residents to attend the hearing.

Mr. Leggett stated that Dr. Randy Rowel has drafted a final report on the smoking ban for Morris H. Blum Senior Apartments. He stated that the report will be forwarded to the Morris H. Blum Senior Apartments' focus group soon. Input from HACA's legal counsel is also being requested.

Mr. Leggett introduced Georgia Sherrod who is working in the Human Services division of HACA. Ms. Sherrod will craft grant requests to help fund the expected HUD shortfall.

Chairman Snowden stated that Mr. Leggett has been with HACA for more than one year and that the Board is pleased with his leadership. Chairman Snowden also indicated that Mr. Leggett's contract has been extended.

Chairman Snowden stated that a new grievance panel has been formed and advised Legal Aid that in the event only three members can hear a grievance, the decision does not have to be unanimous. HACA's new panel will hear their first grievance on February 21<sup>st</sup>.

Attention then turned to Ms. Georgia Sherrod, Leron Fisher, Rani Jenkins, Mary Ellen Turner, and Yvonne Baskerville and the Chairman stated that he is looking for measurable results and milestones by which they will be accountable. Chairman Snowden cited the example of having two or three parents involved with their children's school that they must specify how many additional parents they want to see participating and then set out to make their goal. Chairman Snowden stated that the staff will be responsible for seeing that this is accomplished and that excuses will not be accepted. Chairman Snowden stated that education is the "great equalizer" and that parents should be involved in their children's education and further stated that it is our job to make them be involved. Chairman Snowden charged Ms. Miranda Wingate with getting the demographics listing the number of school aged children for each HACA community. It will be the responsibility of the staff to increase the number of involved parents. If only three parents are actively involved and the Board decides they want to see 20 parents involved, that is what the staff will be measured on.

Chairman Snowden also stated that Mr. Leggett is working on an MOU with Sojourner Douglass College. The Fannie Lou Hamer Scholarship will fund full tuition and books for any public housing resident. Staff is expected to help enroll 50 eligible public housing residents in Sojourner Douglass College by the end of the fiscal year. Staff is to work with the City of Annapolis to arrange transportation to get students to the school. The Chairman wants public housing residents to be fully aware that they can go to college for free.

The Chairman further stated that it is not “business as usual” for HACA staff. HACA is going in a new direction and if anyone on staff fees they don’t fit into the plan, then they are not in the right place. Stewards need the right tools to get out of public housing.

### **Property Managers Report**

Ms. Demetria Hall stated that 64 Units at Newtowne Twenty are occupied, 11 are in MOD and three are in Repair-Make Ready. The community is 97% occupied. There were 3 move-ins during December and one move-out. Mr. Snowden asked if there is a system in place to determine the number of parents who are attending PTA meetings. Ms. Hall stated that she is working with local schools to determine community service projects for the residents.

Ms. Hall stated that Robinwood has 129 units occupied, 11 in MOD and 9 in Repair-Make Ready. One unit is ready and will be leased within a week. The community is 94% occupied. Ms. Hall stated she is working with the schools within that community as well. Commissioner Johnson asked if the community service slips can be signed by the resident council presidents. Chairman Snowden asked that this question be brought up at the February 21<sup>st</sup> work session so that it can be part of the Master Plan. Mr. Snowden wants to be sure all Property Managers know what their specific duties entail.

Ms. Yvonne Baskerville, the newly hired Resident Services clerk at the Robinwood Community was introduced to the audience and Board. Ms. Baskerville spoke of her background and is happy to be working with the residents. She indicated new residents will be provided with a welcome packet and that she is there to help parents prepare their children for school and eventually, college. Chairman Snowden stated that he expects measureable milestones. He stated that each family’s needs must be assessed so that HACA will be able to provide the family with the resources they need. Mr. Wayne Taylor, an Intern from Sojourner Douglass College was introduced as Ms. Baskerville’s assistant.

Chairman Snowden stated that the executive team should move forward and figure who does what. Mr. Leggett reminded the Board that the Robinwood ROSS Grant is a resident driven grant while the Harbour House/Eastport Terrace is different. Chairman Snowden reiterated that he wants things that can be measured.

Ms. Veria Horton, Property Manager for Harbour House, stated that 264 units are occupied, two are in MOD, and 7 units are in Repair-Make Ready. Ms. Horton stated that college tours are on tap for High School seniors and that she is working with all residents to ensure they have a HACA ID card. Chairman Snowden asked if Ms. Horton is able to keep abreast of the paperwork for all residents with her current staff. Ms. Horton stated that it can be hard to keep up and that Ms. Lisa Kopinetz helps her. Ms. Kopinetz, Property Manager for the Eastport Terrace Community that she is working with residents to get them to perform their community service obligation.

Mr. Corrie Flannigan, Property Manager at the Morris H. Blum Senior Apartments, stated that there are 151 occupied in the building with 2 units in MOD and one unit in Repair-Make Ready. One resident, Mr. Platzke, moved out and purchased his own home. Mr. Flannigan stated that 3 new security monitors have been hired and that there is a zero tolerance policy regarding the sign-in book.

### **Youth Services**

Leron Fisher, Youth Services Manager, stated that Mr. Leggett is working with school leadership to develop parent-school contracts to help make sure the Board's expectations are met. There will be a variety of parental requirements, not just PTA attendance. Mr. Fisher assured the Commissioners that Youth Services is involved with the parents of the HACA children.

Mary Ellen Turner stated that she, too, has been in touch with area principals and that she is initiating measures by which we can encourage PTA attendance. HACA is also going to provide transportation to the PTA meetings to be held on March 8 and April 12.

Chairman Snowden stated that the Board meeting will adjourn so that those wishing to attend the County Council meeting at 7 p.m. may do so. The County Council is scheduled to vote on a recently vacated seat.

The meeting was called at 6:57 p.m. and was scheduled to resume at 11 a.m. on Friday, February 17, 2012 in HACA's main office.

The Board of Commissioners' meeting reconvened at 11:12 a.m. on Friday, February 17, 2012. In attendance were Chairman Snowden, Commissioner Cynthia Carter, and Commissioner Elizamae Robinson.

Chairman Snowden announced that the March Board of Commissioners meeting will be held on Thursday, March 1, 2012 to coincide with the Annual & Five Year Public Hearing. The Board Meeting will convene at 4:00 p.m.; the Public Hearing will begin at 6 p.m. Both meetings are to be held at the Rosalie E. Mitchell Community Center in the Harbour House / Eastport Terrace Community. Notice is to be sent to all Public Housing stewards as well as stakeholders and partners inviting them to attend the Public Hearing.

### **Youth Services, Continued**

Leron Fisher stated that the activities for seniors planned for the Robinwood Community will be held from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. and will include crafts, health seminars, and other activities seniors may benefit from. The program will be funded with the ROSS grant money. The building is not being used during those hours and Mr. Fisher does not foresee an overlap of activities between senior activities in the morning and youth activities in the afternoon. Chairman Snowden asked what the seniors' program objective is; Mr. Fisher replied that the objective is to empower senior residents to take a more active role in their health and education. Mr. Fisher stated that the Resident Council approached him with the idea and Mr. Leggett stated that the ROSS grant allows for offering areas of education, job training, and other things that can be identified as part of the Pathways to Opportunities umbrella. Ms. Baskerville will lay out the targets and Ms. Sherrod will oversee the program. Commissioner Carter stated that she would like to see the Grant to find out what funds are available to help HACA children.

Chairman Snowden again stated that resident education is the key and that each HACA staff member must know what their role is in the Pathways to Opportunities objective. Mr. Leggett stated that he met with the Superintendent of Schools and they are identifying many points for inclusion into the MOU. Mr. Leggett expects to make a formal presentation of the MOU at the April Board of Commissioners meeting. Leron Fisher is working to identify the children who are in the school system to see if they are a part of the PEEC OUT (Parents Engaged in the Education of their Children Outreach) program. Once a determination is made as to the number of HACA children already in the program, targets can be set to increase the parental involvement. Mr. Fisher stated that the staff will create a survey type form that will be used to determine who is in the program. Mr. Leggett stated that he is happy to hear that Property Managers are also in contact with School principals and that they are coordinating their efforts for maximum effect.

Chairman Snowden expressed concern that HACA staff may not know what they are doing. Ms. Sherrod is responsible for pulling together the efforts to reach more parents and children. Chairman Snowden wants to be sure that school roles and staff roles are properly identified and outlined in the MOU.

Rani Jenkins stated that she is working with the after-school kids and the schools to determine where the children are in terms of scholastic achievement. Ms. Jenkins is also working with Ms. Sherrod to identify individuals who may qualify for the Fannie Lou Hamer Scholarship. Chairman Snowden stated that the goal is to increase a number of things such as parental involvement and scholastic achievement. Chairman Snowden indicated the need for a team approach so that everyone will know what they need to do to make this work.

Chairman Snowden stated that Ms. Sherrod will have the responsibility to show us how each entity will reach its objective and that Ms. Jenkins will have the responsibility of enrolling individuals in Sojourner Douglass College. Chairman Snowden stated that he wants to see objectives in the Annual & Five Year Plan. He stated it is important to get the correct input from staff to make sure the numbers agreed to are realistic. Ms. Jenkins is to advise if the number is realistic and to provide a rational explanation to the Board on why the number may not be realistic. If the Board finds the explanation irrational, then they will find someone else to do the job.

Mr. Leggett indicated that he is working to locate a front end assessment tool and that everyone has something to do. He indicated that he is working with local service providers to see if there is an assessment tool available to capture data.

### **Finance & Administration Report**

Sharon Land, Director of Finance & Administration, stated that the staff has maintained a balanced budget and has a year-to-date surplus of \$18,051. Ms. Land introduced Ms. Dora Campbell, the Accounts Payable clerk responsible for ensuring HACA's bills are paid timely. Ms. Land expressed the need to curtail spending.

### **Occupancy Report**

Miranda Wingate, Director of Affordable Housing, indicated her role is to enforce HACA occupancy policies. Commissioner Johnson indicated a concern regarding Wait List Status.

Ms. Wingate indicated that prospective applicants are called no more than 90 days prior to their possible housing unit's availability. At that time, the applicant is put through a background check, including criminal history check, to determine if the applicant is suitable for housing. Suitable applicants are then invited to a briefing. Once the applicant has passed muster, their file is provided to the Property Manager of the community where the available unit is located. Chairman Snowden asked how Pathways to Opportunities fits into the application process. Ms. Wingate indicated that once the lease has been signed, a "needs assessment" is documented and goals are set. Those applicants interested in improving themselves are given a higher preference on the wait list. At that point, discussion centered on the Wait List Preference Point system, with a determination made by the commissioners to revisit the system they installed last year.

Mr. Leggett indicated that the Charlotte Housing Authority has instituted a contract for new applicants who would like to reside in CHAs new housing developments so that they are ready to move on in 7 years. Ms. Wingate indicated that several housing authorities are also instituting an amnesty plan for the men who are living illegally in units. The plan is for the men to come forth and get on lease without penalty for residing illegally. The housing authority then gets the benefit of assessing the man's income.

Ms. Wingate indicated that certain breaches of a lease are not allowed to be grieved such as a drug arrest although extenuating circumstances can be brought to HACA's attention. Ms. Wingate also indicated that HACA's wait list is currently closed and has over 900 applicants waiting for housing. The list is purged annually using a "continued interest form".

### **Safety Report**

John Wade provided crime statistics for the month of January and indicated that 19 arrests were made on HACA property, 5 of which involved HACA residents. The Property Managers were provided with the arrest report. Mr. Wade stated that a stabbing in Harbour House took place recently and that new locks will be placed on the 1125 building where the crime occurred. A monitoring camera will also be set up at that building. It is hoped that the camera will act as a deterrent to those individuals who may wish to break the building locks. Mr. Wade indicated that another dryer fire at Bloomsbury Square occurred and that Maintenance is addressing the issue with tenants on how to clean the lint vent.

Chairman Snowden turned his attention to Ms. Georgia Sherrod and stated that she has the responsibility of coordinating the Pathways to Opportunities initiative and asked if she has had an opportunity to think about how the process will work. Ms. Sherrod stated that she has. She will be meeting with people about grant money and partnerships and will prepare a diagram of what we already have. She will look at other housing authorities and assess their programs against Pathways to Opportunities. When Chairman Snowden asked if she will be ready by March 1 to make her presentation, Ms. Sherrod indicated that she will have a shell of what resources we have and what resources are available. Ms. Sherrod also stated that she is looking at a technical grant for our website. Chairman Snowden stated that he is expecting an assessment of family needs, including rehab, obtaining a GED or scholarship. He would like to move from concept to reality. He cautioned that if systemic reforms are not put in place, the system will revert to 'housing as usual'. Chairman Snowden stated that a plan must be made for each staff member of what their duties are and that all staff must know how they fit into the plan.

## **Redevelopment Report**

Mark Ford indicated that sewer lines have been completed in Phase II redevelopment of Obery Court / College Creek Terrace. Four buildings are being erected and one will be under roof within a week. Chairman Snowden stated that a memorial erected in the circle at Obery Court has disappeared during the redevelopment. He indicated he will contact Ms. Ivy Carter of Pennrose to see if we can honor the family of the young person with a new memorial.

## **Old Business:**

Chairman Snowden addressed the unfinished business from the January Board meeting, including the advocacy form that was created as a result of Mr. Robert Eades' efforts to assist residents. Also addressed was the loitering problem at Robinwood. Ms. Demetria Hall indicated her concern of a worsening situation in Robinwood with the coming of the warmer weather. She recommended "No Car Washing" signs be posted. Chairman Snowden instructed a letter be sent to residents advising them that due to the increase in water rates by the City of Annapolis that car washing at all communities is now banned. Violations of the ban will be considered a breach of lease.

## **New Business:**

None

The Public Board Meeting adjourned at 1:36 p.m.

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Carl Snowden, Chair