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Housing Authority of the City of East Point, Georgia

Regular Meeting

February 28, 2023

The Board of Commissioners (Board) of the Housing Authority of the City of East Point, GA (Authority) met on Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at 5:30 PM.

The meeting was held being held under circumstances necessitated by emergency conditions involving public safety, more specifically, the public health issues created by the COVID-19/Coronavirus, so this meeting was conducted via video and audio teleconference via Zoom, in compliance with O.C.G.A. §50-14-1 (g). Public access was allowed to the meeting via the Zoom ID being posted at the HACEPG office and on the HACEPG website.

The agenda was posted at the HACEPG office and on the website.

All Commissioners waived notice of the meeting.

Mr. Jones called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

Those answering the roll call were:

Mr. Jones, Dr. Lovett, Ms. Jackson, Ms. Bussey, Mr. Frazier, and Mr. Calloway.

Others Present: Michael Spann, Executive Director, Garlan Furin, General Counsel, and Housing Authority employees: Tara Mobley, Rejeana Prothro, Luvell Porter, Debra Stephens, and Rejeana Prothro. Andy Dentone and Jonathan _____ were also present.

Mr. Jones opened the meeting with a moment of silence/prayer.

Upon motion of Dr. Lovett, seconded by Ms. Jackson, the Board voted unanimously to adopt the Agenda.

On motion of Ms. Jackson, seconded by Ms. Bussey, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2022 Regular Board meeting, the December 7, 2022 Special Board meeting, and the February 8, 2023 Special Board meeting.

Mr. Spann updated the Board on the Martel and Hurd Public Housing properties: For the fourth consecutive year, the Capital Funds amount from HUD was increased, and staff have begun public meetings with the residents to seek their input on how to allocate the funds. The REAC inspection for Hurd is scheduled for March. Staff is working with

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HAIG insurance carrier to manage the restoration of the 3 burned out units at Hurd. An RFP for demolition of the units at this time is in the drafting process, and staff is discussing whether to rebuild with the insurance proceeds now, or to wait and invest those insurance claim monies in the redevelopment of the entire site. Hillside Landscaping LLC was selected as the landscaper for both sites, based on the recommendation of the staff committee that reviewed the responses to the RFP. Occupancy is at 93%, and when units are being prepared for new residents, in addition to the standard turnkey work done, upgrades are being done to better compete with private market units.

Mr. Spann updated the Board on the Aya Tower property: The mural process has been completed with the City of East Point, the Vecino Group, and Tri-Cities High School – Mr. Spann shared an image of the proposed design honoring former East Point Mayor Patsy Jo Hilliard. Ms. Stephens shared the construction update: the first 5 floors are down to work on the finishes (otherwise completed) and the front exterior is finished. Overall completion stage is at 60%. Staff is working with United Healthcare and Morehouse School of Medicine re: providing health and wellness services to residents, and applying for grant(s) in that regard. Our FSS program already has many partners in this area that could be used.

Mayor Deana Holiday Ingraham joined the meeting to discuss ideas that she has shared with City Council, and could be explored with EPCEDC, as a non-profit entity working with new homeowners. The continued gentrification of the East Point area could potentially displace older and low income residents, and the community needs to work towards equitable growth, protecting the senior residents and the legacy residents of East Point. The Legacy Resident program would have age and income requirements, so that when a resident homeowner qualified, the non-profit entity would pay the difference between the historical property tax amount and any increase caused by an increase in the assessment of the property. The Mayor discussed similar efforts in Atlanta, through Invest Atlanta, and a recent charitable donation by Tyler Perry for the area surrounding his studio. The Board discussed the concept and asked questions, and the Mayor stated that she is beginning to seek guidance and examples from the work that has been done in Atlanta. The Board and the Mayor discussed that seniors have to apply for separate tax exemptions through Fulton County and East Point, and the factors and amounts are not the same. The Mayor stated that the concept is in its infancy, but she did not see a down side to trying to establish this program, and that it could be a model for other communities. She thanked Commissioner Calloway for his time and service on City Council, addressing housing equity and reversing racism. The Mayor emphasized that the community has to plan for intentional strategic growth to ensure housing at every income level, and the Housing Authority is a critical partner on that path. Mr. Spann thanked the Mayor for considering the Housing Authority and EPCEDC as potential partners, and stated that the mission statement of both entities reflects the same purpose. The Mayor also stated how she values the Commissioners, and her process of intentional appointments to this Board. Dr. Lovett discussed that the EPCEDC Board was structured differently, and recruiting Board members envisioned residents who were not HACEPG Commissioners.

Mr. Spann updated the Board on the Hillcrest property: He shared an image of the building status, at 50% complete, and stated that good progress has been made, even with rain delays. Staff is meeting bi-weekly with The Benoit Group, and it is on track for the May 2023 opening.

Mr. Spann updated the Board on the East Point Community & Economic Development Corporation (EPCEDC): Property details are included in the Executive Director's Report, including GICH participation and a table of the investment properties. Ms. Stephens is in the process of researching additional properties for acquisition. Dr. Lovett briefly explained the purpose of EPCEDC to the new Commissioners.

Mr. Spann updated the Board on the Fairburn Housing Authority: Their Board completed their Strategic Planning process, and one of their goals is also to expand affordable housing in their jurisdiction.

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Mr. Spann updated the Board on Norman Berry Village: Staff is continuing to evaluate our options regarding redevelopment of this site, in our capacity as a shared owner of the general partnership. The building is in year 13 of the extended LIHTC compliance period. The process would include paying off the existing debt or refinance at a lower interest rate, and upgrading interiors and landscape. There are 119 senior (55+) units, some for very low income levels, and the Housing Authority subsidizes 24 units. The goal is to keep this property affordable in our community. The building stays fully occupied, and One Street Management does a good job. Dr. Lovett asked what is driving the timeline to make these business decisions, and what are the hard business decisions that need to be made, and Ms. Stephens stated that she had been working with HUD under the “Fair Cloth” program, to use our subsidies from closed public housing units to pay for the NBV subsidized units. Dr. Lovett stated that he would discuss with Mr. Spann and Ms. Stephens at a later time.

Public Comment: Ms. Mobley confirmed that there were no public comment participants who were previously signed up present on the Zoom meeting.

The Monthly Executive Director Reports (including financial reports for January 2023) were previously distributed to the Board via the documents on the website/email. Mr. Spann stated that he had added HCV utilization and the Wait List activity to show the challenges currently faced by participants and staff – it is difficult to find a landlord to accept vouchers in the current economic climate, so HUD is working on incentives, and the HACEPG is extending the time period for residents to find housing with their vouchers. The utilization rate of vouchers is a score that affects our SEMAP score. We are absorbing vouchers from other Housing Authorities instead of just managing their vouchers, so that utilization rates and subsidies will stay increased, and we can pay higher rent levels.

There was no Executive Session.

Dr. Lovett asked Ms. Mobley for email instructions to receive the monthly agenda. Mr. Spann stated that a preliminary draft of the Strategic Plan will go out to the Board for review/feedback before it is final at the March meeting. There is no update on the matter from the last Special Meeting.

On motion of Mr. Calloway, seconded by Dr. Lovett, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:54PM.

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