

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
NASHUA HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
HELD JULY 17, 2020**

The Commissioners of the Nashua Housing and Redevelopment Authority (NHRA) held its meeting at the community room of the Nashua Housing and Redevelopment Authority, located at 100 Major Drive, Nashua, New Hampshire, at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, July 17, 2020. Chairperson Paul Deschenes called the meeting to order, and the Acting Recording Secretary Scott Costa called the roll at approximately 8:35 a.m. with the following responses:

Present

Paul Deschenes
Thomas Monahan
Helen Honorow (via teleconference)
James Tollner (via teleconference)
Eric Wilson

Absent

The meeting was held in the community room at 100 Major Drive due to federal and state social distancing guidelines relative to the COVID-19 pandemic, which require a larger meeting space to allow for precautions.

The following persons were also present : Mayor James Donchess, City of Nashua; Amy DeRoche, City of Nashua; Tim Cummings, City of Nashua; Lori Wilshire, Alderman-at-Large; Al Wilson, Beyond Walls; Gail Moriarty, Nashua International Sculpture Symposium; Phil Fagun, Sculpture Symposium; Charlotte Maher, Sculpture Symposium; Lynn Lombardi, Executive Director; Scott Costa, Assistant Executive Director/Acting Recording Secretary.

MINUTES:

The Chairperson entertained a motion to waive the reading of the Authority's regular meeting minutes dated June 19, 2020, accept them, and place them on file. Mr. Wilson made a motion, and Mr. Tollner seconded the motion.

The Chairperson entertained a motion to waive the reading of the Authority's special meeting minutes dated June 26, 2020, accept them, and place them on file. Mr. Tollner made a motion, and Mr. Wilson seconded the motion.

The Chairperson entertained a motion to waive the reading of the Authority's Nonpublic meeting minutes dated June 19, 2020, accept them, and place them on file. Mr. Tollner made a motion, and Mr. Wilson seconded the motion.

The Chairperson asked if there were any comments, additions/deletions, corrections, or discussion.

There being no further discussion, the motions passed.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The Chairperson entertained a motion to waive the reading of the Communications, accept them, and place them on file. Mr. Tollner made the motion, and Mr. Wilson seconded. The Communications were as follows: Monthly Operational Reports – June 2020 – consisting of Public Housing and Section 8 Waiting List and Applications Report; Vacancy Report; Vacancy Report Compilation Sheet; Work Order Report; Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) Utilization Report; Rent Collections Report, NHRA Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2019 Audit, Beyond Walls Presentation

The Chairperson asked if there were any comments, additions/deletions, corrections, or discussion.

Mr. Wilson asked if the rent receivables being higher was as to be expected considering current circumstances. Ms. Lombardi confirmed and said NHRA can begin serving eviction notices once the moratorium has ended. Ms. Lombardi further explained that some housing authorities are extending the moratorium an additional year, and requested if the Board also wanted to do so. Ms. Lombardi stated that NHRA wants to work with residents who have become past due on rental payments due to the economic conditions relative to the pandemic, and she is hopeful NHRA can work through the court system to make repayment agreements with those residents, as opposed to allowing the receivables to increase. Mr. Wilson commented that some residents may not pay anything at all towards any repayment agreements NHRA is able to establish with them in or out of court, to which Ms. Lombardi agreed. Mr. Wilson suggested NHRA continue to work with residents to the extent possible, but keep to the current deadline. Mr. Monahan said NHRA should make every effort to assist residents, but also agreed with Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Monahan asked about the vacancy report and the applicant who was housed on a later date due to being given an extension due to lack of funds. Ms. Lombardi explained that NHRA offers vacant units to the updated applicants in order of priority, and if refusals are made, NHRA will potentially return to an applicant who needed an extension and allow this in the interest of leasing the unit while also allowing for flexibility due to COVID-19.

Mr. Wilson suggested the discussion and approval of the annual audit be tabled until the August 2020 meeting due to additional time being needed for review. Mr. Monahan agreed.

The Chairperson entertained a motion to table the approval of the NHRA Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2019 Audit until next month's meeting. Mr. Wilson made a motion, and Mr. Monahan seconded the motion.

Mr. Deschenes invited Beyond Walls to begin their presentation. Mayor James Donchess said he would give context to begin the discussion. Mayor Donchess said Al Wilson, Executive Director of Beyond Walls was present via teleconference, as well as Tim Cummings and Sarah Marchant with the City of Nashua. He said the City of Nashua is doing a lot to strengthen the economy of the City, as well as improve the environment for its residents, and overall make the City more attractive for those who may wish to relocate to Nashua. Mayor Donchess said the master plans include more affordable housing, the

Bronstein redevelopment, the School Street development, expanding outdoor dining, and potentially a performing arts center, as well as other things. He stated it is important to any emerging City to have strong enviro-arts. Mayor Donchess introduced Gail Moriarty, Chair of the International Sculpture Symposium, who has been running the program for twelve years. He also mentioned Positive Street Art, and said they are creating a lot of work around the City, as well as noting there are many other visual and performing arts organizations. Mayor Donchess said in the context of this, he knows that cities beyond Nashua have used public murals and public mural projects to greatly enhance not only the buildings, but the entire public profile of their city. He mentioned a neighborhood in Miami, FL that was elevated to a higher standard with this method. He said he became aware of what Lynn, MA has doing for some years now, called the Beyond Walls Mural Project, which Mr. Al Wilson would explain more about. Mayor Donchess said he has visited the city of Lynn and has seen what Beyond Walls has accomplished, which is a stunning display so far of sixty murals. He presented pictures of some of the murals to the Board, and suggested visiting Lynn, MA to see them in person. Mayor Donchess also showed a picture of a public housing building displaying a thirteen story high portrait of one of its residents. He said the City of Nashua was able to find a source of funding to conduct a joint art project, and reported the Sculpture Symposium is going to co-sponsor. Mayor Donchess mentioned he is hoping Positive Street Art will add their sponsorship. Mayor Donchess said the identified source of funding is the sale of a façade, which has been approved by the Planning Board with the understanding it will be used for an art project. Mayor Donchess said the transfer still has to be approved by the Board of Alderman, but this has been delayed due to COVID-19, and is pending. He explained Beyond Walls brings in artists from around the world to create these sculptures and murals, which pre-COVID-19 created community events and brought together whole neighborhoods. Mayor Donchess said Mr. Al Wilson and Beyond Walls were in Nashua at one point some time ago, and the City was working with them to attempt to find locations for art projects. He stated they had identified some locations around the City, such as Elm Street Middle School, when someone brought up the idea of placing a mural on 56 or 57 Tyler Street. Mayor Donchess said they went over to view the buildings and it seemed like an ideal location for various reasons, including size and visibility. He then invited Mr. Al Wilson to further describe the mission and workings of Beyond Walls.

Mr. Al Wilson thanked everyone for inviting him. He explained Beyond Walls had extensive relationships primarily with housing authorities and they are currently working with several in Massachusetts, as well as housing authorities elsewhere. Mr. Wilson said Beyond Walls is creatively addressing community needs with art, and it all started in 2016. He described less desirable areas, such as dangerous areas for pedestrians, underpasses for the MBTA in Boston, and other areas that needed refreshing and refurbishment. Mr. Wilson said when they reached 2017, they started placing art on bridges, expanding to larger areas, more murals, brought in more artists and became a non-profit. Mr. Wilson explained they have done very large scale art for cities and companies throughout Massachusetts which have placed them on the map. He also described the types of murals, the large amount of art which they have done, and the community events which have taken place as a result of the ongoing projects, therefore bringing neighborhoods together while also beautifying them. Mr. Wilson said Beyond Walls has now built up access to the world's best artists, which allows for a bigger profile and recognition for their work. He said he would love to work with the City of Nashua, and it has been a pleasure to speak with Mayor Donchess. Mr. Wilson then asked if anyone

had any questions, and if Charlotte Maher, of Sculpture Symposium would like to add any comments.

Ms. Maher said she was readily available for any questions as well.

Mr. Eric Wilson said the thirteen story portrait was phenomenal. Mr. Eric Wilson asked how a mural would be chosen for NHRA, and whether the residents are generally involved in the choice. Mr. Al Wilson said the art is all family friendly and not overtly political, and they hold to that hard line. He said their ability to attract the top street artists of the world is to give creative license. Mr. Al Wilson said they give the artist's history about the city, information and input about the neighborhood, the environment, and other input and then they create their own vision.

Mr. Monahan asked if there would be a rendering or concept presented to NHRA prior the art being placed on site. Mr. Monahan stressed the importance NHRA places on the input and comfort of its residents, and that he feels there should be a step in the process residents are able to be involved in. Mr. Monahan said he understands what artists do, and he realizes it is highly likely it will be great art, but would like to see something prior to a permanent mural being created.

Mr. Al Wilson said it would be completely reasonable to show a display of the artist's portfolio prior to the artist designing his or her own vision or creation. He further explained the ongoing successful track record of the artists who have been working with Beyond Walls, and his confidence in the artists they attract.

Mr. Monahan asked about the maintenance of the mural over the life of the art. Mr. Al Wilson said Beyond Walls takes on all of the burden of cost for the placement, materials and labor to create the art, and the artist retains the copyright. He explained the materials, especially the paint used is of very high quality, and has excellent durability with UV protection. He said it cannot be sealed, as this could compromise the art or prevent the placement of new art. Mr. Al Wilson said there is a mural in Miami that has been in direct sun for over eight years, has not faded and still looks fantastic. He said eventually the piece will fade, but it takes some time. Mr. Al Wilson said Beyond Walls does not maintain the art, they ask that it stays in place for a year, and then it can be changed out should NHRA wish to do so. Mr. Al Wilson said he wants to be involved with the City of Nashua for years to come and hopes that if the decision is made at some point to change or replace art they have created, they will be invited to do so.

Mayor Donchess further explained NHRA would be committed to the art being in place for one year, and then after that time, it could be removed or replaced. NHRA would have control over the piece, but not the commercial use of it due to the copyright. Mayor Donchess asked Mr. Al Wilson if NHRA could ask for another artist if the first artist's portfolio is not found attractive. He said yes, but this would be awkward and challenging if the artist evaluated the wall first, as this would take up his or her time to create and present a vision, although that potential request could be accommodated.

Ms. Maher commented that the artists are chosen and/or offered areas they are interested in, and in which they feel they could connect with the community.

Mr. Tollner stated the residents should definitely be a part of the process. Mr. Monahan said the artist's portfolio should be presented to the residents along with the proposed project idea for input prior to moving forward, as they should be involved. Mr. Monahan requested the input of Mr. Deschenes as a resident. Mr. Deschenes said he has spoken with several residents who have said they are enthusiastic about the idea of art being placed on the building.

Mr. Monahan said there would have to be legal documents exchanged between NHRA and Beyond Walls, which he would like to review. Mr. Monahan also said if Beyond Walls had an artist in mind at some point should this be agreed upon, he hoped the artist would be willing to and want to meet with the residents. Mr. Monahan further stated it is encouraging to know there are residents at Sullivan Terrace who are excited about the possibility of a building mural. Mr. Monahan said he would be interested in taking it to the next step.

Mr. Eric Wilson asked if Mr. Al Wilson had any art in mind for the wall at Sullivan Terrace, or if any artists have reviewed the building wall, and requested pictures be provided of any artists portfolios via email if so.

Ms. Maher said artists have been spoken to about interest, but none have been shown the wall, and therefore there are no concepts in place. She said examples of large murals created by artists who have worked with Beyond Walls are available for viewing on the website.

Mr. Al Wilson also said there would be a delay in any art being placed should a decision be made to do so, due to COVID-19, and the most likely timeframe would be spring of 2021. He also described the way Beyond Walls involves the local community, the residents of the buildings, and the activities and events which take place before by way of introducing the artist and the process.

Mr. Monahan said he would like to move forward to the next step, and welcomed a discussion about what that may be. Mayor Donchess suggested the City of Nashua work out some other details with Beyond Walls, and then get back to the Board with additional information and potentially a proposal from Beyond Walls.

Ms. Moriarty said they have been working closely with Beyond Walls, and described how the Sculpture Symposium works and a little of their history, and current contributions to the City of Nashua. She said she receives many compliments about the sculptures they create for Nashua, and there are visitors who have commented to her that they have come to Nashua solely to enjoy their art, which she finds to be wonderful.

Mr. Al Wilson said he is very excited about the possibility of delivering a piece of art to NHRA to make the City of Nashua proud, and that will be a valuable addition and point of commentary. He also said he sees great potential for a project.

Mayor Donchess said the caliber of artist Beyond Walls is selecting for the walls in Nashua, with whom he has met, has been extremely impressive. He also said he truly enjoys bringing people down to Lynn to see the art, and see the smiles of enjoyment at the beauty of the art.

Ms. Lombardi thanked everyone for being there, as well as the wonderful and thorough information provided. Ms. Lombardi said once she sees a proposal, and has even further knowledge about the potential artist, she will feel much more comfortable presenting the idea to the residents.

There being no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

The Bronstein Apartments redevelopment process remains a primary focus with the preliminary Low Income Housing Tax Credit application having been submitted on July 6 to NH Housing Finance Authority for review and comment. The process by which NHRA will be requesting approval through the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) falls under Section 18 Demolition/Disposition regulations. RECAP Advisors is in the process of preparing a Section 18 application which will require Board review and approval under a formal resolution in August. The Section 18 application will include the following key requirements: Board approval; inclusion in NHRA's PHA Annual Plan; resident consultation; environmental review; local government consultation; a description of the disposition; valuation of the property; relocation plan and timetable; and use of proceeds, if applicable. Once submitted NHRA's Section 18 application will be placed under review by the Special Applications Center and local HUD Field Office. The Bronstein redevelopment plan will go before the Nashua Zoning Board on July 14 for consideration.

Modernization work under the Capital Fund Program is occurring at Arel Manor and Ledge Street Homes. Arel Manor has received new fascia and soffits, and the remaining work consists only of punch list items. Ledge Street Homes (Eleventh Street) building envelopes are being replaced with new roofs, windows, siding and doors.

COVID-19 testing is occurring by the Nashua Public Health Department at multiple public housing sites. NHRA is optimistic that limiting the barriers residents face in getting to testing sites will better enable them to receive testing. Our appreciation goes out to the staff at the Health Department for the work they are doing.

NHRA's auditor has completed its field work for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019 annual audit. The audit has been completed. I have supplied a hard copy to each of the Board members today. I am pleased to report there were no findings.

There have been developments in the Bronstein Redevelopment, and I defer to Mr. Monahan and Mr. Wilson should they wish to elaborate further.

Mr. Monahan said there have been some very positive developments with the City of Nashua, and the negotiations with Boston Capital. Mr. Monahan reported there have been a few stumbling blocks along the way, and therefore it is taking a little more time. Mr. Monahan said over the past few days large strides have been made towards establishing a Memorandum of Understanding. Mr. Monahan said everything being done is for the benefit of the residents, as well as NHRA. Mr. Monahan explained that although time is of the essence, it is important to step back and look at what is most effective and positive for the future success of the project.

Mr. Wilson said the partnership with Boston Capital is establishing a fifteen to thirty-year relationship, and although there is much work to be done in the short term, the focus is long term stability of a partnership. Mr. Wilson does not anticipate any issues with the Zoning Board, the Planning Board or NHHFA during the ongoing negotiations with Boston Capital, nor does he foresee anything stopping the redevelopment project.

Mr. Monahan said one of the most of pressing matters to remember is keeping residents apprised of the timelines, opportunities which could be afforded to them, as well as the Vouchers NHRA is working to obtain to provide residents in order to lessen any burden they may have as the redevelopment moves forward. Mr. Monahan stated he feels ongoing communication with the residents as well as their respective representatives is as important, if not more important, to the Board, Ms. Lombardi and Mr. Costa, as they work closely together on the negotiations, then the redevelopment process itself.

Ms. Lombardi said she spoke with Mayor Donchess prior to the meeting and explained the consultant NHRA is working with has been an excellent resource, as they specialize specifically in relocation. Ms. Lombardi explained they know how to seek out and address any concerns residents may have, and as Mr. Monahan had said, no resident will simply be given a short amount of time to move out of their unit. Ms. Lombardi stated there is a ninety-day requirement of notification, so therefore residents will be notified well in advance of any need to vacate. Mr. Wilson then clarified the redevelopment is not happening immediately, but into next spring and likely summer, so no residents need worry about an imminent notice that they need to relocate.

Mr. Wilson asked if the fire alarm system is online at Arel Manor. Mr. Costa said yes.

Mr. Wilson asked if there is an inspection at Bronstein on July 28, 2020. Ms. Lombardi said she had not been made aware of a site visit yet.

Mr. Tollner asked about the ninety-day notice requirement to Bronstein residents of the need to vacate, and whether all residents have already been made aware this is forthcoming. Mr. Wilson confirmed. Ms. Lombardi said public meetings were held, and also explained the other processes used to communicate the information to all residents. Ms. Lombardi said information was disseminated door-to-door, and by telephone communication, including the use of translation services to hold discussions with residents of Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Mr. Deschenes said some residents were afraid of the recent COVID-19 testing held at NHRA properties until the process was explained in more detail, as which time they became more comfortable. Mr. Wilson suggested the information about how COVID-19 testing is done be included in the notification flyers posted at each building. Ms. Lombardi indicated that she would speak with the Nashua Health Department about revising their flyer to include details that the testing is not painful and will not harm individuals.

Ms. Honorow said she appreciates all of the work everyone is doing, and asked if there is any assistance other Commissioners are able to provide. Mr. Wilson said he has been learning a lot from Mr. Monahan, and the involvement of Mr. Monahan and him at this time appears to be sufficient. Mr. Wilson thanked Ms. Honorow for her offer. Mr. Monahan also thanked Ms. Honorow for offering her assistance, and explained there should be more

information to provide to the rest of the Commissioners shortly, at which time further involvement would be more important, especially once the Memorandum of Understanding is signed. Mr. Monahan said although the redevelopment project is now public, the Planning Board meeting is coming up in August, the outcome of which will be determine when all of the details of a good plan will be shared with everyone.

Mr. Wilson added the Memorandum of Understanding is under review by the NHRA attorney, but the biggest work in progress is the low income housing tax credit portion and planning, and making sure this project in no way interferes with the ability of NHRA to fund everything else needed. Mr. Wilson explained it is a matter of ironing out some pending financial matters relevant to the redevelopment project in the interest of being responsible.

The Chairperson asked if there were any additional comments or discussion.

The Chairperson entertained a motion to accept the Executive Director's Report. Mr. Wilson made the motion, and Mr. Monahan seconded.

There being no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

RESOLUTION NO. 20-2369

**BY THE NASHUA HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
AWARDING A TWO-YEAR CONTRACT BEGINNING AUGUST 1, 2020 AND ENDING
JULY 31, 2022 FOR FIRE ALARM SYSTEM TESTING AND SERVICE TO CROWE &
SONS ELECTRICAL CORP., 590 MIDDLESEX STREET, LOWELL, MA 01851 AT A
TOTAL CONTRACT COST OF \$2,245 PER YEAR (\$2,000 UNDER THE OPERATING
BUDGET AND \$245 UNDER THE PARK VIEW APARTMENTS BUDGET)**

The Chairperson entertained a motion to approve **Resolution No. 20-2369**. Mr. Wilson made a motion, and Mr. Monahan seconded the motion. The Chairperson asked if there were any comments or discussion.

Mr. Tollner commented about the large difference in the bid pricing.

Mr. Monahan asked if everything was done in accordance with standard protocol. Ms. Lombardi said yes. Mr. Monahan said the pricing is fantastic, and the company is very good to work with.

There being no further discussion, the Acting Recording Secretary called the roll with the following responses:

AYE

Eric Wilson
James Tollner
Helen Honorow
Thomas Monahan
Paul Deschenes

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

BILLS/INVESTMENTS:

The Chairperson called for a motion to pay the bills as listed on the Cash Disbursement List - check numbers 63358 through 63473 and from the Park View Apartments Cash Disbursement List – check numbers 5500 through 5504, and to approve the investments as listed. Mr. Tollner made a motion to approve, and Mr. Wilson seconded the motion.

Mr. Monahan asked for clarification on a payment to J-N-R Gutters. Ms. Lombardi explained.

There being no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:

Mr. Monahan said he is looking forward to updating everyone soon regarding the redevelopment at Bronstein.

Mr. Wilson commented about the low CD rates.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH MAY COME BEFORE THE BOARD:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Chairperson entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Wilson moved to adjourn, and Mr. Tollner seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea S. Reed-Lenane

Andrea Reed-Lenane
Recording Secretary