

SPRINGFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY

2018 ANNUAL PLAN

RAB Meeting

October 4, 2017

10:00 AM

Present:

George Corcoran, 363 Central St. Apt. 34

Maureen Solomon, 98 Division St., Apt. 704

Raquel Sanchez, 69 Sanderson St., Apt. 201

Elfrida Venage, 18 Saab Ct. Apt 707

Marilyn Hallas, 25 Saab Ct., Apt. 1405

Mercedez Martinez, 69 Sanderson, Apt 703

Sandra Todd, 363 Central St. Apt. 34

Catherine Stevens, 75 Robert Dyer Circle

Michelle Booth, Deputy Executive Director, Springfield Housing Authority

Nicole Contois, Deputy Executive Director, Springfield Housing Authority

John Healy, Purchasing Manager & Senior Project Coordinator, Springfield Housing Authority

Fidan Gousseynoff, Executive Department Manager, Springfield Housing Authority

Naomi DeChristopher, Capital Improvements/Procurement Assistant, Springfield Housing Authority

Emma Febo, Language Bridge (*provided interpretation to Spanish*)

John Healy opened the meeting at 10:00 AM by introducing himself. He explained that the materials he handed out to the attendees contain information about major capital projects for each development for each year. He indicated that some information might be familiar to those who attended RAB meetings in previous year since the Capital Improvement/ Facilities department prepares its plan for the next 5 years however the agency is allowed to be flexible and move some projects depending on the budget and other circumstances. Mr. Healy provided brief explanation on what the difference between capital and maintenance projects.

Referring to the 5 year plan George Corcoran stated that parking lot renovation for Central Street is planned for 2020 and he is concerned about two big sink holes causing safety hazards. Mr. Healy responded that the sink holes will be fixed before that, most likely within next two months. Answering Mr. Corcoran's question he indicated that the pipes and the drain are on the SHA property and need to be repaired by the agency not the City.

George Corcoran emphasized the importance of installing security cameras. Mr. Healy stated that apart from including this item into the Capital Program, as suggested at one of the previous RAB meetings, the SHA is exploring other opportunities to fund this project, including through the energy performance contract which is currently in the process of doing survey and assessing the infrastructure (thermostats, lighting etc.). of the developments

Answering Michelle Booth's question Mr. Healy explained that the current CF only includes installing security cameras at those developments where it was requested by residents through RAB.

Fidan Gousseynoff informed George Corcoran that the agency did apply for the HUD's Safety and security grant this year however even though the application did meet all the criteria, it was not awarded a grant.

Elfrida Venage indicated that she first requested surveillance cameras at Saab Ct. back in 1999 and it was in 2003 that the SHA finally installed them however she personally does not find them to be very useful because it takes a lot of time and manpower to look through the recordings unless at least approximate time [when a violation occurred] is known and the Crime Prevention Office does not allow volunteers like her to review the recordings for confidentiality reasons. She emphasized the importance of using volunteers from residents to detect violations and report to the management on a timely manner. She provided brief explanation about Angels of Mercy, a program she has been managing at Saab Ct. Answering Maureen Solomon's question Ms. Venage explained how she was able to obtain a camera for the Community Room through the Resident Council's funds.

Michelle Booth explained that security cameras are still very helpful tool in fighting crime in PH. Cameras provide great evidence in court cases and sometimes are the only way to persecute the violators especially with so many residents refusing to testify due to their concerns about their safety and retaliation. She added that some of the recordings the SHA has been providing to the Springfield Police Department were very useful for their investigations.

Ms. Booth also indicated that even though some residents might assume that the Springfield Housing Authority management does not do much to address the problem of crime, the Crime Prevention Office and District management offices do work really hard to ensure safety and security in all the developments, following up on the complaints, investigating violations, undertaking legal actions, taking the violators to the court but unfortunately with the lack of witnesses or evidence it is hard to evict them. She advised the residents to pay attention to high traffic, suspicious or illegal activity, record information like license plate, date and time of violations, report it to the CPO and the District management office, and inform the Police Department.

Ms. Venage and Mr. Corcoran expressed their concern about trespassers, unauthorized occupants and suspicious activity in their development and not enough response from the SPD. Ms. Booth and Ms. Contois recommended reporting instances of not getting any response from the SPD to the management office.

John Healy continued his review of the Capital Fund plan. He stated that parking lot and sidewalks renovation project at Riverview Apartments is currently under way and in the future the agency is planning to renovate more units to make them fully handicap accessible subject to funds availability. He added that CF for Riverview also includes some money for asbestos abatement in the basement.

Marilyn Hallas from 25 Saab Ct. shared her concern about intercom system in her building not working properly. Mr. Healy indicated that most intercom systems in SHA buildings are old, hard wired and it is hard to repair the wires hidden behind walls. He explained that due to lack of funds it is hard for his department to include intercoms replacement to the plan as the agency must address more important issues that pose threat to safety and health (e.g. roofs, mold, hazardous materials).

Mr. Healy said that the Facilities Improvement Department is looking into replacing all heat controls, thermostats, zone valves at Saab Ct. and other high-rise buildings.

Answering Maureen Solomon's question about cleaning the vents Mr. Healy explained that all the vents were cleaned about 5 years ago and this type of job is usually performed by the maintenance not the Capital/Facilities Improvement Department. As for the cleaning the radiators, the maintenance crews are responsible for doing this job in all vacant units while in occupied units, it's a tenant's responsibility.

Racquel Sanchez expressed her gratitude for all the work done by the SHA at Riverview Apartments. She inquired whether the sealing/caulking around the windows can be replaced. Mr. Healy advised to contact the management office since this type of item is not a part of the CFP. Ms. Sanchez also expressed her concern about not having enough space for ambulance at 98-100 Division Street. John Healy stated that since there is not enough land it is not possible to create extra space, however the SHA did complete the work to remove a curb in that area to make it easier for ambulance crew and people using wheel-chairs. He also indicated that the agency has been reviewing possibility to improve the layout at 121-122 Sanderson Street however had to postpone it due to high cost of the project and lack of money.

In response to Maureen Solomon's complaint about people parking on the street instead of on the parking lot thus impeding traffic especially for PVRTA buses, Michelle Booth suggested contacting the City Councilor Adam Gomez to request his support in establishing a ban for street parking especially in winter time.

Answering Racquel Sanchez's question Mr. Healy assured that he had informed the contractors working on site to be careful with the community garden at Riverview. He said that the staff is concerned about all the difficulties the tenants have to face during the parking lot renovation project but all those difficulties are temporary and the project is aimed at creating better conditions for the residents.

John Healy moved on to reviewing the Capital Fund plan for Central Street which includes repairing the catch basins, parking lot renovation and cameras installation. He listed the most important challenges the agency has to deal with including failing drains, trip hazards, need to install handicap ramps.

George Corcoran expressed his concerns about shifting foundation, bricks coming out and covered in green slime, lowering the ramp in front of 363 Central Street, gutters, locks not working properly. He also inquired if it is possible to plant a tree and install a bench. Mr. Healy responded that planting a tree and installing a bench as well as lowering the ramp can be included to the plan as a part of the parking lot renovation project. He stated that he can have a structural engineer to look into the shifting foundation issue. He advised to address the issue of the locks to his property manager. Nicole Contois promised to ask the District D manager to contact Mr. Corcoran.

Catherine Stevens commented that it is important to install security cameras at Robinson Gardens. Mr. Healy explained that no major capital projects are planned for that development because so much money was spent for the upgrades during federalization.

Michelle Booth informed that she has to leave for the C3 meeting and left the Conference Room at 10:54 am.

Frida Venage indicated that she is impressed with the work done at 18 Saab Court to replace old boilers and shared her concerns about old kitchen cabinets, the heater in the Community Room not working properly and the elevators that are old, unsafe and unreliable. She indicated that she would rather have the capital money spent on repairing the elevators rather than fixing the porches. Ms. Venage also expressed her gratitude for all the hard work of the SHA maintenance employees who are very cordial and diligent.

At the end of the meeting Mr. Healy indicated that the SHA has to deal with lots of emergency situations and with most of the buildings being very old it is hard to address all the issues and include many items that were discussed to the plan. He expressed his appreciation to the attendees for their time and input.

The meeting ended at 11:14 am.