

**EAST WINDSOR HOUSING AUTHORITY  
REGULAR MEETING – JUNE 20, 2011  
MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Boutin. Commissioners LaMay, Legassie and Percoski were present. Commissioner Lamb was not in attendance

**ADDED AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no added agenda items

**MEETING MINUTES OF:**

**Regular Meeting – May 16, 2011**

The minutes of the regular meeting of May 16, 2011 were reviewed by all commissioners present. A motion was made by Commissioner LaMay, seconded by Commissioner Percoski to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of May 16, 2011 as presented.

LaMay/Percoski

Unanimous

A motion was made by Commissioner LaMay, seconded by Commissioner Percoski to change the order of the meeting to have New Business put in this time in order to give our guests, Denise Menard and Elizabeth Burns an opportunity to speak.

LaMay/Percoski

Unanimous

**NEW BUSINESS**

Denise Menard, First Selectman, Elizabeth Burns, Human Services Coordinator and Lori Butenas, Human Services Aide spoke to the Commission with regard to the concerns surrounding the Renters Rebate Program this year.

Elizabeth Burns spoke to the Commission regarding an e-mail that had been sent to her on May 23<sup>rd</sup> by the Executive Director, Jennifer DiMauro. wherein Ms. DiMauro outlined her concerns with regards to the ease of service to the disabled and elderly residents of Park Hill. In her e-mail Ms. DiMauro listed tenants who would have difficulty getting to one of the proposed sites for the renters rebate application and who may be in need of a home visit; she also reiterated that Seniors and the disabled have the right to apply for the program from May to October of every year

and should not be confined to the dates as set forth by the Human Services Department.

Ms. Burns continued by expressing her concerns over the issues by stating that the Housing Authority had shared incorrect dates with tenants for the application sites, along with misinformation regarding the Dial-A-Ride transportation program. Ms. Burns stated that the Housing Authority gave out information stating the Senior Center charged a fee as opposed to a donation. Ms. DiMauro responded that there was one typographical error on a flyer for the renters rebate which said that it would be held on July 1<sup>st</sup>, instead of what it should have been which is July 19<sup>th</sup>. Ms. DiMauro stated that she had corrected the date in the most recent newsletters sent to the Park Hill residents. Ms. DiMauro responded to the statement of the fee vs. donation by stating that there seemed to be some confusion on the part of the riders as to the policy. Ms. Burns responded to Ms. DiMauro by stating that for the purposes of transportation to the Senior Center for the renters rebate application there would be no charge.

Ms. Burns further stated that with regard to the list of residents that Ms. DiMauro felt would benefit from a home visit, her worker Ms. Butenas had contacted the residents but out of the 17 listed, only 4 requested a home visit – the rest stated that they would be able to get to the Park Hill community hall. Ms. Butenas also stated that those residents who could not be contacted by telephone were sent a letter.

Ms. Burns then referred to Ms. Butenas regarding the home bound residents (we gave her 17 names of residents that we felt would benefit from a home visit). Of the people contacted by Ms. Butemas she stated that only 4 wanted a home visit and the rest wanted to come to the Community Hall. Ms. Butenas claimed that all of the residents that she had telephone numbers for had been contacted and those she couldn't reach by telephone had a letter sent to them. Ms. Butenas was asked how she was going to handle the application process at Park Hill; by appointment only or sign-in sheet and where she would be doing the applications. She responded to this that there would be specific appointments, at which time Commissioner Legassie spoke up and said that she had had a recent conversation with Ms. Butenas and had been told that there would be a sign-up sheet at Park Hill and not individual appointments. There was no response from either Ms. Burns or Ms. Butenas on that statement. Ms. Butenas did say that she would work out of the conference room so that confidentiality would not be an issue and that appointments would be 15 minutes each. Ms. DiMauro then stated that she felt that 15 minutes did not provide sufficient time for the elderly, who may have other concerns or questions that a social worker might need to respond to. Chairman Boutin and Commissioner LaMay also expressed their concerns that fifteen (15) minutes would not be adequate. Ms. Butenas agreed to adjust the time to as long as thirty minutes, if necessary. Ms. Butenas also stated that many of the

applicants were returnees and the application process is faster for those people.

Ms. Burns went on further to state that she had concerns over “mistakes” that had been made on the application by Housing Authority staff, and that she did not want her name on the documentation if mistakes had been made because she would be held responsible. Ms. DiMauro responded to this statement by defending the Housing Authority staff and by further stating that the reason for any mistakes made was due to Human Services having withheld the correct software version which has been provided to them by the State of Connecticut, Office of Policy and Management. Ms. Burns responded by saying that her department did not know that the Housing Authority had attended OPM training and had no idea that they would be doing Renters Rebate applications. Ms. Burns went on further to say that once she found out that the applications were being done at Park Hill by the Housing Authority staff she forwarded all e-mails from OPM to the Housing Authority. Ms. DiMauro responded to this statement by saying that once Human Services notified her office that mistakes were being made, she asked the Tax Assessor from a neighboring municipality to look over the applications to determine where the problems might lay. Upon discussing the applications with a neighboring municipality; it was discovered that the software being used by the Housing Authority was outdated and was the reason for the “mistakes”.

Ms. Burns continued to reference other comments in the e-mail such as the fact that Ms. DiMauro had mentioned the fact that the Housing Authority doing the applications was keeping the costs to the town down, i.e. mileage, fuel, copy paper, toner, etc. – Ms. Burns responded to this by stating that she was not concerned about these costs.

Ms. Burns continued by stating that she was disturbed by the statement in Ms. DiMauro’s e-mail asking whether or not there had been any press releases put in the local papers. She responded to this question by stating that there had been releases sent to the Hartford Courant, the Reminder and the Journal Inquirer, and on the Town of East Windsor website. Ms. Boutin interjected at this point and said that many Senior do not have a computer and inquired as to whether or not it had been put on the Cox Community Calendar; Ms. Burns said that it had not.

The discussion continued with Chairman Boutin stating that she had been told by Ms. Burns herself that more than one date for Park Hill applications would be provided; however, her worker Ms. Butenas decided that only one date could be done in July. Chairman Boutin then inquired as to whether or not an additional date could be done in August and Ms. Burns said that it could. Ms. DiMauro then asked Ms. Burns to supply her with a date for August be given to her by July 19<sup>th</sup> so that it could be included in the August newsletter; she agreed to this.

At this time, some of the residents of Park Hill (who were present at the meeting) had the opportunity to express their opinions and/or concerns. One resident of Park Hill stated that she felt very comfortable dealing with the Housing Authority staff and that they did a good job. Another new resident stated that he and his wife felt very comfortable going to the Housing Authority staff because they knew and trusted them; but they did not feel comfortable going to Human Services as they did not know them at all.

The discussion ended with the First Selectman Denise Menard, stating that the Renters Rebate program would stay with the Human Services Department; in spite of the fact that she was handed a petition signed by over 35 residents of Park hill who stated that they preferred having the Housing Authority complete their Renters Rebate applications.

Ms. Menard, Ms. Burns and Ms. Butenas were then thanked for coming to the meeting and the meeting resumed its normal order.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Cindy Thibodeau, apt. 9, took this opportunity to state that she feels the Renters Rebate program should be done here and several of the residents in attendance said the same thing.

## **BILLS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Check Register – May 12 – June 15, 2011**

The check register for May 12 – June 15, 2011 was reviewed by all Commissioners present and all questions answered. A motion was made by Commissioner Legassie, seconded by Commissioner Percoski to accept the check register of May 12 – June 15, 2011 as presented.

Legassie/Percoski

Unanimous

### **Bank Reconciliation – May, 2011**

The Bank Reconciliation of May, 2011 was reviewed by all Commissioners present and all questions answered.

## **REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/RESIDENTS SERVICE COORDINATOR**

Our grant through the Town of East Windsor was submitted by the Grant writer to the State on June 3, 2011. It will be some time before we hear of the outcome. We are proceeding with work on the heating and cooling pumps. At this time, the mechanical engineer for the project is

working on the plans for the installation of the new equipment. We will keep all of our tenants up to date on the progress of this project.

We met with a representative from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) earlier this month and submitted our application for reimbursement for the January 11<sup>th</sup> winter storm. It appears favorable that we will recoup some of the funds that we expended for the storm.

We have scheduled, and possibly by the writing of this report, made repairs to the chain link fence on the upper level of the complex that was damaged during the storm, as well as the light fixture on the pole next to the fence.

Annual unit inspections are underway and we have completed about half of the inspections and expect to get them done by the end of July. We are a bit behind schedule, due to some unexpected major repairs that came up, as well as having the maintenance crew very busy refurbishing vacant units. Tenants are reminded to prepare for their inspections by making sure that both doors are not blocked with furniture, both emergency pull cords should be visible and accessible at all times, heating units should not be blocked, hoarded items have been cleared out and that general housekeeping is good. During inspection, we check all alarm systems, including the smoke detectors to ensure that they are in working order. We also check to be sure that each tenant has their File of Life completed and on their refrigerator, in the event that emergency response personnel are summoned in emergencies. We also check for evidence of pest problems, as well as to ask each tenant if they are experiencing any problems in their apartments.

We have had very few complaints about the new landscaping company. If any tenant has a concern, we remind them to call the office. Please do not approach the workers while they are operating machinery, as this is very dangerous. If there is a problem, we will speak with them about it.

The annual picnic is scheduled for Friday, July 15<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. There is no cost for the picnic, as it is something that the Housing Authority does each year for our tenants. We had an excellent turnout last year and I hope that we will see all of our tenants turn out again this year.

This past Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, we had the Air Force and Marine Corp. recruits here doing repair work to the fence line, painting an empty apartment, staining the pavilion and picnic table, painting the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> level laundry room doors and utility boxes and doing a myriad of other tasks. We had pizza donated from Elaine's Pizza and Pizza Hut and everyone worked real hard. We hope to have them back in September, but this time it will be Air Force, Marine Corp and Army - no Navy just yet.

## **RESIDENT SERVICES COORDINATOR**

The end of May turned out to be the perfect time to plant gardens here at Park Hill. I was able to get over 100 packets of flower and vegetable seeds donated for the residents. Everyone who was interested received seeds. The apartments look nice with the resident's displays of flower and garden accessories.

The Birthday acknowledgement program has been very rewarding. Residents are surprised to find their day remembered. I enjoy their response when I give them a card from the "Staff of Park Hill" to celebrate their special day. In May there were 8 birthdays and 13 residents were born in June.

We started a "coffee hour" in June on Tuesday mornings and the first event was successful. We enjoyed coffee, juice and pastries and chatted about ideas to improve the social activities. We are offering a food basket filled with goodies for a raffle. The second week was even more successful as we made a point of asking the residents in the upper levels to join us. The food basket for the raffle was a hit. We have the movie time at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesdays and hope to get more attendance now that the shows are posted on the Community bulletin board.

I have continued to assist residents with Safe Link cell phones. Several tenants needed assistance with utility bills. The recent change in ConnPace also requires new applications to alternate programs. There are new tenants that I have helped complete forms for various local, state and federal programs. The file of life is an ongoing project. Each week I try to check and complete as many as time allows. Many just need prescription updates, but it's important to review them with the tenants for accuracy. It's also a great opportunity to ask the residents about any needed services and listen to their concerns.

## **COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Nothing from the commission members.

## **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

There were no reports of committees

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

There were no new Policies and Procedures

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a) Small cities grant

There was covered in the report of the Executive Director

**PUBLIC OPINION**

There were no public comments.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- a) **Tenant Matters/Security Issues**
- b) **Pending Legal Matters**
- c) **Financial Reports**
- d) **Policies and Procedures**

A motion was made by Commissioner Percoski, seconded by Commissioner LaMay to go into Executive Session at 8:00 p.m. to include Edith Carney, the Executive Director, Jennifer DiMauro, and the Executive Assistant, Darlene Kelly as needed.

Percoski/LaMay Unanimous

A motion was made by Commissioner Percoski, seconded by Commissioner Legassie to come out of Executive Session at 9:05 p.m.

Percoski/Legassie Unanimous

There was no action taken.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Percoski, seconded by Commissioner LaMay to adjourn the regular meeting of the East Windsor Housing Authority at 9:15 p.m.

Percoski/LaMay Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Darlene H. Kelly  
Recording Secretary

