

Ridgefield Housing Authority (RHA) Meeting Minutes for January 26, 2017
(Approved)
Ballard Green – 25 Gilbert Street – 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners: Frank Coyle, Cathleen Savery, Vincent Liscio and John Kukulka
Absent: Bob Hebert
Visitors: Coco Barron, Nancy Higgins, Jo Ann Lynch, Krisann Benson and Isette Brenda

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
 2. Approval of Minutes
 3. Treasurer's Report
 4. Tenant Commissioner Report
 5. Management Report
 6. New Business
 - A. 2017 Schedule of Meetings
 7. Old Business
 8. Public Session
 9. Executive Session: Individual Tenant Issues. (if required)
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1. Call to Order

Mr. Coyle called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Mr. Coyle apologized for the confusion. The meeting had changed from Wednesday to Thursday. In doing so, both Ms. Henderson and Mr. Sfraga could not attend Thursday night's meeting.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Coyle asked if there were any comments regarding the January 12th meeting.

Mr. Kukulka moved and Mr. Coyle seconded a motion to approve the January 12, 2017 minutes. The Ridgefield Housing Authority voted 4-0. Motion passed.

3. Treasurer's Report

Mr. Coyle, Treasurer mentioned that the report was in a preliminary stage. Although not final, it looked very good. Mr. Coyle mentioned he had sent it to the Commissioners and Mr. Liscio said he had received it. Mr. Coyle said he was open to any changes.

Mr. Coyle met with Mr. Sfraga previously. They are approaching CHFA for funding. They would be working on a plan. The preliminary meeting is in February. The Board will do a proposal which will be a matter of public record. Possible items are a new elevator, entry way improvement, architectural drawing, repaving the parking lot where the disposal goes down and other items that may or not be included.

4. Tenant Commissioner Report

Ms. Savery said residents had been concerned about the outside lights streaming into their apartments. Ms. Savery said if anyone was having a problem, to see Mr. Sfraga to change the angle of the lights or perhaps install darker shades in their apartments.

Ms. Savery wanted to thank Ms. Henderson for her work on the December 2016 parties.

Mr. Liscio moved and Mr. Kukulka seconded a motion to approve the Tenant Commissioner Report. The Ridgefield Housing Authority voted 4-0. Motion passed.

5. Management Report

Mr. Coyle met with Mr. Sfraga to report the following in Mr. Sfraga's absence:

- A. **Occupancy** – Occupancy is very positive. Not many vacancies. The fob key system at Congregate has been delayed to perhaps next week. Will see if Ballard Green is next.
- B. **Maintenance Issues** – Mr. Coyle said at Ballard Green, one of the new chairs from the revised meeting room has been taken. Mr. Coyle has asked that the chairs not be taken. Also, Mr. Coyle has reminded the residents to clean up after themselves in these areas. Additionally, Mr. Coyle said Annual Inspections of Apartments would begin next week.
- C. **Resident Services Coordinator Report** – Mr. Coyle said meetings were taking place on February 14th at 11:30am, at Ballard Green's community room, and on February 13th at 1:00pm, at Congregate Housing's lounge room. All residents are encouraged to attend. However, these sessions are not intended to be a complaint fest. Mr. Coyle said Ms. Henderson advised year end was very positive with the Christmas party. Ms. Henderson thanked the commissioners for serving food.

Mr. Kukulka moved and Ms. Savery seconded a motion to approve the Management Report. The Ridgefield Housing Authority voted 4-0. Motion passed.

6. New Business

No new business was identified.

- A. **Schedule of Meetings** - Mr. Coyle asked if there were any comments regarding the schedule for the rest of the year being that it was always going to be on a Wednesday. Ms. Savery mentioned it was difficult to read. Mr. Kukulka gave Ms. Savery his copy which was in a better format.

7. Old Business

- A. **Pump House at Ballard Green** – Mr. Coyle said the application for demolition was not put in yet. Ms. Savery expressed concern.
- B. **Phone Menu** – Still working on resolving this issue.

8. Public Session

Ms. Brendza mentioned there was a lot of food leftover from the last party. Ms. Savery said this had been discussed in a prior meeting. Ms. Savery said that from now on, they would try to distribute the food to people who were not able to make it to the party due to inclement weather or because they were feeling poorly that day. Ms. Savery said to either notify Ms. Henderson or Ms. Savery so that the food was not thrown away.

Ms. Brendza said she was upset that Alison was no longer at Ballard Green. Ms. Brendza expressed sadness that Alison had been let go two weeks before Christmas. Ms. Brendza mentioned that Alison had enjoyed a good rapport with many of the residents. Mr. Coyle said although the Board had expressed their concerns, the decision on how to manage their employees was Konover's responsibility.

Ms. Lynch said she also missed Alison. Ms. Lynch asked if there was an address to correspond with her. Mr. Coyle said he would ask Mr. Sfraga.

Ms. Higgins said she gave a stamped card to Ms. Henderson, who was able to address it to Alison. Mr. Coyle said this was a good approach as certainly Konover management would be hesitant to give out Alison's address.

Ms. Higgins addressed the issue of leaving a phone message. Ms. Higgins said Eversource told her that they thought they could only leave a phone message. Eversource did not know that if they held on the line a few more seconds, they could speak to a live person. There was a big silent break prior to actually connecting to a live person. Mr. Coyle said he was not sure if that could be completely fixed. Ms. Savery said that this issue was serious. Mr. Coyle said that this issue probably involved the main carrier who he thought could be AT&T. Mr. Coyle said he agreed that the notification had to be clearer.

Ms. Benson said she was also very upset about Alison's departure. Ms. Benson asked if the Board couldn't have discussed this before and Mr. Coyle said the Board had discussed this. Mr. Coyle said the Board was aware of the situation in general terms but not involved in the timing. However, the Board knew that there were issues. Ms. Benson said that if the Board paid the bill, wouldn't they have a say. Mr. Coyle said the Board had a say in hiring the manager, but left the responsibility of the individual employees to the management company. Mr. Coyle said the parting was amicable but could not say anything more.

Ms. Brendza said a lot of people were upset. Mr. Coyle said that was important. They want people who are pleasant to the residents and who do a good job. Mr. Sfraga is particularly attentive. They were hoping that the new assistant manager was also attentive.

Ms. Higgins asked if hypothetically, she had an issue with management and was not satisfied with the response, could she bring it to the Board. Ms. Savery said first to bring it to her, then to Mr. Sfraga and then to the Board if it was relevant. Mr. Coyle said on Personnel issues, the management company had the final say. On process issues, the Board had the final say. Issues may not always be resolved right away, but the Board would stay focused on them until they were resolved. Personal issues should always go to Ms. Savery first.

Ms. Benson said there was a gentlemen who was legally blind. Ms. Benson questioned if perhaps there should be a sign posted that there were blind people in the area so as to slow the cars down. Mr. Coyle said there was an ongoing problem with speeding at Ballard Green. However, he would bring this up with Mr. Sfraga. Mr. Liscio said this blind gentleman had previously brought this speeding issue before the Board.

Ms. Brendza said the 'No Pass Thru' sign had been down at Ballard Green. Ms. Benson said the wind had blown it down.

Ms. Barron said she hoped there would be two administrations installed. Ms. Barron said she felt Congregate was being neglected. She mentioned an apartment that had been empty for eight months and that there was a lot of work for Doug to do to please everyone. Mr. Coyle said it was highly unlikely that another administration would be brought in. Mr. Coyle said that for 152 units, there should only be one property manager. Mr. Coyle said that was not going to change and that in the past year, the turnover had been outstanding.

Ms. Brendza said Doug was wonderful. He was a very hard worker doing all the repairs.

Mr. Coyle said the issue of open vacancies was not an issue anymore. Ms. Savery said that one apartment had been an exception in that it needed a lot of work. Mr. Coyle said that apartment had nothing to do with rent increases. Mr. Coyle said the Board did not do rent increases lightly. Expenses have been cut in the past year. Ms. Coco said she felt the grass didn't have to be cut every week as well as having the trees trimmed. Mr. Coyle said they were not going to cut on the maintenance nor reduce their services. Ms. Brendza said she liked Northeast Landscape because when it snowed, they were out at 6am cleaning the walkways and putting the salt down. Ms. Brendza said they did a good job.

Ms. Barron said there were five to six signs that people ignored on a regular basis, where people drove the wrong way. Ms. Barron has brought it to management's attention but it was still occurring. Mr. Coyle asked if Ms. Barron know who it was, to tell Mr. Sfraga. Ms. Barron said she sent a report to the administration but the guy was still going the opposite way. Mr. Coyle said he would look into it.

Ms. Barron said there were two recycling boxes which were being used inappropriately. She has seen people throw kitty litter in the recycling bin. Mr. Kukulka asked how the Board could control people's behavior. Mr. Kukulka said short of having a cop stand there, it was a difficult thing to correct. Ms. Barron said if the people didn't comply, they should not have their lease's renewed. Ms. Lynch asked if the people could read English. Ms. Barron said yes, they could.

Ms. Barron asked if there were plans to add more apartments. Mr. Coyle said the Board was not involved in developing any at this time. Mr. Coyle said this was not a Housing Authority decision, rather it would be a town decision.

Ms. Brendza asked if the town had stopped 8G. Mr. Kukulka said no, the town had a waiver for now.

Ms. Barron said when she goes to Congregate and tries to use the intercom, it is difficult and nobody answers. Ms. Barron asked if there was some way to control the door. Ms. Barron said when she calls the office at Ballard Green, the phone rings and rings and sometimes gets the answering service. Mr. Coyle said that had already been discussed.

Ms. Barron talked about planting flowers but that it was no fun when the kids jump on them. Ms. Barron also asked about number signs on the apartments at 51 Prospect. Mr. Coyle said he could get together with Mr. Sfraga about that.

Ms. Higgins wondered if in an emergency, how emergency services knew where to go. Mr. Coyle said that was not an issue as he had seen emergency services at both housing locations. Apparently, the emergency services do not appear to have a problem.

Ms. Barron asked about another tenant using the washing machine for 20 years. Mr. Coyle said that had been addressed previously. Mr. Sfraga had said they were allowed to use it.

Mr. Coyle asked if there were any other issues, concerns or compliments.

9. Executive Session

The meeting moved to Executive session.

Mr. Kukulka moved and Ms. Savery seconded a motion to adjourn the Ridgefield Housing meeting at 8:08 p.m. The motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Fields
Recording Secretary