MORRISTOWN HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
29 Ann Street
Morristown, NJ  07960
Monday, November 26, 2018
Commencing at 6:00 P.M.

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TRANSCRIPT
RE:  Open Public Meeting
OF THE
PROCEEDINGS
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MEMBERS PRESENT:

MAUREEN DENMAN, Chairwoman
ALTON ROBINSON, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT:
KEITH KINARD, Executive Director
NICOLE PARSONS, Administrative Specialist

APPEARANCES:

JOSEPH MANFREDI & ASSOCIATES, P.C.
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Hoboken, New Jersey  07030
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REPORTED BY BETH A. BENSON, Certified Court Reporter

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CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: I, Maureen Denman, chairperson of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Morristown and presiding officer at this meeting do hereby state that it is now 6:11 in the evening on November 26, 2018, and we are convening at 29 Ann Street, Morristown, New Jersey, and do hereby announce publicly that proper notice of this regular meeting has been provided in accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.

Roll call.

(Whereupon, roll call was taken with all members noted being present.)

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: Pledge of allegiance.

(Flag was saluted.)

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: A moment of silence. And I would ask us to remember Barbara Dougherty. Mayor Dougherty lost his mother a couple of weeks ago. Keep her and all those in our prayers.

(A moment of silence is observed.)

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: We will have to skip the approval of the minutes for the
December meeting.

Mr. Kinard, executive report?

MR. KINARD: Certainly, chairwoman.

There are a few things I just want to raise for the board and the public. First and foremost, we continue to work on capital work issues associated with the properties. I did do a lighting scan on the portfolio, and unfortunately lighting, the lighting portfolio is in poor condition. At Manahan Village alone there's at least one light out at 21 of our 27 buildings. In some instances several lights are down at each building. The affected buildings are listed in the report. You can see them. They cover all the streets.

Really given the magnitude of the lighting issue at Manahan Village, we're going to be proceeding expeditiously to fix all halogens and deal with them. This work is considered exigent to health and safety, especially the fact it's getting darker earlier this time of year.

With regard to buildings 31 and 39 Early Street and 29 Ann Street, we have a few lights out, and we are going to also be
repairing them through this process expeditiously. This just isn't the magnitude we have at Manahan. We are also working with JCP&L because we have some pole lights that belong to them, one especially right in front of 31 Early Street that is down. So if you bear with us over the month of December, early January, we hope to get all these lights back up and running.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: Can I just ask, are they going to address the pole that's leaning by the family units down at Manahan Village right on Clyde Potts past the resident center?

MR. KINARD: Light pole or wire?

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: You know what, it may not be a light pole.

MR. KINARD: We will talk about that in just a moment.

So there were several other issues raised by the buildings and grounds committee at last month's meeting that we attempted to address. First and foremost, building ten around Flagler, the railing is now in place that was missing. There is a 14-inch high step there, a higher step than normal. We actually
have the contractor back on site, Victory, who is dealing with the concrete issues from phase one. We have a whole slew of issues to deal with on phase two, and the 14-inch high step will be dealt with shortly.

Lighting will be addressed as I just previously mentioned. The PVC pipe behind building 36 has been removed. The area below 13 Flagler has been trimmed back. The trees were on the sidewalk and people did have to work their way around them, so now they should have unimpeded access. The paint has been ordered in order for us to address the adjacent retaining wall in that area, but also the retaining walls throughout Manahan Village.

Verizon has been contacted and are fully aware of the low-hanging wires and leaning utilities poles on Clyde Potts Court. They advised us they will be addressing the issue. We have a number of them leaning. I believe they are as a result of Verizon hanging fiber-optic lines as opposed to running them underground. Fiber-optic lines are pretty thick. You can see them throughout the community. And as you're riding around Clyde
Potts you'll see a number of poles being pulled. I believe they have too much wiring on them now, as this has added to the electrical wiring. In fact, in one instance I see they actually took a wire from the fiber-optic back to a tree to actually add extra support. You'll see that down by the swimming pool area. And as if the tree branch isn't going to break at some point in the future. There's one wire hanging that's this thick hanging about seven and half, eight feet off the ground.

We thought it was JCP&L, turns out these issues are Verizon, and they took the cheaper route and hung the wires as opposed to running them underground. So we are, myself and Darlington, will be meeting with Verizon in attempting to address these issues.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: So if it is determined that it would be best to go underground, that would not be at our expense, would it?

MR. KINARD: No, that would be at Verizon's expense, and it would be a hard pill for them to swallow to determine that. I think what they'll end up doing is coming out and
addressing these wires because they need to tack them up higher and string them appropriately. This looks like me and a couple of my friends just wired up the community. That's what it looks like. And they just really ran through there quickly, and you'll see it kind of zigzagging across the street in areas. Poles are really distressed. It's not going to be long before they're worse. But it's an expensive endeavor for them to wire the community by going underground.

The resident center at Clyde Potts, well, this is one of those issues that watch what you wish for I guess. That's the best way to put it. I can say the good news is the HVAC system is installed on the roof, and almost fully operational. It actually is providing heat to the building right now, which we haven't had in the past.

We did run into another issue though which is a gas line that is now required to run the new HVAC system. It has to be installed by PSE&G. It appears the new HVAC system in all its glory requires a thicker wire gas line, not a one-inch but more like a three-inch gas line.
because of the type of system it is. We don't have that gas line there right now. We have a smaller one-inch. So PSE&G will have to come in and run that. But in the meantime they were able to test the system, get the system up and running, it's just not 100 percent fully operational. And that will rectify one of our main issues which is getting heat into the building.

However, because the building was down for so long, as I mentioned in a previous meeting the pipes froze in a lot of areas of the building. Pipes are frozen behind the wall. I'm going to be doing a walking tour with a plumbing contractor in the next week or so, and he'll be showing me the various areas in which the pipes behind the walls are frozen. He'll turn the water on and see the seepage. They're going to have to tear into the walls throughout the building, fix the frozen pipes, and then depending of the extent of the demolition work that's required we're going to have to get the building renovated in various areas.

The bathroom areas we already know is a big problem, because the bathrooms, the toilets
themselves cracked due to this, but even in the kitchen area we believe we are going to have some pretty significant issues.

So we are now moving into another phase of this resident center, which is going to be some demolition, surgical, some renovation, in order to try to get it up and running. We still haven't moved to just the painting and the floor tile and the ceiling tile that's been damaged or knocked out. That will come up, and the furniture that's required. But this, there's a lot of costs that are still yet to be determined, and a time frame that is still yet to be determined in terms of getting this community center up and running.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: So once you have the walk-through with the plumber you should be better equipped to give us an idea of what the dollar figure is associated with --

MR. KINARD: Yes, that's the game plan, a dollar figure and the time associated with it. And we're going to try to do it comprehensively to include furniture, the painting, everything to really get this building done.

Also attached to your reports, just
kind of a strategic plan overview, since everybody is so busy, and I know we don't have a lot of time to really download issues, I thought it would be helpful to try to give you an idea of what we've been working on and what we've been thinking internally, and after six months and a few weeks here now I've really got a pretty good feel for the agency as a whole, what the strengths and weaknesses are and where we need to improve.

So just quickly going through this, you'll see that as an overview really focusing on three areas; people, processes and properties. These are the three main areas that I see that we need to improve or strengthen.

On the people side, it's very simple, we need training, we need to focus on excellent customer service, and we need to focus on superior job performance. It will come out in just a moment through this presentation. I just want to get through the top sheet.

On the process side there are really several areas, five areas. A lot of them deal with policies and standard operating procedures. A number of our policies have been revised, a
number of them have not been revised. When you
start getting into the weeds, those policies
have not necessarily been revised, and we really
don't have standard operating procedures here at
the agency in terms of decision trees and things
like that. A lot of it has really been how
people have done it for awhile, and I've heard
that -- if I had a dollar for every time I've
heard that here, I'd be doing pretty well. So
we're looking at that. We're looking at the
connectivity of our systems, our work order
system, our management system, our camera
system, all those things, how they can better
link up, and also how we can stop actually
operating manually with the systems in place.

It appears that in some areas we have
purchased good systems, but we haven't stopped
doing the manual processes associated with those
systems. Some areas the systems have failed us,
so we're doing manual processes, but we haven't
held a vendor responsible for the failure or
fixing the failure or upgrading. So there's
this kind of strange mix there that's hurting
our efficiency across the board.

We really don't have an updated
organizational structure. I know that, because I'm not represented in the organizational structure, so -- and we don't have -- we don't do a lot of compliance here, third-party reviews. Primarily the third-party reviews here are an audit, annual third-party review, and we also have like a REAC, pre-REAC inspection, but we're not really doing third-party reviews on a lot of other important issues we deal with here at the agency. So that's one of the things the staff and I have been talking about, getting a Section Eight area especially, or pertaining to SEMAP and things like that. We really need to be getting some reviews done before we get -- before HUD does theirs.

On the property side it's pretty obvious. Building conditions, exterior site conditions and internal apartment conditions, we need and are working on reviews, planning and improvement in all those areas. The building exterior conditions, we've got windows, we've got roofs to look at. There are a number of areas that come up in the physical needs assessment that we have on hand that we really haven't addressed, so some of that is because we
don't have the money to address it, some of it is we prioritize other things, like the resident center, things like that. But those building issues are boilers, things like that, starting to come to the surface and causes problems.

Exterior site conditions, one of the biggest issues HUD has is the site conditions across the board. Tripping hazards, broken concrete, erosion of soil. It's a whole host of things and we have it all throughout. Some of it we've addressed, some we clearly still need to address. And Victory is on site now again helping us address some of those issues, but we have got to work hard there.

And last but not least, the internal apartment conditions, pest control and the actual issues in the apartments that are dated and need to be addressed. So I just included -- I'm not going to spend a lot of time here, but you'll see when you read this the people and processes in the system. Some of the things we are beginning to address in terms of customer service and organizational structure, we plan on getting third-parties in here to do a lot of job training. What I found is even in places where
we have updated policy, a lot of the staff
doesn't know the policy. They haven't reviewed
it, they haven't been trained on it. Again,
there's no standard operating procedures. So
we've checked one box, but in reality we really
didn't take that next step yet, and we need to
do that.

And also with resident services, it's
another area in which we're really kind of
behind the eight ball. We need -- we've talked
about resident programming. We have a lot of
residents that need help, case management
services, counseling services, housekeeping
services, whatever. We can link them with
third-party providers and get those services
provided. And we also need to have a better
decision matrix when it relates to those things.
How do we intervene, what questions should we be
asking, when these things happen what should our
next step be. It shouldn't be things that we
guess or we rely on experience, we really should
have rock solid standard operating procedures.
So those things is what you'll see on the people
side.

The process side you'll see really a
list that's not exhaustive, but some of the manuals and handbooks and plans that we are addressing, plan on addressing, that we really want to make tight, and in addition to making tight we really want to make sure every member of the staff understands it, and understands it to a level that we need them to understand it.

And on the last side, the property side, it's really all those issues that we tend to talk about when we come to these meetings and during the month, it's everything from garbage shoots to housekeeping inspections, which we will start in February of '19, the housekeeping inspections. It's an inspection and repair program, fire escapes, waste services, comprehensive extermination. It's all of those things that really make up the strategic plan, the MHA moving forward.

We're going to more clearly refine this so you'll see something coming up not every meeting, every other meeting, that you'll see more skin on top of these bones, and you'll start to see metrics come in play, and a clearcut timeline in terms of when each one of these things are in place, trained on, etcetera,
etcetera, or if we have any problems.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: Great. I know you had mentioned, and I'm assuming the uniforms for the maintenance staff are part of the plan.

MR. KINARD: Yes.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: And the equipment, did you order that snowblower leaf chopper?

MR. KINARD: We did. It's on board.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: Great.

MR. KINARD: And the uniforms should start in the next two, three weeks or so, we should have the Carhartt uniforms here, part of the professionalism. And also the management staff is going to start wearing some uniforms too. Theirs is more like a blazer and trousers. But it's all part of just professionalizing the staff.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: That's great. Long overdue. And I'm sure the staff appreciates it as much as we do and the residents will recognizing the uniform. I mean, I hear that often, they don't know if they're an employee or not.

MR. KINARD: Right.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: Excellent. You put
a lot of time and effort into that.

MR. KINARD: Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: That's terrific.

Okay.

MR. KINARD: One more thing, the residents are also, unfortunately Commissioner Banks is not here, but they are moving forward with an election process for resident council or councils. We recently sent an amended notice out to the residents. I don't have it in front of me. But it pushed back the petition date until December, mid December. It brought down the petition requirement, so now residents are looking for about 20 signatures on the petition as opposed to 50 that they were trying to get at Manahan Village. It was 20 for the senior buildings. And it also pushed back the election date until late January.

And all that was done to make sure that -- it's to really give the residents enough time to try to get enough signatures and go through the process. And it just was stressful also with the holidays. But they've been working diligently, trying to get a tenant council or tenant councils across the board.
And I don't know how it's going to end up, but there's a third-party who's overseeing the process. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention that.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: Okay. The postponing or the pushing back of the date isn't going to cost us anything extra with the third-party oversight. Right?

MR. KINARD: Not a dime.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: Great. That would be my only concern.

All right. Well, you got any questions, Alton?

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: I'm good. Very detailed report.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: Excellent. So we have got no committee reports other than thank you, Mr. Kinard, for providing the update on the resident outreach.

Old business, we can't approve the schedule of bills.

That brings us to public comment. Any members of the public wishing to address Commissioner Robinson and myself?

MS. HAMLET: I'd like to make comments.
CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: State your name and address and apartment for the record.

MS. HAMLET: Marsha Hamlet, 29 Ann Street, apartment 110.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: Thanks, Marsha.

MS. HAMLET: One of my comments I had is right here in the front of the building there's this alarm or something that goes off all the time constantly, and I was wondering if that could be addressed. It's on the board there where the names are, some beeping and all this, you know. And I live right on the first floor, so I continuously hear this all weekend long. So I was wondering if perhaps the system could be checked so that it would stop going off continuously.

MR. KINARD: Absolutely. We will be on it tomorrow.

Daisy, you're aware of this?

MS. ROSARIO: Yes, I called it in. I know what you're talking about.

MS. HAMLET: And also it was mentioned about having pest control, which is desperately needed, because I know in my apartment I have roaches and I had previously bed bugs. And I
continuously have the roaches in there, and they are in the bathroom and in the kitchen.

MR. KINARD: Marsha, in terms of where they're coming in from, did you ever see them coming from a vent, under the front door strip?

MS. HAMLET: No, they're coming from where the toilet and the tub and all that, the sink around in that area, all around there, they're coming through there.

MR. KINARD: Okay.

MS. HAMLET: And in the kitchen, you know where the cabinets are right underneath there, that's where they're coming from. I know exactly where they are.

And I know I called to have extermination done, and I know they come in and put the little spray down, which I have myself because I have been using that too, but it needs an entire extermination, perhaps this building, and then also of the apartments.

MR. KINARD: We are -- it will take us probably another month or so to get it right, but we are looking to bring a new extermination company on board. We are also not satisfied with the level of extermination. So we can
really do comprehensive or regular
exterminating, not only per apartment, because
we have a list they run off every Tuesday, but
also building-wide to do the entire building
exterior, interior more frequently.
Extermination is -- the pest infestation has
been really, really bad, we've been pushing
back. It's a war that we haven't been able to
win, but we are bringing a new company on board,
hoping to have more success with it. In the
meantime I'm going to get an exterminator back
out to your apartment.

MS. HAMLET: I appreciate it. I have
another comment. When we had that bad
snowstorm, and it took me about nine hours to
come from Clifton. Now, when I came here and I
got right to the parking lot area to come in, I
got stuck right there. I couldn't even get the
car in. It spun around. And I was still right
there because that area right in the front was
not cleared off enough for me to come through.
So I called Morristown Police Department and
they came and they helped me to get in the
parking lot to get in a space.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: Can I interrupt
you? Was it on the street or in the lot?

Because I know they did not get out and do the streets until late.

MS. HAMLET: When I came through at 1:30 in the morning all the streets were cleared very good. I was very impressed. But when I got right here, when you get ready to come in, I was able to get -- this is the entrance, I was able to turn in, and the car spun around, and I was like where nobody could get past me. So I had to get out and dig as much as I could. And when I felt a little pull in my back I said I'm calling Morristown Police Department. And so two police officers came and they helped me get in. That was nice.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: Very nice.

MS. HAMLET: I couldn't leave the car sitting there. They wouldn't have been able to get past me. So I feel that if they -- within the -- the next morning when we got up to go outside, they plowed, but what they did is when they plowed they plowed right up against the cars, so then we had to go out there and dig in front of the cars. But I called the office, and I know another lady called too, and I spoke to,
what's her name, Ajorie, and I told her can
somebody come over with a snowplow or a smaller
one to help us get out, because that's a lot of
snow to be digging from in front of your car and
on the sides. So she did, she sent more people
over. There was somebody doing the sidewalks
and stuff like that. But she sent the small
little snowplow, and then the guy came with the
truck, and we were moving cars and we were able
to get the parking lot cleared very well. But
initially it was really in bad condition. And
for me personally, I didn't appreciate that,
because it was late and it was cold. And you
know, I had to get in. I couldn't leave the car
there.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: Thank you.
MS. HAMLET: You're welcome.
MS. FUGMAN: One day, I know what she
means, by the sidewalk --
CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: State your name for
the record, please.
MS. FUGMAN: Dorothy Fugman. I got to
sit.
CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: What apartment
number?
MS. FUGMAN: 401. I had to go into the middle of the road. Well, a few people, they helped me. But sometimes when the light is changing I almost got hit one day, because the sidewalk and the road was covered with ice, and I couldn't --

MR. KINARD: I can say we learned some valuable lessons from that snowstorm.

CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: Everybody did.

MR. KINARD: State-wide. We could definitely have done a better job. I know the difficulties that I'm hearing here today I experienced myself, because it took me about six hours to get home from here, and then I had trouble getting into my street. Fortunately I have a truck, but I had trouble. And I saw cars on the side the whole way home. It was really, really, really bad.

One of the things we are going to be looking into as a result of this storm is a third-party snow removal company when the prediction of snow is over a certain level just to have them on retainer. The challenge with them to be honest with you is that they are under retainer for a whole host of folks, so it
depends on where you fit in their pecking order, priority order, how big your property is, whatever, how quickly you get service. But we will definitely try to do better. I think that that snow shocked a lot of people. And yeah, I feel for you, I really do.

    MS. FUGMAN: I appreciate it.

    CHAIRWOMAN DENMAN: Thank you.

    Okay. Mayor Dougherty could not be with us this evening, Councilwoman Davis could not be with us this evening.

    With no further ado, the meeting is adjourned.

    (Meeting was adjourned.)