

MORRISTOWN HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
31 Early Street
Morristown, NJ 07960
Thursday, May 4, 2017
Commencing at 6:00 P.M.

RE: Special Open Public Meeting

TRANSCRIPT
OF THE
PROCEEDINGS

M E M B E R S P R E S E N T:

MAUREEN DENMAN, Chairman
ANGEL VEGA, Vice-Chairman
MIRIAM BANKS, Commissioner
MICHAEL SCHMIDT, Commissioner (On Phone)

A L S O P R E S E N T:

LIZETH TAVERAS, Administrative Specialist
JEAN WASHINGTON, Accounts Manager
DOUGLAS PRIESTER, Operations Manager
DARLINGTON POUNDER, Senior Mechanic
CYNTHIA SARGENT, AMP Manager
HILIARI B. DAVIS, Council Liaison

A P P E A R A N C E S:

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BY: JOSEPH MANFREDI, ESQ.
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REPORTED BY BETH A. BENSON, Certified Court Reporter

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1 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: Good evening. I'm
2 Maureen Denman, chairperson of the Board of
3 Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the
4 Town of Morristown, and presiding officer at
5 this meeting do hereby state that it is now 6:04
6 p.m. in the evening on Thursday, May 4, 2017.
7 We are convening at 31 Early Street, Morristown,
8 New Jersey. And do hereby announce publicly
9 that proper notice of this special meeting has
10 been provided in accordance with the New Jersey
11 Open Public Meeting Act.

12 MR. MANFREDI: Roll call, please,
13 Lizeth.

14 (Roll call was taken with all members
15 noted being present.)

16 MR. MANFREDI: Pledge of Allegiance.
17 (Flag was saluted.)

18 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: Ask for a moment
19 of silence, please.

20 (A moment of silence is observed.)

21 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: The first item on
22 the agenda, a resolution authorizing the
23 addition of the new commissioner signatories to
24 the Authority's bank accounts.

25 MR. MANFREDI: Is there a motion?

1 VICE CHAIRPERSON VEGA: I'll make a
2 motion.

3 MR. MANFREDI: Madam Chair, we just
4 have to choose an alternate for this resolution,
5 if anyone would like to suggest an alternate to
6 add.

7 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: I would like to
8 recommend Commissioner Banks as our alternate.

9 MR. MANFREDI: Any other discussion on
10 the resolution?

11 Could you call the roll, Lizeth.

12 (Roll call was taken with all members
13 voting in favor.)

14 MR. MANFREDI: Resolution number
15 2017-16 has been withdrawn from consideration.

16 We will move to public comment. Any
17 members from the public that would like to
18 address the commission?

19 MS. DAWKINS: Sharitha Dawkins. When
20 is the resolution going to be heard on that one
21 that you just skipped?

22 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: The June meeting,
23 the regular June meeting of the housing
24 authority.

25 MS. DAWKINS: Who authorized Sonny to

1 not open the resident center for us yesterday
2 for setup? We were supposed to be there from
3 Tuesday to Thursday from four to seven and
4 Friday from eight to two. We have an event
5 tomorrow, but since you locked us out yesterday
6 our donators had to turn around and go home. So
7 I just want to know who authorized the lockout
8 so I can know for my records.

9 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: The public session
10 is for comment only.

11 MS. DAWKINS: So you can't answer that
12 question? Okay.

13 My next question is, is this a legal
14 meeting? This was published in the paper,
15 right?

16 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: Correct.

17 MS. DAWKINS: 48 hours. Okay. Thank
18 you.

19 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: Two papers.

20 MS. DAWKINS: And do you support Break
21 Bread, that's my question too, or is that not a
22 question you can answer?

23 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: Again, that's not
24 a question we can answer. I can make a general
25 statement. As you all know, we are relatively a

1 new commission, Commissioner Vega, Commissioner
2 Schmidt, Commissioner Banks and myself are ten
3 days on this commission. We have a duty to you
4 to fully understand what processes are in place,
5 what processes are not in place. We have to
6 look into and research what changes need to be
7 instituted, if any. And we -- unfortunately
8 Director Rogers has been on vacation since last
9 Thursday, and we have not had access to him. So
10 we just ask that the residents have some
11 patience with us. We are not in the position
12 right now to -- this meeting was specifically
13 called to do the signature cards in accordance
14 with New Jersey statute. Previously it had not
15 been done correctly. I read the statute online,
16 I called Attorney Manfredi the day after the
17 first meeting and said what do we need to do
18 after Jean informed -- questioned me about the
19 signature cards. It is the first time it is
20 being done correctly. She's got to show the
21 resolution to the bank in order to issue
22 signature cards, which is why we're going to
23 have to rescind at the next meeting the
24 signature cards that were previously issued.

25 MS. DAWKINS: Okay. So my next -- so

1 you're not going to allow the residents to
2 organize or come together. So our next step I
3 was told is to contact Kelly Peterson --

4 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: I did not say
5 that.

6 MS. DAWKINS: -- at HUD. I will be
7 reaching out to her tomorrow, and she will be in
8 contact with you. Because commissioners are not
9 supposed to tell us what we need in our center.
10 You're not supposed to dictate. You're supposed
11 to help us, and you're not. You're blocking us
12 out. And that's wrong. And I'm not saying all
13 commissioners, because I don't know where you
14 stand at, and I don't know this person, they
15 didn't even show up. Vega. But I need to know
16 if you're with us, because we need programs.
17 And I came with a program, I came with a
18 proposal. I was gone for four years. I had a
19 stroke in 2013. They had four years, four years
20 to do a program. And I came back. And I'm here
21 to do programs for our kids. And I'm not going
22 to let it go. I'm going to fight for it.

23 So the whole month no residents will be
24 allowed in the building, that's what you're
25 saying?

1 MR. MANFREDI: All I can say --

2 MS. DAWKINS: Our Mother's Day event,
3 all our residents were ready to come out with
4 their big hats. You're disappointing our
5 residents. You are disappointing our residents.
6 You'll hear from HUD tomorrow. Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I want to make a
8 statement. Sharitha, I applaud you because I
9 know for years you have been trying to get
10 events down at the resident center. I think
11 that resident center is under-utilized.
12 However, I'm a new commissioner, and so is
13 others. I'm not agreeing to anything that's
14 going to come and bite me in the butt later
15 until I know the proper policies and procedures,
16 and because this board hasn't been able to meet
17 on a regular basis with all the other chaos that
18 has been going on in the past, this is new.

19 You have to understand that we need
20 time to figure out all this mess and stuff
21 that's going on. I said last week, and I mean
22 it again, I am here for the residents. I'm here
23 for the residents. But policies and procedures
24 have got to be put in place so that if we have a
25 program in the resident center no one can come

1 back and say, oh, you didn't do this, you didn't
2 do that. Understand what I'm saying? It has to
3 be done a certain way, and we can't do it today,
4 we can't do it next week. We have to research
5 what our responsibilities are as a board, our
6 liabilities. There's a whole lot of stuff that
7 goes into it.

8 I'm sorry you were misled by other
9 people in the past, and this and that. But this
10 is a new day. You have got to give us a chance,
11 and we've got to work together. We've got to
12 put aside all this other stuff and let's come
13 together and try to do things for the residents
14 in that resident center. That's what it was
15 built for. But we can't authorize anything
16 right now because we don't know what we are
17 authorizing. We don't know what the legal
18 issues are or whatever. So just please, please,
19 please be patient. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: To that note, I
21 would like to also applaud your initiatives,
22 Sharitha, and I said that at the last meeting in
23 addition to Commissioner Cherello.

24 Unfortunately, we don't know, because Director
25 Rogers has not provided us with the history of

1 what has transpired previously. We asked for
2 it, we have not received it. He gave us an
3 answer in an email that really put himself on
4 the fence and wouldn't commit one way or
5 another. So in the absence of anything else, we
6 can't without getting the history proceed until
7 everything has been divulged to us.

8 I don't think any of the new
9 commissioners would have even put their name on
10 the list if they weren't here for you. I've
11 lived in this town for 30 years. My husband is
12 a fifth generation Morristownian. The only
13 reason I got on this commission is because I
14 like the fact there's a town where there's
15 generations and generations of families, and I
16 think the development is great in this town, but
17 I want to ensure that generations of you all and
18 everybody around this table can afford to live
19 in town and that where you live is acceptable,
20 and that we take care of it for you. I believe
21 that it is the responsibility of the commission
22 to support you and your initiatives.

23 I think you've got some fabulous ideas,
24 Sharitha. Our hands are tied from a legal
25 perspective. It's like having to sit for a test

1 and only be given two pages of information. You
2 can't possibly take the test if you haven't been
3 given the whole book. And we haven't even
4 gotten the Cliff's Notes.

5 To reiterate what Commissioner Banks
6 just shared, I would ask that you give us a
7 little time so we can gather all the information
8 and documentation that we need, and that we can
9 be supportive of you. I'm going to let you --
10 and I'm going to say this out loud for the
11 record, my first action as chair was an email to
12 Director Rogers to get that air conditioner
13 fixed in the rec center, first order of business
14 to get three bids. And Mr. Manfredi can attest
15 to that. So we are looking to work with you.
16 It's just we can only do so much in one week's
17 time.

18 MS. HARRIS: Michelle Harris, town
19 council, also resident in Morristown. I have a
20 question regarding the agenda, so I know it's a
21 comment section, but legally you have a
22 documentation that indicates for item 6b, a
23 resolution approving and authorizing issuance of
24 funds for the Break the Bread, why is it on the
25 agenda and moved, and indicated that the meeting

1 was only called because of checks being
2 authorized.

3 MR. MANFREDI: If I may respond, Madam
4 Chair.

5 With a special meeting, councilwoman,
6 we have to list everything on the agenda to
7 preserve the right of the board to address it.
8 In a special meeting we are constrained by law
9 to address only those items that are listed on
10 the agenda. We knew there'd be concerns about
11 it tonight, and to allow the opportunity for the
12 commissioners to make the statements they've
13 just made, we had to list it. And that's why it
14 was there. If we didn't list it we couldn't
15 even discuss it by law.

16 MS. HARRIS: Thank you for that
17 explanation.

18 The other thing is that I understood
19 that there was a meeting the other day when
20 Sharitha was there and she was locked out, and
21 there were two council people along with the
22 president or chairperson of this commission, and
23 indicated that you indicated, sir, Mr. Manfredi,
24 that they had to have insurance, the residents,
25 in order to hold a function down there. And I

1 thought in pursuing that, because it is a
2 housing authority building, that that building
3 is covered by insurance, and that residents have
4 access to it and they are covered.

5 MR. MANFREDI: I was not there
6 yesterday so I didn't make any statement
7 regarding that. As to what the legalities are
8 and what I advised the board, that's
9 confidential. And I have advised them on
10 insurance issues. And as you have heard
11 Commissioner Banks and Chairwoman Denman just
12 state, there are legal issues we have to work
13 through which are very serious and very
14 significant.

15 MS. HARRIS: Since you have been on
16 this board for x number of years, I think you
17 know, yes, yourself --

18 MR. MANFREDI: I'm not on the board
19 though.

20 MS. HARRIS: You represent the board,
21 you get paid as a paid legal attorney. And that
22 means you go over all the records after all
23 these years and past directors, you have been
24 here for maybe three or four different
25 directors, so I think you know the protocol of

1 how that agency or that building is run and the
2 protocol for it in the past. So first question
3 is, is there insurance on that building?

4 MR. MANFREDI: Protocol after Ms. Sally
5 left as executive director changed, and it
6 changed to in a way I was not aware of, and now
7 I'm aware of. There is certain insurance on the
8 building for liability, but there is not
9 coverage for independent events at that
10 building. And we have to take great care,
11 especially where children are involved, to
12 ensure that there's adequate coverage for that
13 building for events.

14 MS. HARRIS: So my question is, when
15 you say an event, if a resident wants to hold a
16 meeting such as a residency council meeting,
17 there's no coverage for them to meet there. Is
18 that what you're stating?

19 MR. MANFREDI: There's various
20 gradations. Some things have come to my
21 attention recently, and as recently as today I
22 looked into it. I can't say to you conclusively
23 that there is sufficient coverage. I have grave
24 concerns about the coverage that have to be
25 worked through.

1 MS. HARRIS: My next question is, did
2 you ask the financial officer of this
3 establishment to give you a copy of the
4 insurance policy so you can state that, or did
5 you call the insurance company to find out if
6 it's covered, besides knowing the director is on
7 vacation, that there's staff here that can
8 answer that question for you and pull that file?

9 MR. MANFREDI: I spoke to the carrier
10 today.

11 MS. HARRIS: And they say they cannot
12 meet there as an event of a resident being in
13 the building.

14 MR. MANFREDI: It's not that simple.
15 We have to get a formal response from them.

16 MS. HARRIS: So you had a verbal
17 conversation but nothing in writing?

18 MR. MANFREDI: No. They don't put it
19 in writing. They're going to get back to us
20 with a formal position on it. I spoke directly
21 to the underwriters.

22 MS. HARRIS: I'm a little confused. I
23 have some friends who are other attorneys of
24 other housing authorities, and they said any
25 building that the housing authority owns they're

1 covered.

2 MR. MANFREDI: They're wrong.

3 MS. HARRIS: For any resident to be in
4 that building, it's a blanket coverage.

5 MR. MANFREDI: They don't practice
6 here, I do. And I'm going to tell you right
7 now, they're wrong. They certainly have no
8 business giving an opinion to my client about
9 what's covered or not.

10 MS. HARRIS: But it's a HUD state
11 facility. And I talked to --

12 MR. MANFREDI: It's not a HUD facility,
13 that's wrong too. It's owned by the Morristown
14 Housing Authority. These buildings are not
15 owned by HUD. They're funded by HUD, but
16 they're not owned by HUD. These buildings
17 belong to the housing authority.

18 MS. HARRIS: But when that building was
19 built it had a stipulation it was just for
20 residents, and the supervision of it is run by
21 the residents. The only thing that's by the
22 housing authority is making sure that the --

23 MR. MANFREDI: It doesn't have any such
24 stipulation.

25 MS. HARRIS: -- maintenance of it and

1 paying utility bills.

2 MR. MANFREDI: That's not correct, and
3 I don't want to engage in a debate with you.
4 Your information is not correct. I will correct
5 it for you if you'd like.

6 MS. HARRIS: Do you have copies of that
7 documentation when it came through HUD for that
8 building when they made the agreement on it?

9 MR. MANFREDI: No.

10 MS. HARRIS: I have records on that.
11 So my question now is this resolution is being
12 moved to the June meeting, and that's the end of
13 June? Are you going to have a special meeting
14 so the residents can know how far they can
15 proceed on that, or are you going to take a
16 whole 'nother month?

17 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: We will have to
18 meet and set criteria for it. As I shared at
19 last week's meeting, we are forming an ad hoc
20 committee to look into the tech center that
21 Sharitha proposed. We haven't even formed
22 sub-committees yet, which have to be in place.
23 The personnel committee, that -- I mean, we're a
24 week old. And the absence of the director did
25 not lend to any advancement in the last week.

1 So --

2 MS. HARRIS: So then a question for Mr.
3 Manfredi, on how the resident center is set up,
4 and how it corresponds with the commissioners,
5 do you have any guidelines or bylaws or any
6 information in ruling of how that is set up?

7 MR. MANFREDI: I will be providing as
8 you just heard from Commissioner Banks and
9 Chairwoman Denman opinion to them on all those
10 issues so we can all be assured that anybody who
11 enters that building is adequately covered.
12 Because the risk of even one person not being
13 adequately covered would be calamitous.

14 MS. HARRIS: So I'd like to make a
15 recommendation you have at least two residents
16 who sit with you when you have that discussion
17 so they get the information clearly and go over
18 those documents with you, because that is their
19 right because it is their facility. Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you.

21 GRACIE DAWKINS: Good evening. I'm
22 Gracie Dawkins. I live at 40 Clyde Potts Drive,
23 apartment one. I was wondering, you had this
24 meeting here, and the air conditioner, it's -- I
25 guess you're going to fix it. What about having

1 commissioner meetings there at 23 Clyde Potts
2 Drive?

3 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: The meetings are
4 rotated.

5 GRACIE DAWKINS: They're not rotated to
6 down there where we are.

7 COUNCILWOMAN DAVIS: They haven't been
8 down there in some quite some time.

9 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: Well, there's a
10 lot of meetings that were canceled. 2016 I
11 believe there were six meetings canceled.

12 GRACIE DAWKINS: Every time when it
13 came to us either we were skipped over or there
14 was an excuse.

15 VICE CHAIRPERSON VEGA: There's one
16 scheduled.

17 GRACIE DAWKINS: This month, or how
18 long? Because we usually go after Ann Street.

19 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: May 23rd the
20 meeting is at Clyde Potts, 23 Clyde Potts.

21 GRACIE DAWKINS: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: So the meeting
23 later this month. And the meeting in June I
24 believe is at Ann Street. That's how the
25 schedule was set up. The June meeting -- no,

1 it's 39 Early Street. The July meeting is 29
2 Ann Street.

3 GRACIE DAWKINS: May is going to be
4 down there, this coming -- did you say 23rd?

5 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: May 23rd, yes.
6 No, May 22. My apologies.

7 GRACIE DAWKINS: Do we have a buildings
8 and grounds committee?

9 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: We're going to
10 establish one.

11 MR. MANFREDI: It was always a standing
12 committee, ma'am, but with the advent of the
13 resignations we don't have anybody on it, and
14 now that committee and all others will be
15 restaffed with commissioners.

16 VICE CHAIRPERSON VEGA: I did volunteer
17 for that committee as well.

18 GRACIE DAWKINS: Would that be with the
19 beautification of Manahan Village? Because
20 Manahan Village looks really bad. And we did
21 get the guys out the other day, they did use the
22 weed whacker, and building 40 looks much better.
23 But it's consideration. The parents need to
24 teach their kids to stop throwing things, and
25 people that don't live there come down there and

1 make a mess.

2 And last, another thing is the
3 washroom, I have been trying to get two front
4 loaders for the washroom, and the dryers, we
5 have three brand new ones, but it's not enough.
6 If you open up the other room it would make more
7 room. And the washers, they need -- they
8 weren't new. They were used washers. And
9 they're filthy. They should have washed them
10 down. There's a lot of things. But I would
11 like a camera. Can we get a camera in there?

12 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: So it is our hope
13 that we will have these commissions established
14 by the next meeting, and then maybe, and I'm not
15 volunteering you, Commissioner Vega, maybe we
16 can as a commission visit each of the sites,
17 take a look at the facilities.

18 VICE CHAIRPERSON VEGA: Absolutely.

19 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: And take into
20 consideration your suggestions, because they
21 were good ones. Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER BANKS: Thank you.

23 MS. HARRIS: Michelle Harris.

24 Question, you just made a statement that the
25 next meeting will be May 22 at the resident

1 center, so I'm assuming that you'll have
2 insurance then to cover the individuals who will
3 be there for a large meeting.

4 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: I can't answer
5 that, Michelle.

6 MS. HARRIS: You just made a statement
7 that the next meeting --

8 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: I didn't schedule
9 the meeting. I'm just telling you the notice,
10 the legal notice packet that I got has the next
11 meeting scheduled for May 22nd at 23 Clyde Potts
12 Drive.

13 MS. HARRIS: So the date of that
14 meeting was planned the beginning of the year in
15 January or December of last year?

16 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: I have no
17 knowledge of that.

18 MS. HARRIS: So I'm assuming, because
19 council always plans their meetings a year ahead
20 so you know the full schedule, it sounds as
21 though the resident center must have insurance
22 in order for you to put that on the calendar to
23 state that you're going to hold a meeting there.

24 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: It's two different
25 things.

1 MS. HARRIS: It can't be two things if
2 you have a calendar that states the dates of
3 every meeting and where they're located. So
4 that means if you have a date with a location,
5 you have insurance to cover every location.
6 That's my clarification.

7 COMMISSIONER BANKS: I want to clarify
8 something also. I hope that everybody really
9 realizes that in order for us to work together
10 we have got to stop putting a lot of negativity
11 in things. Now, us having insurance or not
12 still does not mean that those events are going
13 to take place when they were scheduled, because
14 there are other issues that we have to look
15 into. We're a new committee. We're a new
16 committee. And like I said before, her ideas
17 are fabulous. They're great ideas. But until
18 we have some policies and procedures set in
19 place, we can't. It doesn't make sense to do
20 that. So to keep nitpicking about the insurance
21 and all that, we don't know about the insurance.
22 If Mr. Manfredi doesn't have the information for
23 us new commissioners, what are we supposed to
24 do? Maybe this information should have been
25 done last year, all these issues that we're

1 discussing now should have been handled last
2 year. But for people to come in and start
3 throwing fire on a pile of wood when we're
4 trying to do our best, I don't think that's fair
5 either. I really, really don't. We haven't
6 even been given a chance. We haven't been given
7 a chance. Thank you.

8 VICE CHAIRPERSON VEGA: Thank you.

9 MS. DAWKINS: Sharitha Dawkins. You
10 were talking about negativity. So when I was in
11 the resident center on Wednesday the chairperson
12 came with a councilwoman and they bombarded me,
13 like they told me -- they just started talking
14 about the insurance, what I needed, and then
15 talking about things like the director. How are
16 you trying to be positive if you're bringing
17 negativity telling me that he's doing legal
18 stuff. This is what was told to me by them.
19 And you're saying if you go ahead and say you
20 didn't say it, I'm sorry, but we have cameras in
21 the resident center, so it was recorded.

22 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: Exactly.
23 Councilwoman Davis, do you want to make your
24 statement now?

25 COUNCILWOMAN DAVIS: Thank you,

1 chairwoman. As a council liaison, I am only
2 here to facilitate communication between the
3 town and the housing authority. I in no way
4 make any decisions concerning the business or
5 how the housing authority runs. This is a crazy
6 situation. And the housing authority has been
7 upside down for a really long time. I'm a
8 witness. I'm also a resident, as you know. I
9 understand the frustrations, because I think
10 it's a great idea to have these programs at the
11 resident center. I think they're important. I
12 think they're necessary. I think it's
13 unreasonable that for all these years there have
14 not been programs. I commend you for really
15 making an effort. But there's also a proper way
16 to go about things.

17 I don't know if the people really
18 understand that Mr. Rogers does not get to make
19 the decisions. He is an employee of this board.
20 So if you go to him thinking you're going above
21 the head of one of these people, you're just
22 making a fool of yourself. You're going in the
23 wrong direction, you're going about it the wrong
24 way. He's not in a position to say yes to
25 whatever money you want or whatever situation

1 you want to accomplish. It has to be decided by
2 the majority of the people that make decisions
3 for this board.

4 I really don't know what else to say
5 other than, you know, we do really need to work
6 together. All of our kids have to benefit from
7 these programs. I think they're necessary
8 programs. And I feel like if you approach this
9 with a more positive attitude, and not just say
10 mistruths about people that you don't even know,
11 then we could work together and get these things
12 done. Because it's not just your kids that
13 benefit from that, it's also my kid. And that's
14 important to me. I live here with you. So I
15 chose to be the liaison for the city to the
16 housing authority, because this is important to
17 me. And we have to work together. That's it.

18 Can I be excused because I have another
19 meeting?

20 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: Yes. Thank you,
21 councilwoman.

22 MS. INESTROZA: My name is Lorena
23 Inestroza. I too am a fourth generation out of
24 six in Morristown. Back in July or August of
25 2016 my employer and I, I work for an accounting

1 center in East Orange, submitted a proposal to
2 Director Rogers requesting two little office
3 spaces in the Manahan Village because we wanted
4 to provide service for the residents of
5 Morristown. As you know, I don't know if you
6 know, but the opiate epidemic is on the rise,
7 and we are losing people daily. We're losing
8 generations of people. We submitted a proposal.
9 We were told that a subcommittee would be
10 formed. This is now nine months, ten months
11 later. People are still dying. We just had a
12 death on Hillary Avenue the other day. We
13 offered free service for the residents of
14 Manahan Village. There's lots of places where
15 you can get treatment, you can get help, but I
16 think we walk the walk and talk the talk for
17 Morristown residents. You can go sit in Morris
18 Plains with your little Zen candles going on and
19 incense burning, or you can have people who
20 relate to you, who know your journey, understand
21 what you're going through. I don't know if
22 there's some way we can put it on your agenda to
23 be --

24 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: It will be on the
25 agenda. I will see to that.

1 MS. INESTROZA: Lizeth, do you still
2 have our package?

3 MS. TAVERAS: Yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: Would you mind
5 reforwarding it?

6 MS. INESTROZA: Lizeth has it.

7 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: Can you forward it
8 for all the commissioners? Do me a favor and
9 spell your name one more time.

10 MS. INESTROZA: Lorena, L-o-r-e-n-a,
11 Inestroza, I-n-e-s-t-r-o-z-a.

12 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: Thank you.

13 VICE CHAIRPERSON VEGA: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: Okay.

15 MS. HOLMAN: Dorothy Holman, resident
16 of Morristown. Just a try to clear a few things
17 up regarding the resident center, back in 2015 I
18 believe it was, Tawana Cotton was trying to
19 bring in different programs as well. Mr. Rogers
20 and Joe, I believe you remember, Mr. Rogers shut
21 everything down, closed the resident center down
22 saying that they did not have a resident
23 council. Do you remember that, Sharitha?

24 MS. DAWKINS: No.

25 MS. HOLMAN: Do you remember that, Joe?

1 MR. MANFREDI: Yes.

2 MS. HOLMAN: That's why nothing was
3 done in the last few years as far as activities.
4 And from my understanding, when we were holding
5 meetings and they went from building to
6 building, the insurance that the housing
7 authority had covered that because it was not an
8 event, it's a board meeting. Okay? So when you
9 have an event, from my understanding, if you
10 were a resident and you were having a party or
11 something, the housing authority insurance did
12 cover you, but when you're having other events,
13 especially programs, I was told we had as an
14 organization that we had to have a million
15 dollar insurance policy. I may be wrong, but
16 this is what was told to us. So it's not that
17 I'm against your program or anyone is against
18 the program, I'm just letting you know why
19 nothing was taking place, why the building was
20 shut down. Originally he even fired Ms. Booze
21 in a public meeting like this. He fired her in
22 a public meeting just like this. She didn't
23 even know it was coming. So it's not that
24 anybody is -- the only thing is you're looking
25 at -- look at all the snakes that people posted

1 on Facebook with the snakes, and I just showed
2 Sonny tonight, pictures of three snakes that's
3 right there by that cone by the resident center.
4 These are some of the concerns that we need to
5 be concerned about instead of arguing and
6 bickering about what's going on and what's not
7 going on until you get the legalities of the
8 liability of the housing authority, what
9 liability may fall on your programs. You want
10 to be covered in all things. I would anyway.
11 So if anything happens to somebody, they get
12 hurt, who are they going to sue? Are they going
13 to sue the housing authority, or are they coming
14 after your program?

15 And like I said, it was not the board
16 that took anything from you guys, Mr. Rogers
17 said HUD would not recognize anything because
18 there was not a resident council. When Tawana
19 Cotton, she's right out there, when she was
20 trying to get the resident council together, she
21 couldn't get cooperation to even get five people
22 so that they could form a resident council so
23 that they could take their building back. Mr.
24 Rogers doesn't have the authority to give
25 permission for anything to happen without

1 majority of the votes from the board that he
2 does not want to recognize. He doesn't want to
3 take orders from the board. He don't recognize
4 this board at all. That's why we resigned.

5 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: Thank you,
6 Dorothy.

7 VICE CHAIRPERSON VEGA: Thank you,
8 Dorothy.

9 GRACIE DAWKINS: I would like to thank
10 by daughter and Tawana and me and plenty of us,
11 they always say you young people don't want to
12 do anything down here. Every time when there's
13 somebody down here with that building there's a
14 problem. And it shouldn't be like that.
15 Anybody that's willing to help the community
16 down here, I know notice there's always a
17 problem. Yes, communication. Everybody doesn't
18 know what's -- you don't know everything.

19 And last, how do I go about getting
20 those washers? I forgot to ask. What do I have
21 to do?

22 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: So as I said
23 previously, we're going to form commissions,
24 separate committees, and we will follow up on
25 that for you.

1 GRACIE DAWKINS: And Sonny, I'm not
2 knocking you, you know we talked many times, but
3 I have to know who am I supposed to go to.

4 MR. POUNDER: I have no problem.

5 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: There's a lot of
6 uncertainty. I requested, because I found out
7 that there is a resident contract and a
8 non-resident contract for use of the resident
9 center that was written by Mr. Rogers in
10 November of last year. I requested it from Mr.
11 Rogers. I received it from Lizeth this morning,
12 not Mr. Rogers. I don't know if it was ever put
13 in place. But it spells out exactly what's
14 needed by a resident, by a non-resident for any
15 special meeting, any meeting that falls outside
16 the scope of under the auspices of special.

17 Hopefully between now and May 22nd we
18 are going to get a lot of answers, and every
19 answer we get there's going to be transparency.
20 Every packet is going to contain both copies so
21 everybody knows what the agreement looks like,
22 what the requirements are, what questions need
23 to be asked, what needs to be completed. And
24 the objective is that this is completed, put
25 before the commission. A member of the public

1 gets up to the microphone, shares the Break
2 Bread or whatever program, we've got
3 substantiating documentation and we can
4 authorize to move forward with it. We're
5 looking to work with you. After a week and not
6 getting like one one-hundredth of the
7 information we need to be an informed
8 commission, we just ask that you be patient with
9 us, know that we are here to support you, and we
10 are going to hold the director accountable to
11 give us what we need so that we can make this a
12 board for the people.

13 MS. HARRIS: I'm not here to cause any
14 negative adversity or anything else, I'm just
15 bringing information and questioning, because
16 the statement by the chairman was that it was a
17 comment section, and you just went back and
18 forth in dialogue. So then my question is for
19 the next commissioners meeting and moving
20 forward, when you have a comment section is
21 there going to be dialogue from the
22 commissioners to answer questions of the
23 residents. So if it is, it needs to be stated
24 in the agenda it's comment and response.

25 CHAIRPERSON DENMAN: Motion to adjourn.

1 VICE CHAIRPERSON VEGA: Yes.

2 (Whereupon, roll call was taken with
3 all members voting in favor.)

4 MR. MANFREDI: Thank you. We're
5 adjourned.

6 (Proceedings were adjourned.)

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