



CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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ANN ARBOR HOUSING COMMISSION

Ann Arbor Housing Commission September 21, 2011 REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The meeting took place at Miller Manor in the Community Room, 727 Miller Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. President Manildi convened the meeting at 6:08 P.M.

ROLL CALL: Commissioners present: Marta Manildi, Leigh Greden, Gloria Black, and Andy LaBarre. Ron Woods arrived about 6:12 P.M. Commissioners absent: None. Staff Present: Nick Coquillard (Interim Exec. Dir.), Weneshia Brand (Section 8 Manager), Michelle Walthall (Receptionist). In Attendance: Kevin McDonald, Joan Doughty and Christina Rivest from the Community Action Network agency; Davis Guidas; Al Schnaidt.

- I. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Commissioner *Greden* moved to approve the agenda and Commissioner *Black* supported a motion to approve the agenda. No comments were made. Agenda was approved 4-0.

- II. **PUBLIC COMMENTARY**
 - A. **Resident Organizations** – None

 - B. **Others Requesting to Speak** –

Doughty and Rivest from Community Action Network (CAN). *Doughty*: Introduced Rivest as the new Program Director of the ROSS Grant at CAN (less than 2 weeks) with 14 years of experience consisting of employment at Catholic Social Services, a background in Social Work & experience working with teens and families in the homeless “realm.” *Doughty*: reported that Rivest will be working on home heating credits in addition to other programs. *Doughty*: reported that CAN was recently awarded The ROSS Grant. *Black*: asked for clarification of what CAN was. *Doughty*: explained that CAN is a community enrichment and resource organization/agency that has successfully partnered with AAHC in targeting residents who desire a good communities to live in. *Doughty*: went on to describe successful programs such as, after school programs, eviction assistance, family and community building. *Doughty*: briefly described the ROSS grant as having a focus on promoting self sufficiency for public housing tenants now expanding beyond Green Baxter Court. *Doughty*: continued to stress both

the home heating program & the food distribution service provided by CAN a vehicle to promote self sufficiency. *Doughty*: confirmed AAHC co-sponsored and now the ROSS Grant. *Doughty*: reported that it was a good partnership. She stated that there was a lot of reliance on neighborhood organizations such as CAN as well as Peace Neighborhood Center. She invited Commissioner Black as well as the public to come and tour, especially at after school hours to experience the vibrancy of the agency support. The 2 agreed to exchange business cards & contact information to schedule. *Doughty*: recently visited all of the Eastside and Westside properties and described seeing big improvements with a positive vibe.

Guidas stated that he was happy with improvements at Miller Manor and enjoyed being part of the meetings.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Regular Board Meeting Minutes – August 17, 2011. Moved by *Woods*; supported by *Black*. Minutes approved 5-0.
- B. Special Board Meeting Minutes- August 31, 2011. Moved by *Black*; supported by *LaBarre*. Minutes approved 5-0.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolutions

1. **FY12-11: To Approve FY 2011 the Continued Use of FY 2011 Section 8 Payment Standards in FY 2012.** Moved by *Greden*; supported by *Woods*. *Black*: Asked why we are approving? *Coquillard*: clarified that *Brand* will be proceeding with a presentation and a memo is provided with the resolution. *Brand*: made presentation stating that HUD requires annual review of payment standards and defined what the payment standards are using the chart and memo. *Brand*: explained that AAHC is unique in covering three counties in their jurisdiction. Washtenaw, Monroe & Western Wayne are all covered in AAHC's jurisdiction. She stated that payment standards typically affect program participants who are new to the program and those who are relocating on the program. Imposing a change in payment standards would affect all tenants. HUD requires the same payment standards for all tenants on program including those who are not moving, relocating or new to program. *Brand*: also stated that both family size and bedroom size are factors that contribute to determine, evaluation, and reviewing payment standards. She presented a memo and chart and presented further explanation as to what payment standards are & the effects of raising or lowering on landlords, tenants and AAHC. *Black*: commented that the disruption to families is true. She also asked if the payment standards were adjusted would the board be informed. *Brand*: yes. *Black*: asked if the payment standards were changed, would they be set on a State level or Federal HUD level? *Brand*: HUD provides guidance usually for high poverty areas and HUD approval is needed if the payment standards were set outside the 90-110% parameters. Approved 5-0

B. Presentations:

- 1. Weneshia Brand - Section 8 Manager:** *Manildi:* Commented that typically all reports are excellent and very clear and the Board is reading all reports. *Brand:* stated that this (Section 8 Board Report) report included the months of July and August. Typically one month at a time is presented. She congratulated staff for receiving 15 points for SEMAP Indicator 3. She continued to explain as she has changed the focus and created a second pair of eyes by charging the staff to be responsible and accountable for monitoring each of the 5 SEMAP indicators by reviewing files, finding & correcting any errors prior to her review. The department's focus is placed on key indicators. *Manildi:* asked for a report on Indicator 1 [Waitlist]. *Brand:* explained the indicator and as the AAHC moves in more families, this will positively impact the score in this area. *Brand:* said the AAHC now has 22 move-ins for this fiscal year. She said the department needs to maintain a pace of 20 move-ins/month to meet goal. She said that she is looking into adding temporary staff in support the one personal assigned to the wait list process. *Manildi:* asked where in the budget temp staff would be reflected to help this process? *Brand:* said a line item in the budget allows for this. Last year there was \$30,000 which the AAHC did not use except to offset other budget costs. *Brand:* stated there are a sufficient number of people in the eligibility stage from the waiting list to process. *Brand:* believes a temporary staff through January 2012 would get her staff where she can meet utilization goals. *Brand:* the department also has a focus on educating landlords and tenants on how to complete documents in a timely manner. She said the department is planning a resident workshop and a landlord workshop to educate and help communicate the streamlining of the department's processes. *Black:* asked about the status of the waiting list? *Brand:* currently it is closed. *Black:* mentioned that the Commission talked about possible electronic application version in June. *Brand:* updated the Board on this issue discussing working with IT and evaluating potential vendors.

C. Board of Commissioner Discussion

- 1. Greden:** Stated that Councilperson Tony Derezinski was recently named to the Art Commission at the Mayor's request. Councilperson Margie Teall will serve as the new AAHC liaison to the City Council. *Black:* reported having new email address for those contacting her to please use: seachermi@comcast.net. *Manildi:* reported an update on executive director search, stating that Sharie Sell from the City's Human Resources Department has asked for input and suggestions for interview questions. She asked all Board Members to review and get back to Ms. Sell. *Manildi:* also acknowledged the topics for the candidates' 10 minute presentations wanted further discussion on these topics. *Black:* asked if we needed to stay within the guidelines of rigid questions or if we could bounce off feedback and formulate impromptu questions? *McDonald:* stated the importance of asking everyone the same questions. He said the board must represent the City and the H.R. department. *Woods:* followed up on questions suggesting that the number of questions may be large and suggested questions that asked "why

you would be a better candidate in lieu of where the agency is now?; and “where would you take the agency or what is your 5 year plan?” He said these questions could be collapsed into others. *Manildi*: agreed that questions included needed to reflect job knowledge, business experience, etc. *Black*: asked if all candidates will know the questions since there is a candidate sitting in the room. *McDonald*: stressed the importance of keeping this discussion general and protected. *Greden*: said that 12 questions may not be able to address in the stated interview time frame and agreed with Woods’ idea to collapse questions together. *Manildi*: reiterated the interview time frame of 45 minutes for questions and 10 minutes for a presentation. *Coquillard*: clarified that board meeting minutes will not be posted prior to the start of the interview process. He also offered to leave the room.

V. COMMISSION STAFF REPORTS for August 2011

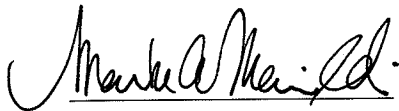
1. Executive Director Memo - Manildi: Thanked staff for very detailed reports. *Coquillard*: discussed REAC inspections and said scores are up. He said there is a real chance will get out of “troubled” status. *Coquillard*: reminded the Board that its Yardi contract is due for renewal and discussed the options available. If the Commission signs a three-year renewal, it could save \$3,000 per year. He said the AAHC is re-establishing a partnership with IT and beginning to work well. *Brand*: presented the down side of not renewing and switching software. *Manildi*: asked about renegotiating current contract cost. *Brand*: Yardi provides a variety of options & has a huge portfolio. It will take a year to commit to getting another RFP for different software. She said the Yardi contract was awarded in 2006 and took two years to implement. *Black*: she said often software changes are disliked. *Brand*: stressed the importance of the software having HUD updates included as Yardi does. *Manildi*: Appointed herself to work with Coquillard to discuss the contract options further.

Coquillard: raised for discussion the issue of possibly following the trend of other successful PHAs, such as Livonia, Westland, and Plymouth in closing the main office door to maximize staff. He said the idea would include having a buzzer system for the front door at the AAHC’s main office to work more efficiently by appointment and controlling the amount of walk-in traffic. The agency would control walk in traffic by being open one day a week and operating on a buzzer system 4 days a week. *Greden*: suggested the schedule be eased into as being closed four days a week would be too often. He suggested a reverse schedule where office is open 4 days and operates off a buzzer system 1 day a week. *Woods*: stated he did not like the idea. He said as a public agency, he felt it should always be open. He saw this idea as a potential danger to disrupt the “good will” already built and being built. He expressed his concerns that customer service in government bureaucracy can often be frustrating. *Brand*: expressed that the Commission has a service that is not readily available to the public as we can only assist & serve those who are currently on the program. She said that HUD regulations do not support us in servicing anyone not on the program or the waitlist. She said that what generally happens is the staff is often put in the unfortunate situation of repeating what services the AAHC does not have readily available to those not

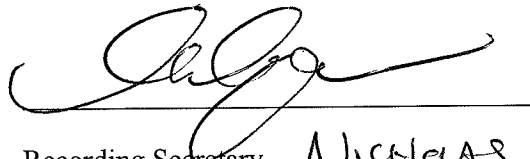
on program and often having to distinguishing between good customer service and bad customer service. *Guidas*: said at this point that his issue to present at meeting was that of security. He felt there was a recent lack of security in the building as a result of walk in traffic and new move-ins. He felt there were often non-residents in the building. He said that, recently, apartment doors had been kicked in and graffiti on the walls. He said that anything offered for resident security is appreciated. *Brand*: continued to encourage the need to balance walk-in hours and customer service. She explained privacy issues potentially involved at the front desk with the handling of social security documents. *Black*: raised the importance of returning phone calls. *Brand*: agreed and stressed the new focus on educating tenants and landlords on process to reduce volume of phone calls. *Woods*: noted that there seemed to be two issues: security & staff productivity. He said the issues are linked but different. He is not supportive that a closed door will help. He said people will still be there. He said there is the concern that that energy will be forced somewhere else. He suggested we keep thinking about it. *Manildi*: stated it is an important discussion with no easy answer. She raised the issue of if an outside consultant would help.

VI. **ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTARY:** *Guidas*: The only concern is security. People are very concerned about security. Anything the Commission can do, anything that could be offered, would be appreciated. How can we make security better? He also suggested more cameras.

VI. **ADJOURNMENT:** at 8:15 P.M. Movement to adjourn was moved by *Woods*, supported by *Black*. Approved: 5-0.



Marta A. Manildi, President



Recording Secretary

NICHOLAS M. COOMARAS
INTERIM EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR