

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING HOUSING AUTHORITY OF TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

2200 East Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

Austin, Texas 78702

February 21, 2009

9:30 a.m.

MINUTES

The Housing Authority of Travis County, Texas held a Board of Commissioners Meeting at 2200 East Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. on the above date. A quorum was established, and Chairman Tommy A. Nobles called the meeting to order at 10:45 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call of Commissioners: Chairman Tommy A. Nobles, Vice Chair Ofelia Elizondo, Commissioner Richard Moya. Commissioner Melvin Wrenn. Absent: Commissioner Tracy Burkhalter Staff in Attendance: Executive Director Wiley Hopkins, PR/Marketing Manager Cindy Noland, Executive Director Wiley Hopkins certified the quorum.

NEW BUSINESS

Item 1: Citizen Communications

There were no citizen communications.

Item 2: Approval of Minutes from the January 24, 2009 Board Meeting and the Approval of the minutes from the January 24, 2009 Special Board Meeting

Chairman Tommy Nobles pointed out that there were several instances where Commissioners were mistakenly called Board Members. He also pointed out that Policy Committee needed to be changed to Procurement and Policy Committee.

Commissioner Melvin Wrenn made a **motion** to approve the minutes with corrections.
Commissioner Ofelia Elizondo seconded the motion, which **passed** unanimously.

Item 3: Approval of Minutes from the February 11, 2009 Special Board Meeting

Commissioner Richard Moya made a **motion** to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Elizondo seconded the motion, which **passed** unanimously.

Ms. Elizondo asked if there were TCFC minutes. Executive Director Wiley Hopkins said they would be in the next Board book.

Item 4: Presentation of the current status of development initiatives

Chairman Nobles noted that Cambridge Villas, Southpark Ranch, CityView, Veterans housing and 502 Highland Mall had been discussed at the SHFC meeting, but that the 502 Highland Mall information would be repeated.

Mr. Hopkins said that the Highland office space contractor began work on Wednesday, would be conducting demolition on Thursday and trenching concrete on the present day. He said a problem had been encountered with permitting that might cause a couple of week's delay, which the project could not afford. He said that staff and the contractor had been emphatic with Austin Energy, because the 73 day clock was ticking.

President Alter recommended contacting the City Manager's office. Mr. Hopkins said he was also in contact with Margaret Shaw at the City Department of Neighborhood Planning and Community Development. Mr. Wrenn said he knew the Chief of Staff at Ms. Shaw's office and for staff to let him know if they needed him to contact them.

Item 5: Presentation, discussion and possible action regarding the Scholarship Program

Mr. Hopkins presented the report. He said that Mr. Wrenn discussed the program with staff and were recommending that the program be put off until next year. He said that staff and Mr. Wrenn agreed that a second letter with a new timeline be sent and calls for next year should commence afterwards. He said he had spoken with the Marketing Manager and she would assist with the letter. Chairman Nobles and Mr. Moya agreed.

Mr. Moya said it was very difficult to establish yourself with a company, but after that you would be on their list for future years. Mr. Hopkins said the letter references that there would be a follow up call to meet with them.

Mr. Wrenn said he had shared resources with staff to approach foundations. He said with the Hogg Foundation website, all you do is input your information and they direct you to foundations that can help. He said staff could also go to United Way, the City of Austin and CAN and automatically be put on that list because we are beyond three years of existence. He said he had dropped off for staff a book about the City list. He said that his role was to help staff identify resources. He said it was a good meeting, good staff. He said that the staff could define goals for the program.

Chairman Nobles asked if there was a formal Scholarship Committee. Mr. Hopkins said no. Chairman Nobles said it would be addressed in Item 12.

Mr. Moya said that staff should first define communications and then create a formal plan. Chairman Nobles said the Commissioners should be prepared to do some footwork. Mr. Wrenn said a certain kick-off time should be set. He said the downside of delay was that staff enthusiasm may wane. Chairman Nobles said the number of high school seniors should be gathered. Mr. Hopkins said he would do so.

Mr. Wrenn said there were always funds that weren't being accessed because of their eclectic nature. He said you have to establish first if they're interested. He said Skillpoint showed a large percentage wanted to go to college, but only 15-20% ended up going. He thanked Mr. Hopkins for his leadership. He said that a portal to the scholarship

community be established this year, and maybe gap funding for the future. He said our award is not based on formulas, as the funding is at colleges. He said our scholarship would reduce the amount of total funding, so maybe it should be targeted for books.

Chairman Nobles said we need to look at best practices. He said we could reinvent the wheel, but instead should look at what other successful scholarships have done. He said a set of guidelines should be established. He said we should also look at limitations.

Ms. Elizondo said that there would be staff time expenses that would be allocated to all of the programs. Mr. Wrenn said that could be addressed during the first year. Chairman Nobles said all of that information should be included in the project plan.

Item 6: Presentation, discussion and possible action regarding the Family Self Sufficiency Program

Mr. Hopkins gave the presentation. He said that staff were currently pursuing a funding source, but that with HUD's cycle it couldn't be awarded until next year. He said the HB 46 might affect the funding, and that funding is a sensitive item currently. He said it would be reported to the Board information about when the application should be submitted and when it could be funded.

Chairman Nobles said that the current item would be the agenda quarterly.

Item 7: Presentation, discussion and possible action of HATC web site

Ms. Noland presented the report. She noted the changes that had been made to the current website. She said information on the timeline had been included in the book, and thanked Mr. Friday for sharing information on the process. She said that the main issue was that she didn't yet know what she didn't know. She said the first process would be determining the nuts and bolts. Chairman Nobles thanked her for the report and said it looked like progress had been made.

Item 8: Discussion and possible action of developing an internal quarterly HATC customer service survey

Chairman Nobles said that the item had been deferred from the SHFC agenda. Mr. Hopkins said there had been considerable discussion on the item at the last meeting. He said staff was prepared to assist, but hadn't yet received direction.

Chairman Nobles said the item was not time-sensitive. He said staff needed to prioritize other critical needs.

Ms. Elizondo asked Mr. Wrenn if there had been follow up on students preparing the survey. Mr. Wrenn said he had contacted two departments. He said they had interest in the project and would get back to him the following week.

Item 9: Presentation of Properties Report

Mr. Hopkins presented the report. He said that there was a current eviction that would be going into mediation, and that it had reached the district court on appeal. He said it's crucial because the person had committed physical assault.

He said that HUD was coming to monitor the Section 8 list and survey those on it. He said a foundation out of Chicago had been contracted to do the work. Chairman Nobles asked how often the list was purged. Mr. Hopkins said when vouchers are given and also annually from a mailing requiring reply. Mr. Wrenn said we were unsung heroes and were doing a great job. Mr. Hopkins said that the current list had started off with 3,000 applicants.

Mr. Moya said he was happy with the progress on Manor Town occupancy. Mr. Hopkins said that Ms. Rico had been presented an award by the Community Center, and that she had been nominated for another award.

Item 10: Presentation of Financial Statements, discussion and possible action on OIG audit and other related audits

Mr. Hopkins presented the report. He said everything we had given the OIG thus far had been received favorably and that the audit was much further now. He said the OIG's goal was to finish by the end of June, and there were no large findings yet. He said when the report was presented; the OIG promised there would be an opportunity for a point/counterpoint discussion.

Mr. Moya said the County Commissioners item about the HATC scheduled for the Commissioners meeting was withdrawn. Mr. Hopkins said that the Commissioners and Judge had been presented in the last six months more information than ever before and that raise their pique of interest.

Mr. Wrenn said there were two pieces. He said that number one was that regarding information from HUD, the governing body, the County Commissioners should have more authority. He said the second piece was that the County Commissioners might have found out about the audit, and it had raised eyebrows.

Mr. Moya said that everything from HUD was also sent to the County Commissioners. Mr. Wrenn said yes, but not beyond that. Chairman Nobles said the Judge had been presented with the pre-audit information, and then the communication stopped. He said the Judge should be visited with every two weeks or every week or as needed. He said it was a red flag going up that they didn't have more information.

Mr. Hopkins said he had a different perspective, but that he was not a voting member of the Board. Chairman Nobles asked him to speak. Mr. Hopkins said that the County Commissioners have stayed out of this organization's business, during his entire tenure. He said the more you give them about internal operations, and they don't understand the operations such as our Commissioner do, it's very confusing. He said that he gets the impression that there can be a point in time when they're going to say they don't get it, and they're not giving us enough information, and we want to appoint someone over there to be on this Board that would be their liaison. He said they're not going to want to hear from him as Executive Director, and they may want to hear from the Chairman, he said he didn't know. He said that he just thinks that you can overwhelm them with information and create a lot more anxiety than is really necessary. Chairman Nobles said he appreciated Mr. Hopkins comments. He said in most cases, they're not

interested in what goes on at the Authority. Mr. Hopkins said they like to hear from us about good things, but be careful not to wind up in the newspaper on bad stuff. Chairman Nobles said the information was not a permanent situation, just during the OIG audit.

Mr. Wrenn said that maybe once a year we ought to have a round table with the Judge and Commissioners, so they can get to know who you are and what you're doing. He said that if there's a project, such as a development project, we ought to sit down with each one of them. Chairman Nobles said he has a quarterly meeting with his commissioner and her staff. He said the other Board members should meet with their commissioners. He said they don't need to know every little detail. He said they don't need to know the agenda of the Housing Authority's meetings, but if there's anything significant that they need to know, let them know. He said it would prevent items from being placed on the Commissioners' agenda.

Ms. Elizondo presented the Finance Committee report, saying that the travel budget is close to \$10,000, and over budget, and asked the Board to keep that in mind. She said the main categories over were legal and staff training. Mr. Wrenn said there were two schedule committee meetings, and then they will make recommendations for budget adjustments.

Mr. Hopkins said labor was well under budget, since two staff positions weren't filled. He said labor might be a good place to adjust.

Ms. Elizondo said they were looking for the budget to be balanced.

Chairman Nobles said he appreciated the staff's efforts on OIG. Mr. Hopkins said it was now not possible to know what the OIG's goal is at present. He said they started just looking into two areas, but that now they seem to have broadened their scope. He said they were making many requests from staff, and that staff were responding to all in a timely manner.

Item 11: Presentation and review of Board action items

Mr. Hopkins said that the action items ought to be labeled either ongoing or extended, or they should be removed if completed.

Item 12: Appointments to Committees

Chairman Nobles said a Scholarship Committee was to be established and charged with project planning, best practices, etc., working with staff on the scholarship fund. He named Mr. Moya and Mr. Wrenn Co-Chairs, and himself as an ex-officio member.

Item 13: Board Committee Reports

There were none at that time, the Finance Committee report having been given earlier.

Item 14: Executive Session – Pursuant to the Texas Government Code Annotated, the Commissioners may discuss the following agenda items. In addition the Commissioners may also discuss and consider any other item posted on this agenda if there are issues that require consideration in Executive Session and the Commissioners announce that the item will be considered during the Executive Session.

According to the Texas Government Code Annotated 551.071, Consulting with Attorney
According to the Texas Government Code Annotated 551.072, Real Property
According to the Texas Government Code Annotated 551.074, Personnel Matters

There was no executive session held.

Item 15: Reconvene from Executive Session and take any action deemed necessary as the result of Executive Session discussions

N/A

REPORTS

- Executive Director's Report

Mr. Hopkins said he had a few items. He asked that since the Board had the settlement statement on 2200 MLK Jr., Blvd. in hand, was there still an issue. He said there were no adjustments and no camouflage. Mr. Wrenn said he didn't understand why there was a realtor's fee. He asked if we didn't have a realtor, why did they need one. Mr. Hopkins said it's standard practice in business to have a realtor engaged for every real estate transaction. He said the Authority had saved \$33,000 by not engaging a broker ourselves. Mr. Moya said even an agent of record must be paid.

Mr. Wrenn asked what the impact would be for the Housing Authority regarding the Secretary of HUD's announcement. He said we need to do a report on homeless groups we work with and what we do to offer help for the homeless. Mr. Hopkins said he had read the memo. He said it impacts us by approximately doubling our Capital Fund to over \$300,000, which will be used for public housing and operations.

He said that public housing would be fully funded. He said that at present, the Authority receives approximately 84% of the allocation. He said he was unsure about Section 8 and the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, but there was a website with details.

Mr. Hopkins said the authority currently aids 59 chronically homeless families and individuals in the Shelter Plus Care program. He said it amounts to \$343,000 when annualized. He said the Authority also helps homeless through the DHAP program. He said there were currently 16 families in that program.

Mr. Wrenn said that HUD had talked about a separate homeless fund, unrelated to the other. He said for Mr. Hopkins to look on CSPAN and find it. Mr. Moya asked if the money would go straight from HUD to the HA's Mr. Hopkins said he anticipated so.

Mr. Hopkins said there had been a letter of protest received from contractor San Antonio Retail Builders, citing several items. He said he will send a detailed letter in response. Mr. Moya said the letter should be reviewed by legal before sending. Mr. Hopkins said that staff had abided by the open meetings law. Mr. Moya said that the rules say to choose the lowest, best and most responsive.

Mr. Moya said that he had received the memo about staff cuts. He said he'd rather have the retirement contributions cut only in half. He asked if employees could make contributions to the fund. Mr. Hopkins said no. He said there is also an option of participating in a 457 option. Mr. Moya said we ought to participate in that 100%. Mr. Moya asked that it be placed on the next agenda. Mr. Hopkins said there would be a savings of \$128,000. Mr. Moya said that 50% would be \$64,000.

Mr. Moya said maybe the Board's travel could be cut. Mr. Hopkins said that was up to the Board. Mr. Moya said that no employees had contacted him about it. He said it was just his issue. Mr. Hopkins said that the move had prevented having to cut health insurance. He said that the cash flow of the Authority is very precarious.

Chairman Nobles said that the Board could discuss it, even if it was an Administrative function of the Executive Director. Ms. Elizondo said she was wary of cutting employee benefits, but that we're not getting cash to meet the budget. Chairman Nobles said to plan for the worst, work for the best and look at all the options.

- Issues and concerns of the Board

There were none at that time.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Mr. Moya made a **motion** to adjourn. Mr. Wrenn seconded the motion, which **passed** unanimously. The Board adjourned at 12:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wiley J. Hopkins, Executive Director/Secretary