

MINUTES OF IN PERSON MEETING OF THE
REAL ESTATE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
RICHMOND REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AUTHORITY
AT 600 EAST BROAD STREET
5TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA
Tuesday, February 13, 2024
5:30 p.m.

Committee Members In Attendance

Eddie Jackson, Chair
Kyle Elliot
Harold Parker, Jr.
Charlene Pitchford via virtual.

RRHA Staff In Attendance

Steven Nesmith, CEO
Mike Kelly, COO
Darrell Davis, SVP

Opening Comments/Announcements

Commissioner Jackson welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated a quorum was present.

Minutes – November 14, 2023

Motion Made by Commissioner Elliott to accept the minutes from the 11/14/2023 meeting.

Seconded by Harold Parker.

Motion carries unanimously.

Commissioner Pitchford was late to the meeting and requested to participate remotely due to business.

Motion made by Commissioner Elliott to allow Commissioner Pitchford to participate remotely in the meeting.

Seconded by Commissioner Parker.

Motion carries unanimously.

Citizens Comment

There were no citizen comments as no one signed up to comment.

Creighton Court Vertical Construction Update

Darrell Davis reports that Phase A is under construction and is a huge accomplishment. Options for Phases C and D are being reviewed and a tax credit application has been submitted. A mixed income community is well underway. KBS is doing the infrastructure. Phase A will involve a lot of subcontracting which has been discussed with the developer. We have confirmed that Section 3 and MBE plans are intact. Hopefully a Section 3 and MBE plan will be submitted in the next 30 days.

Top Real Estate Development Priority Projects for 2024.

CEO, Steven Nesmith advised he has had meetings with Mayor Stoney with respect to the top projects for 2024 and having the City of Richmond as a partner is very important. Mayor Stoney is in sync with what our priorities are for real estate development for 2024. Mr. Nesmith has had meetings with members of city council about the funding process for projects in 2024 as well as what the plans were and what the top priorities are. It is important that the residents need to feel and see what is being done. Communication with the residents is a top priority. Mr. Nesmith wants to tie communication together not just with the real estate part but with the residents as well.

Darrell Davis expressed that one of the biggest priorities he feels is Fay Tower and the need to get the project moving forward. There is a need to show HUD that RRHA is serious about this and it is a good choice neighborhood candidate. Fay Towers will essentially be a replacement for Gilpin Court. It will be rental housing with mostly one-bedroom units, some two-bedroom units. It will have approximately 150 units. Most efficiencies have been eliminated. As many residents will be moved to Fay Towers as possible to begin demotion of Gilpin Court. There will be a community room available. Self-development was brought up that it would be a great idea to have this community room to aid in self-development. Commissioner Davis advised that 25% of the units (the max allowed) will be project voucher based. This will have to be a hybrid project

as trying to staff talent with experience is extremely difficult. We will consult with a developer to help with the entire project list to ensure we are not missing things or any holes that we have. We also must look at the infrastructure of Gilpin to help with determining where to start demolishing Gilpin. Mr. Davis expressed that his personal “big” priority is the senior sites which are undergoing renovation. A lot of capital funds are being put into these renovations and need to be redeveloped so things such as roof replacement, major building systems, windows and things of this nature can be accomplished that can’t be done with capital funds. We hope to establish a direction by summer 2024.

Mr. Nesmith discussed that a lot of the senior sites have been neglected for a very long time as before he came to RRHA Michaels Development Company was released. A major announcement will be made concerning the modernization of senior sites. There is a great need for better living conditions for seniors. There are capital funds that can be spent. Mr. Nesmith has talked with residents, and they have expressed that the biggest focus has been on the big six and not the senior sites and they feel neglected.

Commissioner Davis stated he wanted to be careful about terminology, it’s not a comprehensive modernization, it will be a facelift. At the current time the senior properties are so dingy and dismal, and the residents have expressed their unhappiness with the conditions of these properties. The facelift will include:

- Complete flooring throughout all the buildings with luxury vinyl tile.
- New appliances.
- Painting throughout the buildings and offices.
- Ceilings will be replaced.
- An interior designer is being acquired which will help with selection of color palettes. Each site will get to redesign their community room. One designer has already been hired for Lombardy.

Commissioner Parker expressed that Darrell and Precious have done a tremendous job in a relatively short period of time.

Grace Place

Grace Place is a unique project as it is 11 stories like Fay but only 56 units. The thought for this is merchant development as when you look at the workload, staffing capacity this would be a huge undertaking. Grace Place will take the same amount of work at Fay Towers, so initial conversations with developers is profit margin which does not look great due to the small number of units in such a large building. So, a reexamination of Grace Place needs to be undertaken.

Commissioner Jackson expressed that the people that we are working with in these units need to know there is a timeline for getting things done and a schedule which needs to be adhered to. We need to let it be known and seen that things are being done.

Departmental Review

Commissioner Davis expressed that a big challenge is being able to respond to the board and CEO with status reports and to keep the staff moving forward. He has put in place a system which depicts how the department is organized and who is in charge of what. This is a critical function that has been neglected for years. Putting this system in place is very beneficial as he will have the ability at his fingertips to have records available and give a status update at any time. It includes all projects with where they are such as complete, under construction, or in the planning phase, who the architects are, etc. All of this information will be available at the touch of a button. All this information is being gathered and we will have a team designated to keep track of all of this information and will aid with decision making. There will be a clearinghouse of information across all departments which will aid in how he keeps track of everything. This dashboard is a very important tool to document day-to-day work with real time updates for every single development project. Approximately 40% of information was missing that should have been collected. Having this dashboard will alleviate misinformation.

- New hires – A good candidate for deputy director has been found, however has not committed to come aboard due to family commitments, so the search may have to continue. Two project managers are coming on shortly which will leave only one position to fill.

The maintenance department is the backbone of the agency and they have been holding the place together with bubblegum and staples in some instances. There are five groups which include:

- HVAC – Responsible for keeping the lights on and keeping temperature regulated.
- Electrical team.
- Pest control – Very proud that this department has saved a couple million dollars a year over what was previously spent.
- Specialty team – They do just about everything else which includes bulk trash, trash pickup.
- Call Center – Fields 500 calls a week (will confirm this number).

Mr. Davis stated that the department is moving ahead, and things are getting in order and getting done.

Mr. Nesmith stated it is a great overview of what the real estate department does and what its responsibilities are. He stated that the maintenance call center taking 500 calls a week is not a good ratio on the public housing side and he is focusing on improving this and having the capacity to respond to them more effectively. To do this it will entail bringing more people onboard and change this ratio. He and Kenyatta are working very diligently on a specific plan. Perception is a big deal in any business and needs to be positive.

Commissioner Elliott asked Commissioner Davis if this process he is implementing has anything to do with HUD and how they do things or is these manners of his leadership. Mr. Davis explained that this really has nothing to do with HUD and comes with his experience as a previous project manager.

- **Gilpin Court** – Mr. Nesmith advised that HRI was the developer that has been chosen and will be brought up on next month's full board committee agenda.
- **Calhoun Center** – A full update will be provided at the full board meeting; however, work is being done with the city's top lawyer, RRHA top lawyer and with

Councilwoman Ann-Francis Lambert. She will be coming to speak to the board with specific ideas.

The developer will be brought before the board to speak and be available for any questions.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date is March 12, 2024.

Adjournment

Committee Chair Jackson thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.

J005