



OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

Marblehead Housing Authority Board- July 30, 2024

LWVM Observer - Mimi Hollister

Present: Jenn Schaeffner, Chair, Jean Eldridge, Bill Kuker, Terri Tauro, Kristin duBay Horton. Cathy Hoog, Executive Director

Public Comment: discussion about tenant anxiety due to lack of communication. A meeting to keep tenants updated is set for August 13 at 6 pm in the High School Cafeteria. Suggestion that a series of meetings should be set at that time. Mold discussion. Suggested that an educational session about mold, how to recognize it, testing, remediation, etc. be scheduled since there are many concerns among residents regarding mold.

Cathy Hoog reported on a number of grants that have been awarded for consulting on the Broughton Road project; for a supportive living program at Farrell Court; for electric panel replacement. An application for assistance with energy efficient heating/cooling equipment has been submitted through the Municipal Light Department.

Broughton Road project and update on status of negotiations with Winn Development:

Considerable discussion on status of the contract with Winn. Present at this meeting on zoom were the Housing Authority Development Attorney, Teresa Santalucia and the Development Consultant, Emily Achtenberg. They reported that many meetings have been happening with Winn to clarify the power structure; budget agreements; fee sharing; economic benefits. All while protecting the rights of the residents, long term as well as short term benefits, and creating a memo of understanding.

Concerns expressed by Board members: How much local preference power is in play when choosing resident applications? Concern was expressed about the ability to provide work force housing for our teachers and fire fighters and moderate income town employees.

Response: requests are considered carefully and fairly, especially taking into account state and federal funding requirements. We can propose and advocate for local preferences, but there is no guarantee. For example, there will be a mix of units with public funding and market rate.

The discussion revealed that the Board needs a tutorial on the whole process. For example: what exactly is currently being negotiated with Winn; are we locked in to a contract with Winn; what are the terms of the current contract; understanding financing, ownership, tenants accepted, all aspects. This meeting will be arranged soon.

Resident Entertainment Committee- Terri Tauro reported on a party planned for Sunday, August 18, at 3 PM at Eveleth School grounds with a variety of entertainment for kids. Suggested asking the PTO's and churches for donations to supplement the HA party budget.

Cathy Hoog reported on state requirements for diversity in subsidized housing, including age and disability as well as cultural diversity. Marblehead is fine in family housing but falls short in over 65 and handicapped. Affirmative action goals need to be adopted.