

BRANFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY
Board Meeting 12-17-24
Meeting Minutes

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Wai E. Apin
BRANFORD TOWN CLERK

Holly Hackett, Tenant Commissioner, recorded the meeting minutes.

The meeting was held at 3 Block Island Rd., in the Community Room.

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 pm.

Branford Housing Authority Board Members present: Nadim Matta, Chair, Jerry Mastrangelo, Vice Chair, Lori-lynn Ross, Treasurer, Holly Hackett, Tenant Commissioner, and Bonnie Ballantyne (newly sworn in)

Guests present: Ellie and Jen from Beacon, Larry Kleutsch (consultant to BHA Board), John Hartwell District 5 RTM and Ways & Means, Abigail Adams District 5 RTM and Community Forestry, Sharon Hutner Branford Clean Energy and Planning & Zoning, and several residents.

1. Welcoming New BHA Board Member

Bonnie Ballantyne was unanimously approved by the Board of First Selectman to fill the Treasurer's position once there is a new election of Officers in January. Bonnie introduced herself and gave a bit of background on why she is the best fit for the position and that she's happy to be a part of the Board.

2. Review and Approval of the Last Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was unanimously passed.

3. Status of Open Items from Previous Meeting

- A. **Management Contract** - BHA Board still hasn't received a finalized contract. Ellie said John Elliot shared the contract with the language that was asked of Beacon with their President, Vice President, and their attorneys.
- B. **Restoration of the area between Shoreline Grove and Parskide II** -

- Larry reached out to Enterprise about adding topsoil but the trees may not be able to be done and some fencing that still needs to be removed.
- Lori-lynn is in touch with Paul Crisci Re: his vernal pool being affected and the damage to his yard. We're still waiting for his pictures and videos of before and after. Lori is in touch with the Town. Nadim would like us to get all of the information to Emily at Beacon so we can wrap this up for everyone as soon as possible.
- There is still not a permanent Certificate of Occupancy (CO), it is still a temporary CO.

Next Steps:

- Larry will gather the information on work that we believe will be needed, and he will share this with Beacon Developments, so we can elicit a commitment or work to be done and timelines.

C. Lifts - CHFA now has the architectural agreement just waiting on the contractor agreement in order for the lifts to be ordered. Lead time is 6-12 weeks.

D. Concrete Decks - Capasso is wrapping the rebar under the concrete that is broken on the 2nd floor and putting down plywood in its place until Spring. Larry will check with Capasso to see if this is an acceptable and safe solution until then. They also made sure that no one would get hit with any falling concrete by wrapping the concrete "headers". Building C is done. Amaya Architects said that structurally everything is sound.

Next Steps:

- Larry will ask Centeck to do a safety assessment for the railings and the decks. Based on this, we will decide how best to proceed.

4. Tenant Commissioner Report

- Went over the walk-through list. Management was given this report prior to the meeting to get started on the urgent safety matters
- Lifts not working in Building C & management told me about B.
- Clarified some confusion with management over parking & the lot.
- Discussed getting grants for raised bed gardening.

- Discussed the shotgun shots heard being legal hunters. Holly will keep trying to reach DEEP to see if something can be done to keep hunters a little further away, given our population.
- Holly is concerned that not enough residents are reaching out with questions or concerns.

5. Management Report

- There are only 2 more residents that Ellie is working with that have an issue with their rent increase. Nadim asked Ellie to involve him if there is disagreement or misunderstandings with the two tenants.
- It seems that maintenance issues have been taken care of within 24 hours except for a few. This is a major improvement.
- Fire alarm System
 - The inspection will be done on December 18. No fire drills have been set up yet. Once the Indian Neck fire station is open, Jen will be able to coordinate fire safety drills.
 - There is confusion and miscommunication about the whether the old system should still be in use, and how the new system will function.
 - Beacon can use CallMax to notify all residents when someone will be on-site. We need to get updated phone numbers from all residents so the system will work efficiently.
- Ellie is looking for solutions to the problems that were found while doing a walk-through of just buildings A & B. She'll sit down with Todd to go over and will send a report back. A Lot of these issues will require vendors coming in, giving quotes, and BHA going over them and approving.
- Jonathan is working to get a truck to remove the ladder and debris behind building A.
- Ebony is on medical leave for the past 2 weeks and until she's back, Ellie will be on-site as the acting manager.
- Jen has another 10 pallets that were donated from Amazon. She can't find a truck to rent to pick up the pallets. She will do so as soon as trucks are available.

Next Steps

- **Utility Study:** as this has some urgency and the Beacon team is understaffed for now, Holly will take the lead on securing the utility

records from Eversource and following up with DOH on the matter. She will coordinate with the Beacon team to ensure there is no confusion at DOH. Holly expects to have an update on this by January 7.

- **Fire Alarms:** We will set up a meeting that includes all relevant stakeholders and people knowledgeable on this, to go over the details of the new system, how it will operate, and how it will meet the safety needs of the residents. Nadim will make sure this meeting happens early in January.

6. Financial Report

- After reviewing the financials prior to the meeting Nadim and Bonnie had several questions for Beacon. Ellie had a report that included notes from the accounting team.
- The large overage on carpeting is because there were 4 apartments that were fully gutted this past year.
- The \$600 for the residents activities was still not issued. We need an efficient way to do this.
- Certificate of Existence: this is still unclear.

Next Steps

- A meeting will be set up with Kara from Beacon and BIA to have the financial questions answered.
- Bonnie will set up a system to make sure that petty cash transactions can be handled efficiently and responsibly.
- Bonnie will continue chasing the status of the BHA vis a vis tax exempt contributions.

6. Schedule of Board Meetings for 2025

The schedule for 2025 monthly BHA Board meetings and the Executive Board Meetings were read and some were left as handouts for the residents and neighbors.

7. All Other Matters

- The Branford Garden Club has **grants for gardening as therapy**. Sharon and Bonnie are both members. There is a therapy committee at the club

for pollinators & other plants not sure about gardening for produce.
Lori-lynn will follow up on this.

- Blue Earth has a **program to pick up food scraps**; it will cost about \$1800 a year for the barrel. If we do the bags we can make arrangements for one of us to go to the transfer station to drop them off and get new bags for free. The owner of Blue Earth is Sam King. The Beacon team will look into this, and possibly set up a pilot to experiment with it.
- Sharon attended to let us know we were eligible for grant funding for **solar canopies, and also to explore arranging assessments on energy efficiency** that can be done for free for interested tenants. Holly will follow up with Sharon on this, and she will involve the Beacon team as needed.