

**ENFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2019**

A Special Meeting of the Enfield Town Council was called to order by Chairman Ludwick in the Enfield Room of the Enfield Town Hall, 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, Connecticut on Tuesday, January 22, 2019. The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m.

Present were Councilors Bosco, Cekala, Cressotti, Davis, Deni, Ludwick, Muller, Szewczak and Unghire. Also present were Town Manager, Christopher Bromson; Town Clerk, Suzanne Olechnicki; Town Attorney, Maria Elsdon

MOTION #4859 by Councilor Muller, seconded by Councilor Szewczak to go into Executive Session to discuss Pending Litigation and Real Estate.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared **MOTION #4859** adopted 9-0-0 and the meeting stood recessed at 5:36 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Executive Session of the Enfield Town Council was called to order by Chairman Ludwick at 5:37 p.m.

Present were Councilors Bosco, Cekala, Cressotti, Davis, Deni, Ludwick, Muller, Szewczak and Unghire. Also present were Town Manager, Christopher Bromson; Town Clerk, Suzanne Olechnicki; Town Attorney, Maria Elsdon

Chairman Ludwick recessed the Executive Session at 6:01 p.m., reconvened the Special Meeting at 6:02 p.m. and stated that during Executive Session, Pending Litigation and Real Estate was discussed with no action or votes being taken.

The Special Meeting moved to the Council Chambers.

PRESENTATION BY SCOTT BERTRAND, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ENFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY

Mr. Bertrand introduced members present from the Board of Commissioners for the Enfield Housing Authority – William Ballard, Chair; Howard Coro, Vice-Chair; Barbara Lawrence; Treasurer, Mary Ellen Kuraska, Assistant Treasurer

Mr. Bertrand stated the Enfield Housing Authority (EHA) is a standalone entity. He noted they work with the Town of Enfield, but they are not the Town of Enfield. He explained this was designed by State statute, and this is the same case across the country.

He stated the EHA has been in existence since 1948, and they own and manage 456 apartments and serve over 700 households. As concerns the units the EHA owns and manages, he pointed out

they do not receive any direct, ongoing, operating subsidy, other than some tenant money that's available to assist some of the elderly and congregate Mark Twain residents. He noted it's only the Section 8 or Housing Choice Voucher Program that's federally subsidized.

Mr. Bertrand stated their main focus is on their four core programs – Moderate Rental, aka family housing, Elderly Disabled Housing, Congregate Housing, and the Housing Choice Voucher Program aka the Section 8 Program.

He stated the EHA is considered to be a high performing agency by HUD and CHFA (the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority).

Mr. Bertrand stated their goal is to make their housing programs high performing and sustainable for the long haul.

He then detailed out the individual programs as follows:

Elderly/Disabled Program

- 200 units
- Four different locations
- Eligibility is for individuals 62 years or older or disabled
- Not a fully-subsidized program
- Residents pay a base rent or an income rent, whichever is highest
- Rents range from \$362 to \$441
- Revenue per unit comes in at \$417
- Some elderly/disabled residents get assistance from the State of Connecticut

Sites for Elderly/Disabled Program

- Woodside Park (Post/Raffia Roads)
- Ella Grasso Manor (Freshwater Pond)
- Windsor Court (Windsor Street)
- Enfield Manor (Enfield Street)

Congregate Living Program (Mark Twain Housing)

- 82 units
- Eligibility is for individuals 62 years or older for individuals with difficulty of one or more daily life functions
- Enhanced service – 24X7 staffing
- Meal program
- Rents range from \$426 to \$496 (includes all utilities)
- Monthly service fee for other enhancements

Moderate Rental Program aka family housing

- Locations – Green Valley and Laurel Park
- Residents pay a base rent or an income rent, whichever is highest
- Rents range from \$378 to \$458 (could be higher if someone's income stream is higher)
- 86% of these households derive some or all of their income from employment or wages

Housing Choice Voucher Program (aka Section 8)

- Federally funded
- Tenant-based assistance
- Individual is given a voucher, which is taken to the market (private landlord, apartment complex), and the individual only must pay 30% of their adjusted income towards rent, and this is on a sliding scale
- The Enfield Housing Authority has 136 baseline vouchers and 55 others that come in from other jurisdictions that the EHA can manage; Enfield has only five vouchers going out to other places (some that they do manage are in East Windsor—Millpond Village)

VASH Program (A new HUD Program to help homeless vets)

- Five vouchers (in the process of issuing their first two vouchers)
- A wait list isn't run for this program because people must go to the VA, and the VA issues a referral to the EHA, and the EHA issues the voucher
- The VA arranges for services that are available for homeless vets

Mr. Bertrand stated the Freshwater Pond Apartments are privately owned and managed. He noted there's a contract between HUD and the owners, and the Enfield Housing Authority manages the contract for HUD. He stated they are coming up to the end of their 40-year contract term, and they hope to continue administering just the subsidy.

He stated they were able to get a grant from the State of Connecticut to do \$1.65 million dollars' worth of renovations at Mark Twain. He noted the EHA contributed about \$300,000 and leveraged that out to get about another \$12,050 from the State and some Eversource incentives for energy efficiency. He stated upgrades were for windows, doors, carpeting, rooftops, kitchen, etc.

Mr. Bertrand stated they were able to get close to \$4 million dollars from the State for renovations at Woodside Park, Ella Grasso Manor and Windsor Court, and a lot of work was accomplished at these sites.

He noted the income stream has been sufficient enough to get work done at Green Valley and Laurel Park.

Mr. Bertrand stated Eversource provided incentives and upgrades amounting to about \$300,000, and Eversource nominated the EHA for a Green Circle Award through the Energize Connecticut Program.

He stated they want to replace the existing structures at Enfield Manor with two new buildings, which will be more suitable to the neighborhood. He displayed an architectural rendering of what the new site may look like. He explained the existing property was built in 1964 and 1965, and its functionally and financially obsolete. He noted the units are very small with efficiencies under 300 square feet and one-bedroom units are only about 400 square feet. He pointed out the modern architecture and design does not keep up with the historic nature of that area. He stated this is a process that was started years ago, and they looked at several different concepts for this site.

Mr. Bertrand then reviewed next steps:

- Local approvals are in process
- Mixed finances – state and federal tax credits, mortgages and grants
- Financing applications – process will start after local approvals
- Estimated start within 24 months of funding approval
- Early estimate total cost is \$25 million dollars

As concerns the partial government shutdown, Mr. Bertrand stated this will not affect the housing units that EHA owns and manages because there's no HUD or federal subsidy involved. He noted they must keep their eye on the Section 8 voucher program because HUD indicated that if the shutdown continues into March, there could be some landlords not getting their payments.

Mr. Bertrand stated some of the things they are monitoring at the State Legislature include a bill dealing with any landlord's ability to screen applicants for criminal background checks – there is a bill that would make it prohibitive and another one allowing for a "look-back period". He stated there's also a bill that would allow housing authorities to expand their jurisdictions to within 30 miles to go into areas of opportunity.

Mr. Ballard stated the reason they got financing was because they always planned ahead of time, and when the money came through, they were able to submit their plans right away. He noted Mr. Bertrand has always been ahead of the game, and he's a great director and is highly respected.

Councilor Deni questioned whether the rent will be higher in the new buildings. Mr. Bertrand stated the existing residents would be protected, but in the long haul there must be a revenue stream to support the property.

Councilor Szewczak questioned whether this project will be done in phases so it's less disruptive to the residents and what's the increase in units from what currently exists.

Mr. Bertrand stated they're proposing going from 80 units to 99 units in the new project. As concern relocating residents during the project, he noted they could take half of the site and relocate people to one side of the site, and they do have three other complexes that they can work with as vacancies arise.

Chairman Ludwick questioned how often people move on to buying their own homes. Mr. Bertrand stated it happens frequently when the economy is good.

Chairman Ludwick stated sustainability is important.

Chairman Ludwick questioned how Enfield ranks in the northern region as concerns providing affordable housing. Mr. Bertrand stated his belief Enfield ranks in the middle. Chairman Ludwick stated he would like to track those statistics.

Chairman Ludwick questioned whether there is a transition process where they help people who can no longer afford their homes. Mr. Bertrand stated that would be more of a social question.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION #4860 by Councilor Unghire, seconded by Councilor Cressotti to adjourn.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared **MOTION #4860** adopted 9-0-0, and the meeting stood adjourned at 6:42 p.m.