

# Presidents Council Zoom Meeting Minutes

March 27, 2023

## CALL TO ORDER

Melanie Fox, Montreal, called the Presidents Council Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and took a roll call of hi-rise Representatives present, along with PHA staff members.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Aado Perandi, PC/RPC Secretary, Wabasha, stated you can always find a copy of the Minutes posted on the PC website. He also asked Representatives to instruct their resident council Secretaries to print a copy of the PC Minutes and post them along with the Minutes from their resident council meetings. Lonnie Magistad, Iowa, made a Motion to accept last month's Minutes as they stand. Rachel Duhamel, Edgerton, seconded and the Motion carried.

## GUEST SPEAKER

Lena Milissis, from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reported that she is currently partnering up with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to promote naturalization among the residents who are receiving HUD benefits. This is in response to President Biden's executive order—who wants everyone to partner up with USCIS in order to share their message. Lena is in Chicago but is working on this project nationwide.

Trina Swanson is the Field Office Director for the USCIS at the Minneapolis/Saint Paul field office which is located in downtown Minneapolis on Marquette Avenue and Washington Avenue. The main task of this office is to interview folks for citizenship and also to interview people that are applying to get their Green card. USCIS is the benefit granting agency of U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The Immigration and Naturalization Service [on March 1, 2003] became three agencies: Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) all serving under the newly formed Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Trina is here to partner with the community to spread the message as to what the USCIS does and to encourage folks to apply and to become US citizens.

To simplify, those who have entered this country and have received the status of lawful permanent resident, will have a green card. Anyone who has had a green card for at least five years is, considered to be, eligible to naturalize and would be eligible to become a United States citizen. There are benefits to citizenship. Once someone is eligible and files an application for naturalization, they would then have an interview about one's application and background, and then take a couple of tests. If they pass there would then be a naturalization ceremony where you would take the oath to become a US citizen.

The plan is to hold a couple of events, one in Minneapolis and one in Saint Paul to help out by giving an overview of the citizenship process. This would include how to apply, what the application consists of, what the test consists of, what are some sample test questions, help people prepare to go through the process and to answer any questions. Information will be available in a number of languages. There will also be clinic sessions that will have some Pro Bono legal advice along with some help from nonprofit organizations. Additional information will be distributed to the hi-rises and the floor was then opened for questions.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Melissa Pappas, PC/RPC Treasurer, Seal, gave a rundown of income and expenses for February.

For February the cleared balance is one hundred nine thousand, four hundred seventy dollars and forty six cents (\$109,470.46). The ending balance is one hundred eight thousand, nine hundred ninety-eight dollars and twenty three cents (\$108,998.23). The report will be filed for audit. Melissa then took questions.

## **PHA MAINTENANCE REPORT**

Brent Feller, Construction Program Manager / Maintenance Contracts gave an update. Maintenance staff is busy budgeting, planning, and getting out contract and bid documents.

Current projects include: the Valley hi-rise elevator project is basically complete and should be fully complete shortly; the Valley electrical project should be starting up shortly, PHA staff, project leader and an electrician will be at the April Valley resident council meeting to talk about the project, give updates and to answer questions; the Wabasha bathroom tile project will be finishing up this week.

## **PHA MAINTENANCE REPORT** *(continued)*

Mike Silvan, Assistant Maintenance Director had a few things to say during these spring months.

1. Preventative Maintenance inspections will be starting up in early April.
2. Life safety equipment inspections will be getting done in each of the buildings.
3. Once we are done with the snow and when the lots dry up, each of the lots will be swept. Some of the high-rises, where needed, will get new striping for the parking lot spaces later this summer.
4. This spring, grassy areas that need repair and re-seeding will be worked on. Please stay off of the muddy areas until this work is complete.

Maintenance then took questions from the hi-rise representatives.

## **PHA MANAGEMENT REPORT**

Tara Johnson, Resident Services Senior Manager, was not in, so the report was given by Mela Krick. Housekeeping inspections will be starting up in May, and the inspections will follow the same order and schedule as was conducted last year. Paffy's Pest Control is the new contractor for pest control that started a few weeks ago. Some of the pest control procedures and chemicals that the new contractor uses may be different than what was previously used. The multi-family team is being expanded. This is the group that does the rent certification, rent calculations, annual reviews, and interim rent changes. Adding to team helps to make sure that subsidies are maintained for all residents. Mela then took questions from the representatives.

## **SAFETY & SECURITY REPORT**

Sgt. Amy Boyer, St. Paul Police Department, ACOP Unit reported that Iowa hi-rise will get some extra patrolling because some homeless people were getting into Iowa hi-rise. If you notice any issues at your hi-rise, please let your building assistant manager know. Be cautious, there was a nicely dressed gentleman with a couple of tablet computers, who had entered Wilson hi-rise, and stated that they were doing some sort of free giveaway. It is not clear who the person was.

Please continue to report unauthorized people who are in your building.

The non-emergency number is 651-291-1111. Sgt. Amy can be reached at amy.boyer@ci.stpaul.mn.us or at her cell phone 651-703-7141. Sgt. Boyer then took questions.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

1. Vending Contract. Youa Thao, Resident Council Coordinator reported that March through April is the time that vendor(s) should be invited to the resident council meeting. This allows the council to get familiar with vendors. Before we get to May, the council as a whole should vote to approve the desired vendor. Make sure the vote of the vendor is in the meeting minute report.

The new vendor contract will be released in the beginning of May and this is the contract that should be used. It covers the period from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. All required vendor contracts and paperwork will need to be retained by the council. The vendor and assistant manager will need copies and Youa Thao will need scanned copies by June 30th.

Choose your vendor carefully and have one that you can work with, as needing to change vendors can be a long and difficult process.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. 2023 Election. Youa Thao, Resident Council Coordinator went over the officer election process which occurs during the months of April through June. An election judge will be present at each resident council meeting during these months.

In April, the election judge goes over the election process and answers questions from the residents and officers. The resident council should choose which board structure they would like to use and then vote on it. There are two choices, the traditional board and the five member board. The traditional board consists of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Fifth Officer. The role of each member is fixed. If changes are desired the council will need to vote and approve of any changes. The Five Member Board consists of Secretary, Treasurer, Third Officer, Fourth Officer and Fifth Officer. The Secretary and Treasurer roles are fixed, but the roles of the Third, Fourth and Fifth Officers can be shared and rotated without needing council approval.

In May, the election judge will accept the nomination of the candidates. All candidates must be present and in person at this meeting. Any exceptions must be pre-approved by Youa Thao. The assistant manager must verify the standing and eligibility of all nominees for office.

In June, the officers are sworn into their role. All nominees must be present and in person at this meeting. Any exceptions must be pre-approved by Youa Thao.

2. Spring Newsletter. Youa Thao, Resident Council Coordinator reported that new members are being recruited for the newsletter team. All that are interested are encouraged to join. Residents and officers can also just submit material and pictures for the newsletter. If you submit any pictures, release forms will need to be filled which gives permission to use the picture. Material can be submitted via email at insider@stphapresidentscouncil.org.
3. Commissioner Recruitment. Nominations for commissioner will open today. If interested, please send a

written notice to Youa Thao by April 17. At the April 24 Presidents Council meeting, the nominees will be announced. Voting will begin after the April 24th meeting and close on May 15th. At the May 22 Presidents Council meeting, the new commissioner will be announced.

### **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REPORT**

John Cardoza, Cleveland, Commissioner, for March reported the following:

- Funding was approved to replace trees at Neill
- Funding for the Officers Recognition event will increase to \$1200 from \$800 next year. John recommends that the RPC also ask for some additional increases as well
- Funding for the hi-rise picnics funds was increased
- Funding for the PHA/RPC fund was increased
- John thanked Melissa Pappas for her help and others for their feedback
- Chair Missy Thompson thanks all the volunteers from all the hi-rises for their work and dedication
- The PHA Board of Commissioners will be starting to meet in person in the board room on the fourth floor beginning in April

John can be reached by phone at 651-955-5450. He then took questions.

### **SECTION 3 UPDATE**

Beth Pacunas, Section 3 Projects Coordinator/Youth Literacy, updated us on education and training, etc. Beth works with the Resident Initiatives (RI) department and Section 3 unemployment is part of that. Beth is now also the Resident Initiatives Program Coordinator. A Twin Cities Rise Personal Empowerment Emotional Intelligence workshop is currently half way through, with seven residents who have been participating every Tuesday and Thursday. The course is going well; it is a very interesting and helpful course. If the course is offered again it is highly recommended that you participate.

PHA and Comcast/Xfinity are exploring the possibility of installing permanent modems in each unit of the hi-rises. Comcast/Xfinity has inspected the cable wiring at Mount Airy, Valley, Wabasha and Exchange and found it to be in good shape. The next three to be inspected are Iowa, Edgerton and Wilson.

If we have any questions regarding employment, education or training please contact Beth at 651-252-5799. She then took questions.

### **RESIDENT INITIATIVES REPORT**

Alicia Huckleby, Resident Initiatives Director & Human Services Director had nothing to report. Alicia then took questions.

### **HIP REPORT**

Betsy Christensen, *Health Improvement Programs* (HIP) Coordinator, had a few updates. Betsy reported that there are under a hundred jars of honey that is available for sale.

**2023 Garden Mentor Program** - Ramsey County Master Gardeners will offer up to 2 garden classes at each Hi Rise. Each class will include hands on learning activities and prizes!

- Class #1 'Get Growing Vegetables and Herbs' offered this month at every site.

- Class #2 - This class will be either nature heals, house plants, micro-greens or food preparation as chosen by class #1 participants. Class #2 will be scheduled April - May.

Garden meetings will be scheduled with the assistant managers in April or May. If interested be on the lookout for posted information.

The Saint Paul Police Department is planning to host some pedestrian safety discussions and safety events at a handful of hi-rises this summer. Notices will be posted. Let Betsy know if your site is interested in any onsite wellness classes that are hosted by Juniper/Trellis

Betsy can be reached by email at [betsy.christensen@stpha.org](mailto:betsy.christensen@stpha.org) or by phone at 651-298-4030.

### **CLOSING**

Youa Thao, Resident Council Coordinator informed us that Youa will be sending out applications to various positions that are available, and would encourage those officers that are interested to apply. Youa reminded us that we should be respectful and kind. She then took questions.

No further Presidents Council business was discussed or conducted, and the meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

Submitted by:

Aado Perandi  
PC/RPC Secretary

## **MEETING REMINDERS:**

(Meeting through Zoom)

### **Next Presidents Council Meeting:**

Monday, April 24, 10:00 a.m. – Noon.

**Executive Committee Meeting:** Friday, April 14 @ 11:00 a.m.

**Computer Team Meeting:** Thursday, April 27 @ 1:00 p.m.