

# **Housing Authority of the City of Laredo**

Special Board of Commissioner Meeting

Russell Terrace Community Hall

500 Richter Court

Laredo, Texas 78040

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

5:30 p.m.

**A-16-S-1**

**Minutes**

**September 6, 2016**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Chairman Ceballos called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM** Roll call and declaration of quorum by Melissa Ortiz, Acting/Interim Executive Director/Secretary.

**Commissioners Present**

Jose L. Ceballos

Gina Magallanes

Dr. Marisela Rodriguez

**Commissioners Absent**

Dr. Sergio Garza

John Solis

**Staff Present:**

Bulmaro Cruz, Director of Modernization & Development

Julia Ordunez, Planning & Community Services Specialist

Norma Ybarra, Section 8 Administrator

Cesar Vasquez, Human Resources

Maria Hernandez, CQI Specialist

Jose Collazo, Resident Services Coordinator

Francisco Lopez, Procurement Officer

Grizelda Resendez, Project Manager

Orlando Guerrero, Interim Finance Director

Alfonso Trevino, CFP Coordinator

## **4. CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Chairman Ceballos stated that the purpose of the meeting was to close the final hearing and take comments from residents in regards to the amendment.

## **5. CITIZENS COMMENTS**

This is the opportunity for visitors and guests to address the Board of Commissioners on any issue. The Board may not discuss any presented issue, nor may any action be taken on any

issues at this time. There will be a 3-minute limitation per speaker. (Texas Attorney General Opinion-JC-0169)

## **6. ACTION ITEMS**

- A.** Public Hearing to discuss the proposed Significant Amendment to the 2016 Five Year/Annual PHA Plan regarding conversion of Russell Terrace from public housing to project-based Section 8 under the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD), and related matters.

Chairman Ceballos stated that the purpose is an administrative hearing to take input. There has been a 45 day comment period and it has been published in the newspaper, posted in the office, and we have held meetings on June 28, June 29, and June 30, 2016 in which they took comments for matters related to the conversion to RAD. He stated that the conversion is for 38 units at Casa Verde and 162 units at Russell Terrace. The remaining 38 units at Russell Terrace will be used for a different project but they will not demolish and will work with HUD.

Mr. Presley Williams asked if the project would change from a HUD based project to Section 8.

Chairman Ceballos responded yes, the project would convert from Public Housing to Section 8 and both are HUD programs. He stated that the policies are under a different program but the impacts to the tenant are minimal and the project would still be administered by the housing authority or a subsidiary. He stated that the tenant should not be impacted unless they are in a flat rent because the Section 8 Program does offer that option.

Mr. Presley Williams asked if you are not a Section 8 participants will that mean that you must move out when the units are converted to Section 8.

Chairman Ceballos responded no, he stated that when the conversion takes place the participants will convert to Section 8 as well.

Mr. Presley Williams stated that he waited a long period of time due to the waiting list and does not want to have to go through that again.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he would not have to go on the Section 8 waiting list and would transfer into the program with the conversion because he is already living here. He stated that the tenants could actually choose to move within a year and take the voucher with them if the voucher is available.

Mr. Presley Williams stated that he did not want to be displaced and if the voucher allowed them to pick from other units.

Chairman Ceballos stated that the reason for the conversion is to avoid anyone being displaced. He stated that there are over 700 landlords that participate in Section 8 and you may choose to rent from them as well after the one year requirement but the rent would be set by the land lord and not



at the same rate as the housing authority. He stated that another option would be to ask for a transfer within Public Housing prior to the conversion.

Ms. Rodriguez asked what the difference between Public Housing and Section 8 would be.

Chairman Ceballos responded that Section 8 is more mobile and you have a one year lease but can choose to move versus Public Housing where it is a complex and you are assigned a unit.

Attny. De Anda stated that if you are in Public Housing and you want to move to the private market you would have to get in the Section 8 waiting list.

Chairman Ceballos stated that is correct but with the conversion they would not have to and they would transfer.

Ms. Resendez, Project Manager stated that the residents have come to her with concerns about the future and asking why their rent will be going up. She stated that she does not entirely know what to answer at times because she herself does not fully understand what the conversion entails.

Chairman Ceballos stated that she needs to be provided with all the information and she needs to be able to respond very specifically. He clarified that the only difference between Section 8 and Public Housing will be the Flat Rent because it does not exist in Section 8. Russell Terrace has 9 families under this rent and they will be affected but the changes will be minimal. He stated that she will be provided with all the tools needed so she can calculate the rents for tenants.

Attny. De Anda stated that in some cases the change will be beneficial to their rent and they should meet with the manager so that they know specifically what the change will be.

Chairman Ceballos stated that another benefit will be that with this conversion there will be improvements to the project and the board will advise of those in the weeks to come.

Mr. Presley Williams asked if the rent will continue to be calculated at 33% minus the utility allowance.

Chairman Ceballos responded that the calculation is slightly different in Section 8 but will be very close because they will likely use the same sourcing to establish the utility allowance.

Mr. Cruz stated that Section 8 and Public Housing use the same data to create the utility allowances for both programs.

Ms. Garcia asked if the maintenance crews will be the ones performing the improvements on the project.

Chairman Ceballos responded that those improvements will likely be subcontracted being that it will be a large project. It will be a job that will be bided out due to the size of the project.

Attny. De Anda asked where the improvement money was coming from and how much will it be.

Mr. Cruz stated that they did not have the financing plan established yet.

Chairman Ceballos stated that a ball park number would be \$25K-\$30k per unit. He stated that the finance plan will be submitted for Casa Verde by Friday and the Russell Terrace they have more time.

Chairman Ceballos stated that items that have been discussed for improvements include front and back door weather stripping, electrical panel issues, window issues, adding a bathroom to 4 bedrooms units, and HVAC.

Ms. Rios asked what will happen with the 9 families that qualify to move to Casa Verde how you will fill the remaining units at Casa Verde.

Chairman Ceballos responded that they will identify the units at Russell Terrace and those families will have the option to move to Casa Verde or remain in a program similar to Public Housing that we will have in those 38 units. He stated that the logical thing would do if we have vacant units is to take the families from the waiting list but they must define if they will use the Public Housing or Section 8 waiting list.

Ms. Morales asked if the units at Casa Verde will have any four bedrooms or just one, two and three.

Chairman Ceballos responded no at Casa Verde there will be no four bedroom units and that has been finalized.

Mr. Presley Williams asked how many handicap units were available in Russell Terrace and if the units will be renovated those need to be addressed because they are not handicap accessible.

Mr. Cruz stated that 5% of the units in the project are handicap.

Chairman Ceballos requested that those units be improved.

Mr. Jasso stated that he recommends that all those units be made handicap/accessible.

Mr. Presley Williams stated that it needs to be taken into consideration that tenants move in and have furniture and they need to be able to have space to move around the furniture too.

Chairman Ceballos stated that there is no need to wait for the renovations to make those accommodations and those concerns can be addressed during the 5 year plan meeting.

**Chairman Ceballos motioned to close public hearing and submit for action at next board meeting.**

**Commissioner Magallanes seconded the motion**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

## **7. EXECUTIVE CLOSED SESSION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE**

The Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority of the City of Laredo reserve the right to adjourn into Executive Closed Session at any time during the course of this meeting to

discuss any of the matters listed on the posted agenda, above, as authorized by the Texas Government Code, including Sections 551.071 (consultation with attorneys), 551.072 (deliberations about real property), 551.073 (deliberations about gifts and donations), 551.074 (personnel matters), 551.076 (deliberations about security devices), and 551.086 (economic development).

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

**Chairman Ceballos motioned to adjourn.**

**Commissioner Rodriguez seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.**



Jose L. Ceballos  
Chairman



Melissa Ortiz  
Acting/Interim Executive Director