

Austin Housing Finance Corporation Meeting Transcript

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And let's convene the Austin housing finance corporation meeting on this April 8th, 2021. It is 10:33. We have a core rum of the directors present -- quorum of the directors present. We're convening for the purpose of hearing speakers and then we're going to take a recess and come back to the agenda. It should be noted that there is late backup in the Austin housing finance corporation meeting of items 1 and item 2.

[10:34:07 AM]

Revised fiscal notes. Let's go ahead and have the speakers and then we'll recess the ahfc meeting and come back to the city council meeting. Mayor pro tem and vice chair of the board, can you take the chair if it's needed before I get back. I need to step away for just a moment. Thank you. Clerk, why don't you go ahead and call the speakers. >> Mayor, we're moving over the speaker. One second. >> Mayor Adler: That's okay. Thank you. >> If [indiscernible] Can

[10:35:07 AM]

please turn her camera on. >> I've got the camera turned on. >> We still can't see Shirley on camera. >> Well, I -- I can see myself -- okay, wait a minute. I see another thing to push. >> There you are. Okay. Our first speaker is Shirley prosland. You have six minutes, and the interpreter is on the line as well. >> Okay. My name is Shirley Crossland.

[10:36:10 AM]

I live at -- at [inaudible] At creekside. And I am for the item about Arbors. I'm sorry, I don't understand when I'm supposed to speak and be silent because I don't see or hear anything. So I have no way to know -- >> Okay, miss Crossland, just make your comment. The interpreter is interpreting. We can hear you and the asl interpreter is interpreting your comments, so just keep going. >> Okay.

[10:37:11 AM]

I'm in favor of changing things at Arbors because I've lived here for about six years, and over that time period I've seen both the buildings and the property and the service slowly deteriorating every year. And we've -- there seems to be a general reluctance to repair things in a timely manner. And a general reluctance to do good, permanent repairs. So the particular thing I

[10:38:12 AM]

want to -- to tell you about today are the mailboxes for buildings 4 and 5. I live in building 5. And someone vandalized the mailboxes last year. It's for most of the year the office tried to handle the mail, distributing the mail to us because everyone said that everyone else was responsible, and no one did anything to repair them for months and months. We then in December they were working again for -- and in January they worked, and then in February they

[10:39:13 AM]

were vandalized again. And I saw the front of the mailboxes in the office, and it was clearly one corner was bent. [Buzzer sounding] Also, the frame that the front fits into to cover the boxes is bent. So once again that needs to be repaired. And there's apparently there's no -- nothing done to keep people away from the mailbox -- >> I'm sorry, your time has expired. >> Okay. Thank you. Good-bye. >> Thank you.

[10:40:37 AM]

Okay, the next -- >> Harper-madison: Am I understanding we have more speakers? >> Yes, we on did. The next speaker is Jean latrell. I'm sorry. We're connecting to the speaker. One second.

[10:41:40 AM]

Jean latrell. Go ahead. >> Can you hear me? >> Yes, please proceed. >> Okay, sorry. Yeah, my name is Jeannie latrell and I live at the Arbors at creekside. I lived there at Arbors going on -- or in my sixth year. And I want to support both the items that are up. Namely the -- [indiscernible] To buy out a partner that we have now. Because they don't do anything to help us. They are not supportive, they are rude, and they just come in our apartments whenever they want to. There's no notification. It's the pounding on the door and they come in. And it's really, really stressing for a lot of people and it's really distressing when they just walk in, they open the door and come in.

[10:42:42 AM]

So what we're asking for is for the city council to support the money to buy out the partner that we have now and the money to -- second item would be to rehab Arbors. They are both very important. This used to be a really great place and it can be and we just need some money to invest into it. And we need some decent managers so that, like, the point of entry doesn't happen again where somebody walks in on you because it's really scary. We don't have security here and we're on our own. We're on our own through the ice storm. If it haven't been for the defense league, I don't know what we would have done. I don't think some team would have survived because -- some people would have survived. Because even if we had notice the storm was going to be that bad, most of us on limited income can't just pick up and go get stuff, and we need management and there wasn't any coming. We needed help afterwards and there wasn't any coming.

[10:43:43 AM]

Still have people in building 2 where the pipe broke and they are just now getting stuff done, fix it. But they did not get permits from the city to fix anything, so they are acting like they didn't know they had to, including the contractor. This is unbelievable. Anyway, I know this is kind of scattered. Sorry. But I just want to let you know I support both of the items that are up and also I hope that the city council votes for them too. We have worked hard for four years to find a way to get a new partner in here and a rehab is necessary for the apartments, you know, in total rehab of each apartment. Because we're living with a lot of bad stuff, ovens that turn on by themselves.

[10:44:47 AM]

You know, the carpets are 16 years old. And so even if you clean them, you can't get clean to the pad. [Buzzer sounding] And I know I'm repeating. >> Speaker, your time has expired. >> Thank you very much. For letting me speak. >> Next speaker is Pam Rogers. Miss Rogers? Pam Rogers?

[10:45:53 AM]

We'll try her back. That concludes for now the ahfc speakers. >> Mayor Adler: Vice director hper-madison, I'm back. So thank you for taking the helm. Before we recess this meeting to get back to speakers in the regular city council meeting, director Casar, you raised your hand. Did you want to say something? >> Casar: Just before the tenants log off given we might not take up the items until later, I appreciate them calling in another building is on the border of me and the mayor pro tem's district and I know she's done significant work there, but I just wanted to acknowledge to them coming to say thanks to support these items, but I know they've worked a really long time to make this sort of important change.

[10:46:54 AM]

And so I wanted to thank Basta for their work alongside the tenants to make that change, and I think workers defense is also acknowledged for their work trying to take care of people in those apartments during the storm. >> Mayor Adler: Sounds good. And thank you for that. >> Mayor, we have the caller that was dropped. She's on the line now. >> Mayor Adler: Okay, great. Call her up. >> Pam, go ahead. >> Hello, my name is Pam Rogers. And I reside at 1026 Clayton lane here in Austin, Texas. Better known as the Arbors at creekside. I'm a retired business owner and former homeowner, and I chose Arbors as my retirement home almost nine years ago. It was a beautiful place to call home, but now I'm ashamed to tell anyone where he live. There's mold in and around the apartments on ceiling vents, walls and carpeting.

[10:47:55 AM]

And so bad it hurts your eyes and nose. Patio and balcony ceilings coming loose. During the hot summer months it's not uncommon for residents to suffer from heat exhaustion in the laundry room. No working acs. Apartment acs breaking down for days and sometimes weeks at a time. I bought a window air conditioner. Elevators breaking down leaving residents strand to do the upper floors for long periods of time. The last inspection was October 2020. Fire alarms going off in the building so often residents have become complacent. And steel fireproof doors are stuck in the closed position causing us to prop them open with door stops. Our mailboxes broken into or completely ripped off the

[10:48:56 AM]

wall. It's an unsecured area that's easily accessible to non-residents and thieves alike. Non-working security gate. Our vehicles stolen and broken into. Front doors to each building easily pulled open without having to use a security code. Due to the laundry machine being ripped off the wall in the office lobby. Again, no security features anywhere. A swimming pool that keeps failing code inspections. Last year I saw tadpoles swimming in our pool, or maybe it was mosquito larvae. That myself and others [indiscernible]. And I say that because we have not been treated with respect or dignity in quite

[10:49:56 AM]

some time. Thank you. >> Mayor, that concludes all of the speakers. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Vice chair harper-madison. >> Harper-madison: I just wanted, councilmember Casar beat me to it because I wanted to recognize how grateful we are for folks showing up to share their truth with us. This is one of these tricky ones that I've been dealing with for several years and my colleagues have before I got there. And it's amazing how speaking of resilience this complex that's designed for, you know, our seniors has really struggled to provide like the last caller said a dignified place to live. What they deserve. And I really just want to say I know without the constant support and advocacy of Basta, that's

[10:50:58 AM]

the one I can personally speak to having worked with directly that we wouldn't be here today where I finally feel some hint of optimism about what things are going to look like moving forward for the residents of Arbors. So again, thank you all for your self-advocacy. It in a lot of ways is why things are moving along. >> You are muted, mayor. >> Mayor Adler: With that at 10:51, recess the Austin housing finance corporation meeting

Part 2

. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. I'm willing to go ahead and recess the Austin city council meeting here on April 8th, 2021. It is 12:21. I think we're going to try to come back here at 1:30. And we'll see if we can take care of a few items before we call the zoning speakers at 2:00. We don't have that many zoning speakers. At that point that would be for the consent agenda. My hope is at 1:30 is we can

[12:22:38 PM]

tackle the pulled items and come back at 1:30. And then we would move then in to hear the speakers on the zoning, do the consent agenda, continue with the pulled items, and the four nonconsent items that I think are going to be relatively quick. And that will get us then into executive session. Okay. And I see rosey is with us. So I'm going to then convene the [music playing]. >> This is Mandy in -- >> Mayor Adler: Hang on one second, Mandy. I'm going to convene the meeting of housing finance corporation, it is 12:23, still April 8th, 2021. Do you want to take us through, Mandy, our consent agenda? >> Absolutely.

[12:23:39 PM]

Mandy Demayo, housing finance corporation. There are two items related to each other on the agenda. We did hear three speakers earlier who were residents of the properties that are affected. This is related to a property known as Arbors at groupside. Two items that a is to purchase the limited partner interest and the other is for needed repairs and some operating expenses. Item number 1 is 1.25 million, number 2, 250,000. These are both related to affordable property owned by affiliate of hhsc. The property is 176 units, senior housing development. That was placed in service in 2001. And we are repositioning the property for recapitalization and some much-needed repairs. I'm happy to answer any questions. I do want to thank the residents

[12:24:39 PM]

who spoke earlier, as well as hasta, who has been working closely with the tenant association. >> Mayor Adler: That's good. Is there a motion to approve the concept agenda, both items? The vice cir of the board, harper-madison, makes that motion, seconded by director Casar. Any discussion? Yes, director tovo? >> Tovo: Thank you. I had a quick question for staff. And then a couple of quick comments. Mandy, is it accurate that there are about \$750,000 worth of necessary repairs to these apartments? >> So, that is our estimate at this point. There are actually some significant long-term capitalization needs, putting this into two different priorities. One is more short-term repairs, and then one is more long-term approach. So we will be looking to recapitalize the property, with a tax credit [inaudible].

[12:25:42 PM]

>> Tovo: Thank you. So actually, I think there was some conversation before about how long there had been issues at the property, and I actually -- my staff and my office have been in communication with residents since, I think, about 2013 when it was under the name primrose apartments. Before hasta -- before we had hasta as the wonderful community partner they are now, empowering tenants, and working with them to advocate on different issues. So, you know, I fully support the purchase. I do want to say, I want to highlight this for a couple reasons, for a couple of examples. I think this is a really important purchase, and I so appreciate the residents who came today to speak to their experiences

there, and the real needs. We had several resolutions regarding creating a (indiscernible) For family members. I believe councilmember Casar, you did one as well. I think the response from

[12:26:44 PM]

housing was that was not their preference for investment of bond dollars. I think it's still a very viable conversation that we should have as a council about whether we should be investing in multi-family apartments. I would still like to see us do that with our bond dollars. This is a test case, where we are purchasing the ownership pieces that we don't currently own on this property. So that we can have more control. And really, have an enhanced -- enhanced level of maintenance, but enhanced quality of life and standard of apartment for those who live there. So this is a good example for that reason. I am a little concerned to better understand that we have these relationships, and the city is actually a partner. I sure hope we can -- when there's such a long history of issues, in terms of the quality of that housing, and the need for repairs, I hope we can figure out solutions earlier. Because it seems to me that a lot of that big bill for

[12:27:47 PM]

750,000, maybe more, dollars, might have been avoided with earlier action. So I'm not faulting, I think our housing department has long been super supportive of those residents and their need for better maintenance, but hopefully we can figure out how to get a solution to residents. >> Absolutely. Councilmember tovo, that's an excellent point. I do want to remind folks that ahsc, an affiliate are partners, either general partners or managing members of 10 different partnerships, affordable housing development. It is one of the earliest partnerships. This was in 2001. It actually was our second partnership. And what the action today is allowing us to do, to buy out the investor partner, is to

[12:28:47 PM]

maintain greater control of this development. So it's the first in multiple steps where we will be recommissioning the property, doing capital improvements into this property. I will say that our partnerships have greatly improved over the years. And we are incredibly selective in terms of who we are choosing to partner with, for some of these very reasons, and lessons learned. I think this is just a really important transaction that we're going to be moving forward with, and yes, you are correct, that there have been some issues with the property for a time. And again, this is the first step, in multiple steps, to really make some major improvements. With the asset >> Thank you for that contact. >> Mayor Adler: Anything else before we take a vote on the

[12:29:48 PM]

consent agenda? Those in favor of the consent agenda, raise your hand? Those opposed? I think that is all of us. >> Mayor, councilmember Kelly is not on the screen and councilmember Fuentes is off the dais. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you for pointing that out. Councilmember Renteria. >> Renteria: Mayor, what Kathie had brought up, councilmember tovo brought up, I think that we need a public hearing on, you know, what are we doing with the bond and how we can work with the city and if there's a possibility of maybe using bond money or also to -- to put some of these older departments that we talked a lot about it here about three years ago, I know that there's a program out there

[12:30:49 PM]

right now, a non-profit, that is implementing that. So really interested in maybe finding out a little bit more. If we don't want to have -- maybe have one of their public -- the housing to find out exactly what is going on and how we can really implement that city-wide, where we could really help out. You know, these are older apartment, tax credits are coming up. I can see that those units are losing (indiscernible) In the market. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Councilmember tovo did you raise your hand? >> Tovo: I was thinking that might be a conversation for the housing committee potentially. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. >> And I do want to assure councilmember Renteria that we are having also conversations

[12:31:51 PM]

with affordable central Texas which is a non-profit that oversees the private equity fund. Specifically about alignment with "Protect connect" and the acquisition of the existing multifamily properties, potentially with expiring tax credits. I think that would be a great conversation at the housing and planning committee. I would welcome that. >> I really appreciate that. >> Mayor Adler: I would like to work with the Austin housing conservancy, I would like to see that well. With that it's 12:32 and I'm going to adjourn the Austin housing and finance corporation meeting.