

**MINUTES**  
**HOUSING AUTHORITY OF COVINGTON**  
**CITY HEIGHTS RESIDENT MEETING - SESSION 2**  
**Tuesday, June 23, 2020 7:00 P.M.**

A Resident Meeting regarding the Possible Sale of City Heights was held on **Tuesday, June 23, 2020** from 7:00pm-8:00pm in the City Heights Community Room.

**Video Link:** [https://youtu.be/Wtmt-i6\\_qb4](https://youtu.be/Wtmt-i6_qb4)

The Housing Authority of Covington Staff Panel consisted of: Steve Arlinghaus, Executive Director; Chris Bradburn, Deputy Director/Jobs Plus Grant Coordinator; Jon Adkins, Director of Resident Services; Shannon Wilson, Senior Housing Manager; and Lakitha Pearl, City Heights Housing Manager

27 residents and community members were on the sign in sheet.

**AGENDA:**

PRESENTATION- (See Attachment A, on page 7)

Slide 1: (Title Slide) Proposed Sale/Disposition of City Heights

Slide 2: Staff Introductions

Slide 3: Before We Get Started

Slide 4: Before We Get Started (continued)

Slide 5: Background

Slide 6: Disposition Plan

Slide 7: HUD Review

Slide 8: Upon Application Approval

Slide 9: Benefits

Slide 10: Questions/Comments

Slide 11: Please Give Us Your Input

**Steve Arlinghaus presented:** **Proposed Sale/Disposition of City Heights** in the following topic order (not all topics are referenced in slides or in numerical order):

- Introduced the Housing Authority Staff Panel and stated that other HAC members were asked to leave to ensure social distancing and COVID-19 precautions are followed. All sessions will be video taped and available online, and minutes will be recorded and distributed to City Heights residents and others in attendance who request copies.

- A survey will be handed out at the end of this session. One of the questions will ask where you would want to live outside of City Heights if the opportunities are available. (Public housing, HCV program, Tenant Protect Program or other.) HAC will have to work with the City of Covington, and with HUD in Washington DC, so enough vouchers can be provided that will allow residents to move at any given time. Residents do not have to sign their name.
- City Heights is 65 years old with 66 buildings (63 dwelling) and 366 apartments. In August 2019, HAC commissioned an independent study by Creative Housing Solutions from Cincinnati, to conduct a Physical Needs Assessment (PNA) to determine what is needed to maintain/upgrade City Heights. Unlike other rental properties, the Housing Authority of Covington not only owns the buildings at City Heights, but also the utilities; the power lines, water lines, sewer lines and the streets. In this study, it was determined that to bring City Heights up to modern standards, it would cost an excess of \$50 million dollars. HUD is not going give HAC \$50 million dollars.
- Some of the discussion is, to use the funds from the sale and develop that into another new community either in the city of Covington or elsewhere outside the city of Covington. Different options are being explored. By the time a decision is made as to what option is chosen, this process will have already worked its way through.
- A packet of detailed information will have to be compiled for the federal government. Part of the information that will have to be provided is:
  - Physical Needs Assessment that states that the cost of City Heights is too expensive to repair. (Completed)
  - Appraisal of what City Heights is worth.
  - Hosting meetings with residents and the community to keep everyone informed of the plans.
- What is known about City Heights: the age of and condition of the units are obsolete, it's isolated from community services, the nearest grocery stores are sub-standard.
- TANK has proposed changes to a bus route that goes to Fort Wright that may impact City Heights. Additional routes for City Heights were also being discussed but during the past few months TANK has provided video/pictures of youngsters that have been throwing rocks and breaking out the windows on the buses that go by. Because of this, TANK may discontinue the bus service to City Heights completely. There are many of you, probably some in this room that know who the culprits are. Nobody wants to testify because of fear of retaliation. But those of you that rely on bus service need to think hard about this. We need your help to try and track down those culprits and more than likely they are younger than 12 years of age, which means they can't be prosecuted, but we can evict the family, and we will if you help us. The courts will be supportive.
- A contract for a new camera security system for City Heights, Latonia Terrace, and Golden Tower was recently signed. The current camera system has a low quality viewing span and rarely works and only covers approximately 10%. The new cameras will have a 360 viewing span and will cover approximately 90% of City Heights with day and night vision. A few months from now, residents won't have to report incidents without having proof or living in fear of retaliation because everything will be on video which can be used in court. This was about a \$650 thousand dollar investment. There is typically more vandalism that occurs when there are vacant units and this security system will be able to capture that.
- The current license plate readers are ok but the new ones will pick up on the license plates which will feed into the state's system. Every car that enters and exits will be identified. This investment is for the safety and security of the people who live here. We know that there are many good people who live here, but there are a few that will never change.

- Last month HAC signed a contract with a consultant to help facilitate the Demolition/Disposition process. (Section 18) There is a lot of paperwork that has to be turned into the federal government. It goes to the Special Applications Center (SAC) in Chicago. They will review the information which may be approved or additional documentation may be requested. We hope to have this process completed by the end of the year and we hope to have approval in early next year, from the federal government for the sale or Demolition of City Heights.
- The Jobs Plus Program is a 4 year program that goes until December of 2022. Our goal is to keep the folks here who are in the Jobs Plus Program.
- The Housing Authority hopes to transition the seniors from City Heights into HAC public housing before all other residents.
- The City Heights residents will be moved to the top of the waiting list for other HAC public housing locations.
- HUD has approved to apply for the Demolition/Disposition of City Heights based on the Physical Needs Assessment.
- Once the application is approved, all of the resident will receive a written notice with steps on how to proceed.
- The City of Covington / Housing Choice Voucher Program will be requesting 300 additional vouchers to help facilitate this process. With those vouchers, you can take them anywhere that you want. If you are originally from Atlanta and you want to go back to Atlanta, you can do that. You can go to California. You can go anywhere you want to go. There are also plenty of opportunities here in Covington, Newport, and Cincinnati as well. You are not limited.
- We will pay for the physical move. We will put out a bid opportunity from a local moving company for 100 mile radius (not sure of the radius, used as an example.) If you choose to use your family or friends to help you move, it could be lucrative opportunity for you.

**Resident & Public Questions and Comments** (answered by Steve Arlinghaus unless indicated otherwise)

Q. Resident- (parts inaudible) Will we be moved to the top of the waiting list for the Section 8 program?

A. You will be moved to the top of the list for public housing, not Section 8.

Q. Resident above continued to state that Section 8 will only pay for a portion of your rent based on income and for people that don't know, you have to come up with a deposit to match it. So if the deposit is \$1,400.00 is HAC going to pay that?

A. No, not that I'm aware of. We don't control Section 8. We are public housing.

Q. Resident- Will it be a year or two that we can continue to live in our apartments here?

A. I don't have the answer for that just yet.

Q. Resident- You mentioned Emery Drive as a public housing complex. Are you talking about the ones up the hill?

A. Yes.

Q. Resident above continued- Say we decided to move there (Emery Drive) I had a relative that lived there and she had to pay her own electric, will we have to pay our own electric?

A. The electric is included in the rent at Emery Drive. Emery Drive has market rent & public housing apartments and some are Section 8 apartments. Rivers Edge is also mixed income apartments.

Q. Resident (parts inaudible)- Why is everything in the apartments deteriorating, half of the things in the apartment don't work, so why.. (Inaudible)

A. We have a maintenance department, you can call in a work order, we have a limited number of personnel. The problem is, with the work orders that get put in here and everywhere else, we don't have a big enough staff to keep up.

Q. Resident- What are you doing about the mice and roaches?

A. We do recognize that there was a severe problem. We recently put out an RFP and signed a new contract with Terminix. Terminix will be the new service managers at City Heights.

Q. Resident- What you said about transition and the choices we have between Public Housing and Section 8. My thing is, it's up to us, the tenants, to choose where to go. If you can afford to get Section 8 and pay a deposit and rent and electric, you do that. But if you don't have a job, and can't afford it, you don't.

A. Chris Bradburn answered and agreed that there are eligibility requirements for Section 8 and explained that there are tenant protection vouchers for programs where people are required to relocate. The rules for tenant protection vouchers may be a little different and at future meeting there will be more information provided.

A. Steve Arlinghaus added that HAC does not have all of the answers for Section 8 but hopes to be able to review all of the questions and provide the answers as this moves forward.

Q. Resident- Stated that he doesn't have a question but wants to tell all attendees that he understands what Steve is saying about trying to help everybody, but what the residents have is time. Residents must prepare and protect themselves and don't wait on them (HAC) to do anything because they're not obligated. In some ways they are but my thing is please, make sure you protect yourselves.

A. Chris Bradburn stated "That's an excellent point" and continued to explain that there was a woman in a previous session with credit issues and what Chris advised her to do, is to go to the City Futures office, talk to the people from Brighton Center, start working on getting your credit cleaned up because you have the time to do it. Sometimes arrangements can be negotiated to bring that level of debt down, or set a payment plan, and that opens up your options with housing. Clean up your credit, now so instead of public housing, you have more options. Use this time wisely. Brighton Center has financial coaches, and they are right down the street. And that's why we wanted to bring Brighton Center here for the Jobs Plus City Futures Program. We knew you guys would need support. Please take advantage of it, it's free. Please, if you have any needs, go see the City Futures office.

A. Steve Arlinghaus stated that resident also may email questions to the staff.

Q. Resident- Say I wanted to go to Golden Tower, I could just go there now? And my cat can come with me? He's on the lease!

A. Yes, you can be put on the top of the waiting list for Golden Tower and your cat may come with you!

Q. Resident- What about the scattered sites?

A. You would be moved to the top of the list but that will not be granted until we get approval from HUD to move forward.

Q. Resident- Some years back, when Jacob Price was torn down, that was with HOPE 6 and I remember sometime after that there was another grant out, so they commissioned another study about the water lines, the sewer lines, etc., and I attended that meeting. The goal there was to get those lines and things to fail so they could get (inaudible) but everything that has been built has very limited housing for us, it's going for market rate. It seems the city is wanting the property to get a better tax base moved up here. I don't think that this figure that was published on the news is really accurate. I think it's quoted as high so it makes it look more pathetic. What's going on?

A. You are talking about the \$50 million dollars?

A. Resident- Yes.

A. That was done by a professional company out of Cincinnati with engineers, architects, that fully understand the magnitude of this in nature, as a whole. I could not have done that, I couldn't have walked in here and throw a number at it. That would be guessing. But they are very experienced at doing that. This is not the only avenue that they have done. They've gone through other housing projects and regular apartment communities, and have done similar assessments.

Q. Resident- I don't question that they aren't professional. But anytime there is a study referred to, the first question you should ask is, who funded this study?

A. We did.

Q. Resident continued " OK, that's my point". "Next, with reference to Section 8, it's like oh, just go out there and get an apartment. That's not true, there is a shortage of landlords that accept Section 8, that the private sector." (Continued inaudible)

A. Wait a minute, we talked about the tenant protect vouchers, this is not typically the same voucher as you would get with Section 8. So these are special vouchers that the federal government would work through with the City of Covington that everyone whose living here at the time will qualify automatically for that type of voucher.

Q. Resident- So we can go anywhere with those vouchers?

A. You can go anywhere with those vouchers, that's correct. And as far as Section 8, some landlords accept it, some don't, that's correct. There's no landlord that's required to take Section 8 but there are a number that do.

Q. Resident- So if I wanted to take this Section 8 voucher and move to California, that's dependent on if there Section 8 will take it?

A. Let me get back to this and I've said this, this will be the third time, we are not Section 8. We are the Housing Authority of Covington. I do not know and we cannot answer all of the policies and procedures of Section 8. We don't do Section 8. They work for the city, we do not. We will find out more about Section 8 and the tenant protection vouchers.

Q. Resident- You can save money by getting rid of maintenance, we don't need them. They always say the same things. They don't come when you call them. I'm a single mother. I've seen mice.

A. Another resident answered that she must call the landlord. Maintenance doesn't handle mice.

A. Resident replied that she did call the landlord and it's been 2 weeks with no reply and continued that maintenance doesn't do their jobs.

A. Steve Arlinghaus stated that HAC knows we could use more maintenance and if they don't get to you, it's because we are understaffed. And we can't afford to hire more personnel. The maintenance crew is overwhelmed and it's difficult to find qualified people to fill positions that require electrical, plumbing and general maintenance skills.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Steve Arlinghaus, Executive Director adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:58 pm.