

**Riviera Beach Housing Authority
2001 Broadway, suite 101
Riviera Beach, FL 33404
Special Board Meeting
Official Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 22, 2020**

Meeting held via Zoom

Meeting comes to order at 7:03 P.M.

I. Call to Order:

Moment of Silence—Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call and Recording of Absences

Upon roll call by ED John Hurt, Chairman Jackson is present and presides. Vice Chairwoman Jessica Thurmond is present as are Commissioners Glen Spiritis, Alexis Lockhart and Horace Towns. Quorum.

Also present: There were 23 attendees on the meeting including Ron Davis and Walter Pearcey of the Mosnar Group; Jason Lawson and Bryan Finnie of Housing Trust Group; Vincent Brown of Brown Electrical Solutions; Dwayne Randolph, Randolph Construction, Wesley of Green to Greener Landscape

Disclosures by Any Board Members

Commissioner Spiritis discloses that he has been hired as a consultant by the Village of Hempstead in New York for a downtown revitalization project. Chair Jackson discloses that he sits on the board of Thousand Oaks and the RBHA owns property in Thousand Oaks.

- II. Approval of the Agenda, Additions/Deletions
- III. General Public Comments for RBHA
- IV. Discussion of Contracting for Heron Estates Family—Phase 2

ED Hurt begins by noting that, at the last Board meeting, Board members had concerns about local contractors getting work and I was told to reach out to HTG to get the names of Section 3 contractors who submitted proposals, the status of those proposals, the total number of presenters and the time and place the Authority could meet with them. The result: Mr. Finnie of HTG gave responses on July 23, which I distributed to the Board, and which included background information and project updates.

Mr. Finnie says he will set up a meeting with the general contractor on Phase 2 with members of the Board. Discussion ensues, with questions about subcontracting opportunities, who and how many Section 3 contractors applied and when, and the process.

There were nine qualified, black-owned businesses that successfully applied, Mr. Finnie says. Mosnar contacted all nine, only four chose to bid and all four got contracts, he says; so, 100 percent who applied were given work opportunities. We worked to say yes, Mr. Finnie adds, not no.

Mr. Davis says the Mosnar Group made a very coordinated effort to work with local contractors and HTG and made a valiant effort to get people involved and, this time, the genuine effort of the general contractor was better than Phase 1.

We can recruit as many as we can, says Mr. Pearcey of Mosnar Group, but getting them to bid is something different; they simply just dropped out. The developer made a much better effort this time.

Vice Chair Thurmond then asks if the concerns of Mr. Brown of Brown Electrical Solutions were addressed. He wasn't happy the first time, Chair Jackson responds, and probably won't be any happier this time.

Commissioner Lockhart asks what other opportunities will be made available once construction starts and how will you ensure communications be made to them. Mr. Pearcey replies that, once construction starts, there will be more work opportunities and we actively promote to active contractors.

I'm pleased to hear about outreach to the community, Commissioner Spiritis then says, but how are you going to do that from laborers to contractors?

Mr. Finnie responds that the plan is to work with an international labor union to help us identify laborers and contractors, especially in Riviera Beach. Discussion ensues, including about how Phase 1 community reach out was accomplished, what events were held and when and where, and how were those events marketed.

Mr. Brown then says I've heard Mr. Finnie say my bid was high, but an opportunity to negotiate wasn't given to me. He also notes he has the bonding and funding capacity to do the work—but doesn't have a relationship with HTG. Why can't the RBHA look at the bids and make the decisions? He makes several other points, to which Mr. Finnie seeks to reply, saying he understands Mr. Brown's frustration.

Discussion continues with Mr. Brown about bonding, funding, decisions and how and why they're made, including how a high-bid drywall contractor is getting the contract over a lower bidder—but that didn't happen in his case.

Chair Jackson points out, again, how the Board wants to ensure locals get most of the work. It is extremely important to me, he adds, to see our guys get these contracts—and more important this time than the first time. Commissioner Spiritis agrees, even as he thanks Mr. Finnie for his efforts, that local, minority, qualified subcontractors get the opportunity to participate.

Commissioner Spiritis agrees, even as he thanks Mr. Finnie for his efforts, that local, minority, qualified subcontractors get the opportunity to participate. That's very important to the people of the City of Riviera Beach, the Commissioner adds, and to our Board.

Mr. Finnie says he'll look at Brown, but also says don't ignore the fact that the majority of MBE's who applied for this project got work. Indeed, he adds, if you look at the glass as half full as opposed to empty, I'd appreciate it.

I do appreciate that, Commissioner Spiritis responds, but I'd like to see you get the glass three-quarters full.

Mr. Randolph, a drywall contractor, says he submitted a lower bid but didn't get the work. When he saw what he saw today—that his bid was \$93,000 lower but he didn't get the contract—it really bothered me, he says. I want to see a more transparent, fair process. We're licensed, insured, bonded and I think the process should have been handled differently.

Mr. Finnie says we will revisit the issue.

Mr. Lawson, who is also with HTG, then adds that, though he's not as involved in construction bidding as Mr. Finnie, a fair process is important to us and that we get good pricing. We'd be happy to sit with staff and members of the Board to show why things happened the way they did and how decisions were made.

Commissioner Lockhart says we want to ensure that, in Riviera Beach, there is equal opportunity and transparency where bids are concerned.

Mr. Finnie says we'll take that into consideration.

Mr. Lawson then talks about the value of relationships in construction—not just price. Discussion continues.

ED Hurt says he is hopeful our partner, HTG, will act on the information we received in the meeting tonight and for these voices to be heard.

Mr. Davis agrees, saying it was a good conversation and I'm hopeful we can move forward.

Chair Jackson then says we appreciate you, HTG, especially for the First Phase; I like you guys. The contractors you've chosen are great but, for our city-based businesses, not getting more of this work isn't good.

After Phase 1, the Chair continues, we couldn't have been more clear about what we wanted for Phase 2: more locals getting work. I understand selection, mitigation, and all that, but I'm also aware of the importance of helping minorities get in the game.

He then calls for a meeting between him, Commissioner Spiritis, ED Hurt and HTG—before HTG meets with contractors—so we can get on the same page. Mr. Finnie says he's open to the meeting. Discussion continues.

Mr. Finnie says he'll call tomorrow with potential meeting dates. Chair Jackson says he wants to meet in person, while Commissioner Spiritis says he has to do virtual meetings only right now because he's out of town.

Chair Jackson thanks all for attending and says to Mr. Finnie that it is imperative that we get past this issue.

Chair Jackson then adjourns the meeting at 8:26 p.m. The next regular Board Meeting is August 11, 2020.