

CAC

Central Advisory Council Of the Chicago Housing Authority Residents

243 East 32nd Street

Chicago, Illinois 60616

(312) 328-6670 Fax: (312) 225-4120

CAC Officers

Mamie Boone
Chairperson

Mary Wiggins
Vice-
Chairperson

Willie Burrell
Secretary

Deverra Beverly
Treasurer

July 10, 2000

Sharon Gist-Gilliam, Chairperson
Board of Commissioners
Chicago Housing Authority
626 W. Jackson Blvd. 7th fl.
Chicago, Illinois 60661

Terry Peterson, Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Housing Authority
626 W. Jackson Blvd. 7th fl.
Chicago, Illinois 60661

Re: Issues Related to the Plan for Transformation

Dear Ms. Gilliam / Mr. Peterson:

The Central Advisory Council (CAC) is forwarding this formal notice of major unresolved issues and concerns regarding key aspects of the Plan for Transformation (Plan). Some of these issues and concerns were previously raised in correspondence to the CHA Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer in letters dated April 26th and May 31st. The CAC subsequently received the enclosed June 7th response indicating that certain issues would be addressed in a few weeks. However, many of the previous issues and concerns remain unresolved. Further, CHA staff have not been responsive or cooperative in responding to these, and other, critical matters.

The CAC recommended in April, 2000 that a winterization committee be established immediately to address actual or projected heating problems throughout the Authority; and hopefully avoid the last minute "emergency" transfer of tenants because of heating problems. There has been no responses to the CAC or individual LAC's; or any visible activities by CHA staff regarding this crucial issue. This is disturbing given that the passage of time has diminished options for addressing actual or projected heating problems.

The CHA has repeatedly complained about the current policy of not renting vacant units, which become vacant. This is of vital importance to prevent further decline in occupancy; and subsequent building consolidations, and or emergency relocations, because of low occupancy. The CAC suggested a reasonable approach of renting turnover units in buildings with 50% or more occupancy to prevent further decline and the emergence of adverse conditions normally associated with high vacancy rates. Further, the CAC is concerned that the CHA's policy of not renting to any persons on the waiting list may eventually result in administrative or judicial challenges by individuals on the waiting list, and result in an

LAC Officers

Deverra Beverly
ABLA

Esther Wheeler
Alameda

Cora Moore
Cabrini Green

Doris Ricks
Dearborn

Maner J. Wiley
Hillside

Mamie Boone
Hornet Homes

Gloria Williams
Ickes Homes

Juanita Stevenson
Lathrop Homes

Brenda Bolder
Lelandia Garden

Willie Ruth York
LeClaire Court

Eunice Crab
Madden Park

Mary Baldwin
Rockwell Garden

Marie Billingsley
St. Reg. South

Shirley
Hammond
St. Reg. North

Martha Marshall
St. Reg. Central

Francis
Washington
Statenway Garden

Cora Dillon
Robert Taylor

Mildred Denni
Robert Taylor

Myra Kin
Trumbull/Lowden

Mary Wiggins
Washington Park

Sandra Young
Ida B. Wells

Beatrice Harri
Wentworth

Willie Burrell
Georgetown, N.Y.

Marie Fossec
Georgetown, N.Y.

across the Board mandate to release all vacant units. Such a mandate would obviously require a major modification to the Plan for Transformation, and possibly cause the reallocation of substantial funds.

There has been no response to the CAC from CHA staff on this critical issue, and the related issue of building consolidation; despite promises that meetings on this would commence by late June. Further, the CAC's representatives were recently informed that CHA has decided to begin contacting individual LAC's and would bypass the CAC in discussions on vacancies and building consolidations. The CAC is the authorized representative of all CHA residents pursuant to specific provisions of State and Federal law, Federal regulations, and written agreements between CHA and the CAC. It is essential that Authority wide information on building consolidation and vacancies be forwarded to, and discussed with, the CAC prior to any contact with individual LAC's. The CAC met in emergency session Friday, July 7th, and agreed that individual LAC's would refuse to meet with CHA staff on these issues pending commencement of meetings and discussions with the CAC.

The CAC negotiated specific language in the plan for Transformation requiring the CHA to maintain occupied units in safe and sanitary conditions during the implementation of the Plan. The February 6th MOA specifically acknowledges CHA's independent legal obligation to maintain units. (Page Seven) Notwithstanding these provisions, the CAC has received numerous complaints throughout the Authority regarding the failure to maintain occupied units. It appears, from informal verbal responses from some CHA staff, that maintenance of occupied units is restricted or limited because funds are being reserved to implement the Plan for Transformation. If so, this is contrary to the Plan for Transformation, the MOA and Federal requirements. There has been no response from CHA staff, or any indication that the maintenance issues are being, or will be, addressed. The CAC recognizes that funds are limited, but rejects the premise that CHA can unilaterally decide to withhold or limit basic maintenance of occupied units in order to implement the Plan for Transformation.

The CAC has recently become concerned that private management companies, and Resident Management Corporations (RMCs), have been given total responsibility for maintaining developments and units, but have not been given adequate funding to maintain the units in decent, safe and sanitary conditions. The Authority recently shifted all responsibility for elevator maintenance, scavenger service, non-routine maintenance, and other vital services to private managers, and RMC's, but did not allocate adequate funding for these services. Since CHA no longer provides these services, this will result in a lessening of critical services, affecting the ability to maintain units in decent, safe and sanitary conditions. The CAC is well aware of funding limitations, but is frustrated by the CHA staff's failure to address this issue, and their disregard of the repeated assertions by the CAC and the LAC's. The CAC recognizes funding limitations, but feels strongly that CHA staff has not addressed this issue in a straight forward manner so as to reach agreement on how the more critical needs can be addressed within the budget limitations. This is even more critical for properties managed by RMC's, since some CHA staff appear determined to be as stringent as possible in evaluating RMC management activities.

The Authority's weekly Redevelopment Committee meetings have not been as productive as anticipated, because of the CHA's failure to address the other outstanding, and related, issues of building consolidation and vacancy turnovers. The CHA staff assigned to the Redevelopment meetings lacked authority to address these Authority wide issues, and were unable to obtain necessary information of decisions to resolve the related matters.

The CAC has formally resolved to cease all redevelopment meetings pending the other issues being addressed. Authority wide redevelopment activities should not proceed until the key issues involving building consolidation, vacancy turnover, and maintenance of occupied units have been addressed. The CAC is also concerned that the CHA's "Service Connectors" are not an effective use of scarce resources, as currently organized; and are currently not providing the essential social services needed for this projected redevelopment. The CAC is also concerned that as of yet residents are not being trained or hired for these positions, or for positions in the Asset Management department, as discussed and referenced in the Plan for Transformation.

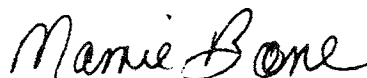
The CAC is also concerned over the recent emphasis by CHA staff on demolition; especially since only a few developments have started the redevelopment process. Given the May 17, 2000 waiver from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), CHA is no longer under pressure to expedite demolition to satisfy the time limitations set forth in the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). The CAC requested a meeting to develop an Authority wide agreed demolition schedule. This would lessen concern and apprehension among residents regarding continued rumors over actual or alleged demolition. There has been no response on this issue, or any indications that CHA staff is willing to deviate from its expedited schedule for demolition.

The CAC met in emergency session on Friday, July 7th, and agreed to cease all meetings with CHA staff on any of the above issues until the meeting with the Chairperson, the Chief Executive Officer and the Mayor's Chief of Staff. This meeting should include the Gautreaux Receiver, and counsel for the Gautreaux plaintiffs. Their presence is essential due to the continued application of the Gautreaux Court requirements to various aspects of the Plan.

CHA staff have, in several instances, refused or delayed the involvement of the Gautreaux Receiver and or counsel for Gautreaux plaintiffs. Further staff have been reluctant to agree to joint meetings with CHA staff, the CAC, the Gautreaux Receiver, and counsel for the Gautreaux plaintiffs. This has delayed progress on key matters. For example, the CAC repeatedly urged that the Gautreaux counsel and Receiver be included in meetings, on the Relocation Contract. CHA finally involved the Receiver and counsel, but still resisted joint meetings with all parties. The CAC met Friday with the Receiver and counsel, and all parties agreed that further meetings and discussions are necessary to reach final agreement. This will probably preclude final approval of the Relocation Rights Contract at the July CHA Board meeting. It is hoped that agreement can be reached and a final Relocation Rights Contract approved this month. This can be formally approved at special meetings of the CAC and CHA Board meetings later this month, or early August, as necessary.

It is essential that the above requested meeting take place as soon as possible to resolve these critical issues, and move forward on the goals of the Plan for Transformation, the improvement and transformation of public housing.

Sincerely,



Mamie Bone, CAC Chairperson

C: Julia Stasch, Chief of Staff
Mayors Office