

<b>Members Present</b>	Lillie Clinton, Gideon Hoto, Marcia Magee, Mary Mangrum, Rose McCoo, Elizabeth Miller, Lynn Miner, Tammy Morris, Amy Pawloski, TerryLynn Stewart
<b>KCHA Staff</b>	David Daw, Shawli Hathaway, Bill Cook, Beth Meshke, Michael Anderson, Tracie Friedman
<b>Guests</b>	Rochelle Frounfelker, Robyn Keske

**KEY POINTS DISCUSSED**

NO.	TOPIC	HIGHLIGHTS
1	Welcome, Introductions, Review Notes	Notes from January 2017 RAC meeting were not approved due to concerns about the <i>Parking Policy</i> section in the Tukwila notes.
2	Policy Update	KCHA's <i>No Smoking Policy</i> draft updates
3	Feedback to Research Team	RAC members provided feedback about KCHA's <i>No Smoking Policy</i> to visiting researchers.
4	Section 8 Update	Lottery is currently open.

**Prior RAC Meeting Notes**

The January meeting notes were not approved. TerryLynn Stewart raised concerns about the accuracy of the *Parking Policy* section of the January 9, 2017 notes. RAC members raised concerns about parking where they live including: parking policy isn't enforced, lack of parking, handicapped parking not convenient to units, problems with parking stickers, and other concerns. Bill Cook took note of these comments.

**Welcome and Introductions**

Shawli introduced David Daw as a new manager in King County Housing Authority's Resident Services department. Shawli introduced Marcia Magee as our meeting facilitator. Marcia also facilitated at the January 2017 meeting in Bellevue. The visiting researchers from Harvard School of Public Health introduced themselves. RAC members introduced themselves to the researchers.

**No Smoking Policy Lease Addendum Update**

Bill Cook, Director of Public Housing, presented a draft revision to KCHA's *No-Smoking Policy Lease Addendum*. This policy applies only to properties owned and managed by KCHA. There are only two proposed changes to KCHA's *No-Smoking Policy Lease Addendum*:

- Housing and Urban Development (HUD) now requires Housing Authorities to prohibit smoking within 25 feet of any building, community park, playground or garden area, so KCHA is required to add these prohibitions into its *No-Smoking Policy Lease Addendum*. This will be a change for some

properties where previously smoking was allowed on a resident's own patio, balcony or garden area.

- The second proposed change is KCHA is adding electronic nicotine delivery systems: (ENDS – which include e-cigarettes, etc.) to the list of smoking materials not allowed within 25 feet of KCHA-owned property, either inside or outside the buildings or apartment units. Bill mentioned research studies that show the vapor produced by ENDS products contains harmful chemicals.

Bill Cook listened to input from RAC member about the proposed revisions to KCHA's *No Smoking Policy* and about smoking from RAC members which included these comments:

- The ventilation in some buildings (e.g. closed high-rises) is such that smoke travels into residents' units from the hallways because vents bring air into units from the hallways.
- The policy should prohibit more than tobacco smoking. Marijuana and "bath salts" should be explicitly prohibited.
- There is less than 25 feet from buildings or play grounds to the sidewalk in most areas of my campus. This will put smokers in the street. Even if smokers do follow the rules to not smoke within 25 feet and walk up and down the street while smoking, the wind will blow the smoke to my unit.
- The new return-air vents pull outside air into my unit and bring cigarette smoke in, so I can smell the smoke from smokers outside, from lit cigarettes dropped on the ground. I'm allergic to cigarette smoke.
- There isn't space to put receptacles for smokers 25 feet from buildings on most sides of my campus. This will make smokers concentrate in one or only a couple of areas which will be close to some units.
- There isn't enough enforcement of KCHA's no smoking policy.
- What can we do if we know someone in our building is smoking?
- Suggest adding "bath salts" (artificial pot) to what is not allowed to be smoked.
- The wording of the *No Smoking Policy* is too difficult to read. The language should be simplified.
- *No Smoking* signs should be put up in the stairwells and more places in the senior high rise buildings to notify guests and care givers they are not allowed to smoke. We need more *No Smoking* signs on the grounds of our properties.
- Maintenance staff should not smoke on campus, and KCHA should require third party property management companies to enforce that with their employees, as well as with KCHA employees.
- The *No Smoking Policy* should not have disclaimers such as KCHA does not guarantee air quality, benefits to residents' health or that the property will be free from second-hand smoke.

Bill replied that a) the 25 foot rule is a HUD requirement so we don't have an option on that b) KCHA staff is not always around and KCHA does not have a way to guarantee the rules will always be enforced c) even if KCHA staff is on site, they do not always see the smoking violations d) residents can help by reporting smoking violations to their property managers and/or talking directly to neighbors to warn them they risk their housing subsidy if they smoke in the building.

### **Smoke Free Study Research Team**

Bill Cook introduced Rochelle Frounfelker and Robyn Keske who are visiting from the Harvard School of Public Health. They are here to find out from RAC members how KCHA's smoke-free policy has worked out so far.

Rochelle said they are working on a research project called the *612 Smoke-free Study*. It is called "612" because, at the start of this study, there were 612 Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) that had smoke-free policies in the US. The goal is to understand procedures and tools PHAs used to go smoke-free, as

well as attitudes, behaviors, and other factors that impact planning, implementation and enforcement of the smoke-free policy. For the PHAs who already have smoke free policies, how are the policies being implemented and how do the residents feel about it? The first phase of the study a survey sent to one administrative staff member of each PHA. The second phase was a telephone interview with that same staff member to learn more about the policy and the PHA's experience going smoke free. They are now in the third stage of the study which involves doing site visits a select number of these Housing Authorities all around the United States to learn even more by talking with residents and staff members. The most interesting part of this study is hearing from those of you directly affected by these policies, to get your feedback and opinions about what is and isn't working. Their goal at this meeting is to hear from RAC members what your thoughts are about the *No Smoking Policy*: what has worked, what hasn't worked, and opportunities for improvement.

Rochelle passed out a consent sheet and said participation in this research feedback session is voluntary and will not affect someone's housing. Participating in this is like being in a focus group. She said they wanted residents' opinions and that researches would not associate speakers' names with their comments. Rochelle requested and received from the group permission to record this portion of the meeting on her recorder for research purposes.

#### Tell us about the policy.

There is a no smoking policy. However, I smell smoke from non-residents smoking on the other side of our fence and residents smoking in their units. Smoke travels through our vents into our building and into our units. People get sick in our building because of bad air and the way the ventilation works.

#### Who does the policy apply to?

Nobody should be smoking on the property, but people do.

Pets are also bothered by bad air.

Even if a smoker is more than 24 feet from a property the wind brings it to us. Other forms of air pollution also come into our units (e.g. BBQ smoke.)

Non-residents sometimes smoke while walking through our property.

Some smokers throw down butts onto the ground on our campus.

Anybody coming onto our campus should be prohibited from smoking and throwing down butts, including guests.

Residents shouldn't smoke in the building, even in their own unit.

Hard core smokers say "Don't take my rights away." Some people who've lived for several years in their units, or caregivers/companions of such residents, say "I don't care with the [new] rules are, I'm going to keep on smoking in my unit." These people are taking *my* rights away [to not be around substances which damage my health].

#### What happens when a resident breaks the no smoking rules?

- There is a lack of people to enforce the rules especially outside regular working hours.
- Management needs to tell residents who smoke that they are at risk of losing their housing if they continue to smoke and also offer assistance for how to quit smoking.
- A lot of people smoke (for medical reasons or tobacco), and other people know who's smoking, but no one does anything about it.
- If you make a complaint against a neighbor to property management, you might not hear back what happened, but that doesn't mean the manager didn't do anything. A good way to stop smoking is to report the name of smokers to your property manager.

- Sometimes neighbors make a mistake about who is causing a problem. For example, a non-smoker who's been someplace where smoking is allowed can have the smell of cigarettes on his or her clothing and hair.
- People have been evicted from my property because of smoking. Some lived there before the no smoking policy went into effect and thought they should be able to stay in place and continue to smoke, but they were evicted.

What was your first reaction when you heard a no smoking policy was being put in place?

- Hurray!
- No way is it going to work.
- There's no way it can be enforced. KCHA doesn't guarantee this policy will be enforced and doesn't guarantee no smoking on our properties.
- Smoking is very hard addiction to break.
- It was good when the policy first went into place that residents were helped to stop smoking with patches, classes etc.
- Why are we having such strict policy for everybody when cigarettes are legal? Is it for health reasons or because of liability or because people who live in Public Housing tend to be smokers more than other people?
- The names of people making complaints about neighbors smoking should not be released. As long as names are released, it isn't safe to report who's smoking in the building
- This policy isn't enough to adequately help people with serious health problems related to bad air. The vents in my building are not adequately cleaned.
- One way to prove who's smoking in their units would be to see whose vent filters inside the units have cigarette smoke residue.
- Because we are notified of inspections before the inspections, people who smoke inside their units can clean up their units in time to pass the inspection, but after the inspection their units go back to smelling like cigarettes.

Why do you think KCHA decided to implement a *No Smoking* policy?

- Non smokers got very well organized and very politically involved. They got the state to enact no smoking laws, and the idea to restrict smoking went to the federal level.
- It costs the housing authority a lot more to renovate a unit which had been lived in by a smoker than a non-smoker.
- I think it's about liability: medical, fire hazard, children and other household members subjected to second-hand smoke.
- It damages the health of children who grow up in the home of a smoker. When these children become adults sometimes their health is bad because of smoke in their childhood environment and the tax payers have to help pay for medical needs of those adults.
- Smoking is a fire hazard.

What recommendations do you have to help Housing Authorities make *No Smoking* policies be successful?

- Ask new residents if they smoke and if they are aware they are moving into a no smoking building.
- Discriminating against smokers before they move into the building would be a way to stop smoking in the building. Not accepting smokers to live in housing authority units will improve the air quality in the buildings and reduce the risk of fires.

- The housing authority (HA) should have some units that are stand-alone for smokers. Letting smokers live in high-rise buildings isn't a good idea.
- Make it really clear that smoking isn't allowed before new residents move in. Make it really clear what the consequences are for smoking on campus.
- HA staff should catch smokers themselves and not expect residents to make complaints against their neighbors to find out who is smoking. The HA can prove who is smoking in which units by periodically checking the vent filters for cigarette smoke residue in every resident's unit. The units with evidence of cigarette smoke residue in the filters will be the units where residents have smoked in their units.
- Third party management companies should also enforce the No Smoking policy. Properties owned by the HA but managed by a third party property management company should be inspected for smoking by HA staff., e.g. walk and smell the hallways, inspect the vents, watch for maintenance staff smoking, etc.
- Be careful about making people homeless because they have an addictive habit.
- Enforce the rules about where smoking is allowed and not allowed.
- Residents can smoke outside their units in designated areas so even if they are addicted, they can leave their units to smoke.
- Support services such as counseling should be offered to smokers who want to quit. For people who must smoke, designated areas should be convenient.
- Should we allow smokers to destroy themselves and also the lives of others who are around their smoke? We should not let them kill themselves and also us who are around them. We should require them to learn how to quit smoking or give them a deadline to quit smoking. Provide air purifiers to residents who have health problems caused by smoking.

### **Section 8 Update**

Michael Anderson said applications are open for nine more days for people to apply for a chance to get on KCHA's Section 8 waiting list. Eligible applicants are seniors or disabled adults or adults with dependent children. Applying is free, easy to do, and is available online. Applying gets someone in the lottery to get selected for the waiting list.

KCHA's Section 8 is now assigned Section 8 households according to the zip code where the Section 8 households live. The last name of the participant no longer relates to which KCHA staff member will manage their paperwork. One advantage is that a landlord will have the same Section 8 staff member contact for all Section 8 properties in the same zip code. An additional benefit is that all Section 8 households in the same area have the same Section 8 staff member as their contact.

Cost of living adjustments (COLA) will go into effect for Section 8 households June 1, 2017. The new higher payment standards will also go into effect, so even though the COLA will raise some people's income the net effect for many participants will be a reduction of the tenant portion of the rent.

It's difficult to find a unit to rent with a Section 8 voucher, but don't give up because people are still getting housed with Section 8 vouchers. The rental market is indeed very competitive. With our higher payment standards people have a good chance at renting even on the east side.

New voucher holders get 120 days to use their voucher. They can request an extension which is usually granted for two more months giving most people about six months to lease up before their voucher expires, if they request the extension.