

KING COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY (KCHA)**MEETING NOTES****RESIDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAC)**

King County Housing Authority, 700 Andover Park West, Tukwila WA ■
 Snoqualmie Room ■ December 04, 2017 ■ 5:00 – 6:30 PM

Members Present	Sharon Bosterder, Lillie Clinton, David Madison, Noke Phoumkeo, Antonio Smith, TerryLynn Stewart, Barbara Rice, Terry Anderson, Gideon Hoto, Tammy Morris
KCHA Staff	Bill Cook, Tracie Friedman, Shawli Hathaway, Nikki Parrott, Michael Anderson, Beth Pearson

KEY POINTS DISCUSSED

NO.	TOPIC	HIGHLIGHTS
1	Welcome, Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goal to make a poster to describe the Tukwila RAC group - Send in ideas for review - Will be translated in different languages
2	Section 8 Updates	Michael Anderson
3	Electronic Online Payments	Bill Cook
4	Key Keeper, Designated Person Form and Maintenance Charges	Bill Cook
5	Update on 2018 MTW Plan: Transfer of Kirkland Maintenance Building	Beth Pearson
6	KCHA's Shining Start	Shawli Hathaway

Welcome and Introductions

RAC members and attending KCHA staff introduced themselves around the room

Section 8 Updates

Section 8 has tried to do everything they can to keep the rents lined up with the market, and the market just continues to grow everyday making it difficult to keep up. What we have been able to do is create an emergency payment standard; the board voted it in for December 1st. We created a new tier; there used to only be 5 tiers and now there are 6 tiers. How this works, you will find your zip code and see what tier corresponds with that zip code on the front page of the document you have. Example if you live at 98003, that is Federal Way; that is our largest occupied zip code. If you look on the front page of the forms you have you will see that this zip code is Tier number 2. That used to be Tier number 1, so the rent for a 1-bedroom in Tier 2 is \$1160; that amount used to be \$1060. That is \$100 more a month. For some this doesn't seem like much but if you are a senior or on a fixed income that's a total of \$1200 a year that can now go to medications or food. That is an amazing change and we are doing our best to try and keep up with the market. These new Tiers help people get into housing, stops them from being

barred because they can't afford the rents the landlords are asking, it will help you as tenants if you have a change in your household. An example a tenant that is going to have a COLA increase; we will pick that COLA up, do an interim and pick up the new payment standards. So your income went up \$20 your rent will go down because you have the new payment standard. Another thing that is very important to mention for our section 8 clients is when they want to move they tell me that their voucher is not good enough because it is too low to secure a unit. These new Tier numbers actually fit these areas; this is a very positive thing for our clients.

RAC member questions:

The Energy Assistance, why does that keep going down? It has not gone down or changed in the 3 years that I have been here. In fact I advocate for it to go up as we know our utilities are getting higher and higher.

Electronic/Online Rent Payments

Bill Cook gave an update on the Online Rental Payment pilot was that started In November. So far 17 residents have signed up to pay their rent online out of 235; this is about 7%. We were hoping there would be more so we did some outreach to the residents that didn't sign up and provided them with materials on how to get started. The good news is so far is that 4 days into December we have 8 new people that have signed up so that brings us closer to 10% of people using the online feature. This is about where we expected to be and we feel things are going very well, it has been running very smooth operationally.

Residents go a website, submit their information, they click pay just like they would on any other website to make payments. So far the pilot has been going very well and we have not had any issues with banks not sending the funds. We're going to continue the pilot for another 2 months and then reevaluate how it's going and decide if there is anything we need to change. Hopefully we will then get to roll this out to every resident sometime early in the spring, probably March or April. Not every resident has to use the online payment; this is just another option for residents to get their payments in. We have heard over the last several years there have been issues with the postal service where it was taking many days from mailing to being received which resulted in late charges to tenants accounts. So this is our option for residents to help solve this issue.

RAC member questions:

Have you done a survey on how many people who have used this service have computers at their homes vs those who want to use the service but have to go out of their home to do so? We have not done that but that is a great idea. One of the great things about PayLease is that you don't actually have to have a computer and go to a web site; you can also use an App through your phone as well. So I think it might be better for us to ask both questions whether they are using a computer or the App on the phone. I would guess more are probably using the app as many people now have smart phone and in a research study we did we found that upwards to 50% of our residents had internet access whether it be on a computer or smart phone.

Out of those 17 people who signed up for online payments how many were at elderly disable buildings vs family sites? It's interesting the spread as we picked 3 buildings that we call family properties and the

other 3 are the mixed population buildings where we have the elderly and disabled, and in November we actually had more usage at the elderly disabled properties. It's not started to become more even for the month of December.

Maybe in the RS office or somewhere to have an extra computer that is secure for residents to come in and pay their bill or even have a computer at every property for residents to pay rent. That's a great idea but I would also say that that computer would be as secure as any other computer out there. The company we use, PayLease, has the highest security rating on their software so it generally shouldn't be a concern on what computer is being used.

There are a lot of people and seniors that are not computer literate so as an option in the future do you think that they would be able to do like a direct deposit from their checks? That's essentially what this is, electronic checks, which is the bank sending the money/checks electronically from the account. We are not planning to get rid of the option to pay via mail so if that's what you're comfortable with then it's ok to continue paying that way.

Can I take my banks online bill pay and connect it to this program? Unfortunately you can't, these are 2 separate services.

Will this service be provided at Greenbridge? This will only be available right now at sites that are KCHA staff managed; that isn't to say that the management company at Greenbridge couldn't decide to use this service as well. It is an option for them to do so. I believe they are waiting to see how this goes at our properties first and then may decide to start using it.

Are you accepting debit or credit cards payments? We are not allowing credit or debit card payments as we are worried that some individual will pay their rent with credit and then possibly get into a difficult financial situation.

There was a letter that was sent out from KCHA in regards to Comcast offering discounted services; is there a future partnership with any other companies to get special rates? Comcast approached KCHA about offering these services and at the moment we are not working with any other companies.

Key Keeper, Designated Person Form and Maintenance Charges

The Designated Person Form is a required form by state law that we had to send it out; it was not required for it to be returned. We were mistaken when we sent it out the first time we thought that it was required to come back to us. This memo clarifies that we don't need the form back. The update law was that the resident needs to provide their landlord with a designated person that we can contact in the event that the resident passes away. This form is an emergency contact form that the resident can choose to submit to the landlord; the form does not change how and when any landlord can enter a unit. In April we sent out the amended form which made it clear to the residents that they did not have to return the form to us.

RAC member questions:

Is this form only designed for residents who don't have family living with them? This form is designed for only those residents who are the sole resident of the unit, if you have anybody else in your household this form does not apply.

Upon tenants death or notice of tenants death KCHA may enter the unit immediately.....so if I die on Sunday the food won't spoil by Monday so there is no need to immediately enter my unit. We will not go into somebody's unit to move items the day they pass away unless there are issues with rodents coming in or there was a horrible smell coming from the unit. We are not going to go in to clean out somebodys refrigerator, we will go in to check as soon as we find out somebody has passed away and make sure the doors are locked and there are no pets in the unit. The key word there is "may" and that would be if there appeared to be a reason for us having to enter.

I would feel more comfortable if this form said "designated person or family member". This is for who ever the resident chooses to list; this could be a friend, a family member, a co-worker and remember this form is not required to be returned to us. We can't change this form, it comes from the state.

This revised form says that tenants can ask for the form back and managers are saying that no they can't remove it from the file and will only give us copies of the form. They should be able to remove it from the file. We will make sure that they are doing that if it is requested by the tenant.

This is the key-keeper agreement and I wanted everybody to see what this looked so they know what exactly the key-keepers are signing and to have a better understanding of what a key keeper is and what it isn't. So at our some of our mixed population buildings we hire as a KCHA employee what is called a key-keeper. You will see in the agreement when you look in section 1 what their responsibilities are and as an employee they have to sign this agreement. They are subject to discipline if they do something that's in violation to this agreement, illegal, inappropriate. They can be terminated as an employee and actually forced to move out as well. Their responsibilities are the purpose they serve is for emergency type situations when management is not on site. For example open up doors for tenants during a lock out, being on call for emergency situations, locking up the building if needed when doors are propped open; they distribute flyers and notices that are not legal notices, for example a resident BBQ. They also report to the property manager any hazardous conditions they may see. They will collect keys from a resident every so often if the resident happens to move on a weekend but this is a rare occurrence as most resident prefer to have contact with the manager before they leave. They do get a discounted rent, and as an employee they go through a hiring process which includes a criminal background check.

RAC member questions

What kind of training have they had if they believe somebody has died in the unit and there is a smell coming out? They are to call the police.

Are they bonded and licensed? They are not as a KCHA employee they don't need to be because they are covered by us.

What is the policy in regards to being let into your unit and needing to show ID? Requesting ID is a part of the lock out policy; if the ID was left in the unit the key-keeper would open the door and allow you to get the wallet and show the ID as verification. If the wallet or ID was not in the unit then the key keeper is not supposed to let them in.

At my property the key keeper carries the key with her all the time she lets everybody know that she has this key that she can go into apartments if she wants to. She has gone into apartments because she heard a noise or smelled something to investigate or to see how far along residents are with moving out of their units. She just goes in at her own discretion. If that is all true, what you are saying, then we need to make a change with that particular situation. We will look at that key keepers performance and see if we need to make any changes.

Why do we have key keepers and not just have a number to call? It may take over an hour to get you into your unit if we have you call an after hours number vs being able to immediately get you into you apartment with the key keeper. We have just recently started looking into having electronic doors, which would get rid of using keys and allow us to track who goes into a unit and when. This is a very expensive option and again we are just started to look into it but I could see this being something beneficial in addressing some of your concerns.

Is there more than one person as a key keeper in each building? No.

If that key keeper is away and can't come to the building is there somebody else that has those keys? Yes the property manager. Is there somebody besides the property manager like at Greenbridge the fire department has the master key; I don't understand why they don't at these senior properties? They do have access to a master key. There is a key box outside the buildings for them to use, the problem is that often they don't check the box and will break down doors so they can get into the units as quick as possible. The police use the boxes more often the fire department but they are not being used all the time.

Maintenance charges

You received the newest draft version of this policy at the last RAC meeting and what I'm handing out now is what the old version. I propose tabling this to the next meeting since we are running low on time; that will give you a chance to compare the two versions. What you will see and what our goal is in changing this policy is that the old policy is highly confusing and we want to make this policy so that it is more streamlined, easier to follow and so that tenants get charged the same amount across all or properties. We want you to take some time to review it and come back next meeting to further discuss. I don't expect this policy to officially be in place until mid-next year.

Why are you going to charge me for something that I don't have instruction for in the language I speak/read and I don't know how to take care of? That is a good point; we can address that further next meeting as we need to move on to the next topic.

Update on 2018 MTW Plan: Transfer of Kirkland Maintenance Building

Beth Pearson discussed an update to a MTW Plan activity of selling one of KCHA's buildings that hasn't been used since 2008. This building is our Eastside Regional Maintenance Facility it's a building built in 1991 that was used for maintenance until 2008; since then the City of Kirkland has been using it for their grounds maintenance and fleet parking. As a part of selling this facility HUD requires us to get their approval and I am the one responsible to get this approval. One of the steps in this process is to get a lot of resident input but in this case since there are no residents living in the location I wanted to bring it to the RAC to keep you up to date in what is going on with this building. When we sell it to the City of

Kirkland they are going to pay us 1.9 million dollars, which is the appraised value, and we are going to use that money to acquire or develop more low income units. This is money that we will be able to repurpose to something that will be very beneficial to our residents and community.

RAC member questions:

Are you taking away from maintenance and when it comes to storage of appliance where are you putting them since we no longer will have this space? The City of Kirkland has been using this space for the past 10 years so we don't use this space or store any appliance there now. At the majority of our properties we have a storage space and we try to keep 1 set of appliance at each for back up purposes.

There was a request to change the RAC meetings from the first week of the month to the 2nd or 3rd week of the month. The beginning of the month is when some members receive funds and they are out paying bills which makes it difficult for some to get to the RAC meetings on time. Discussion held between the members and it was agreed that the meeting could be changed to the 2nd week of the month; the days and times will stay the same.

KCHA's Shining Star

This is an award for our residents that we will discuss at the next RAC meeting since we are now out of time.