



Housing News

A Newsletter of the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford

Compiled by the office of the Executive Director

Richard D. Fox, Executive Director

Estella Alexander, Deputy Director

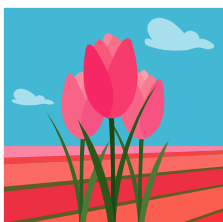
Commissioners:

- Courtney A. Nelthropp, Chairman
- Timothy B. Hodges, Vice Chairman
- Daiva K. Jones-Kelley, Resident Commissioner
- Vito E. Palermo
- Kristella Garcia

Editor, Mary Beth Henry



Spring will be here before you know it and we hope you enjoy all the beautiful bulbs at the various Housing Authority developments. Please respect your property and make sure you don't drive over any bulbs. Thank you for your cooperation.



From The Executive Director

On January 24, 2008, staff testified on the impact of proposed changes in Low Income Housing Tax Credit funding by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority.

The Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) had proposed radical changes in the qualifications criteria for the award of 2008 Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). LIHTC are the form of federal subsidy that is administered by CHFA and that result in substantial investments of private equity (i.e. through the purchase of the tax credits) in the development of affordable and mixed-income housing.

The proposed changes will eliminate the priority status that has been historically afforded to projects intended to revitalize severely distressed state and federal public housing complexes and all but eliminate this important class of projects in the future.

The Connecticut Housing Finance Authority has been a long-standing partner in the revitalization of federal and state public housing developments. Its support for HOPE VI development efforts in New Haven, Hartford and Stamford has facilitated the transformation of severely distressed housing complexes with overwhelming concentrations of poverty into new communities of diverse populations that are economically sustainable. The revitalization of these developments has enabled residents to participate in an array of supportive services which have led to higher levels of employment, better performance in schools and lower crime rates. The investment of CHFA financing has often leveraged public dollars at the ratio of 3 to 1 or even higher and the older and more obsolete examples of Connecticut's public housing are not sustainable otherwise.

The needs of the state Moderate Rental portfolio are approaching crisis proportions. Moderate Rental housing complexes throughout Connecticut are approaching the end of their useful lives and are in need of recapitalization or revitalization. Stamford has three such complexes in its portfolio – Vidal Court, Oak Park and Lawnhill Terrace – which together total some 600 housing units. Our residents are, typically, low and moderate income working families who are the backbone of our service economy. If we were to lose these apartments, these workers and their families would be displaced from Stamford, a result which would cause both economic and social harm to our community as well as place an additional burden on our already over-taxed transit systems.

The loss of this important
(Continued on Page 4)

Update on Ongoing Housing Authority Projects

The Elevator Replacement project at Stamford Manor is now planned to have a March start date. All the material has been ordered and delivered with the exception of the doors, which took a little longer than anticipated. With the delivery of the doors in

March, the contractor will be able to get started in earnest. The project is to continue through April with the new elevator operational by then.

The Ground Floor Ceiling and Insulation project at Ripowam Manor has been

awarded and the contract is to be signed within the next 30 days. Upon the signing of the contract, a construction schedule can then be established.

The Security Improvement project at Stamford Manor has
(Continued on Page 2)

Safety Corner

Please make sure to secure all window and door locks in your apartment on a daily basis and make sure they are in proper working condition. In addition, please do not have any debris or equipment of any kind in the front or back of your apartment. Any equipment or objects may cause someone to trip or act as a receptacle into which someone may place an illegal substance. This will also make it safer for your children.

Be alert and aware as to what goes on in your neighborhood. If you see a suspicious person loitering in your general area, contact the Housing Authority or call the police directly at 977-4444. Please remember that your Resident Association meets on a monthly basis with the Housing Authority staff and police department. You should actively participate in these meetings and discuss any concerns you may have regarding security at that time.

As Spring approaches, please remember that Housing Authority policy stipulates that no grills are allowed. In the past we have had problems with the siding of a building melting from the heat of a grill. In addition, no cans of gasoline should be kept inside or outside of the units as this represents a significant fire hazard. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping our developments safe.

Update on Ongoing Housing Authority Projects

(Continued from Page 1)

received a partial approval of its

Coastal Area Management application with the sign off by the Engineering Department. With the final approval

by the EPB office it then goes to the Zoning Board for the final approval.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes Update

In early February, Governor Rell offered her proposed Mid-term Budget Adjustments and the restoration of PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) and Tax Abatement Grants were NOT included.

On February 19, 2008, Richard Fox, Executive Director of the Stamford Housing Authority, and Commissioner Daiva Jones-Kelley testified in favor of two bills before the Selective Committee on Housing which proposed to restore the State's 30-year commitment of PILOT funding for the State Moderate Rent Program and tax abatement payments for non-profit sponsored housing. These bills are Senate Bill No. 2, [An Act Concerning an Emergency Relief Plan for Connecticut Families for Housing Costs](#) and House Bill No. 5031, [An Act Concerning Payment in Lieu of Taxes for Public Housing and the Low and Moderate Income Tax Abatement Programs](#).

The 2008 state budget eliminated the PILOT program causing a fiscal crisis for both local housing authorities and their residents. In speaking to several state legislators, we have learned that

many did not know that PILOT had been eliminated from the state budget. Consequently, neither housing authorities nor residents were made aware that PILOT was to be eliminated until the state budget was finalized.

The elimination of the State's PILOT commitment shifts the burden for this significant financial obligation onto our low and moderate income residents - struggling households that have relied on the restricted rent of State public housing to make ends meet. These households are typically hard working members of our communities' services sector - the backbone of our local economies. In order for residents to now assume this obligation, it would mean a substantial rent increase in their rental rate. The State's elimination of its PILOT commitment during the last days of the 2007 legislative session, along with subsequent attempts to revive it, provided very little time for residents to assume this obligation.

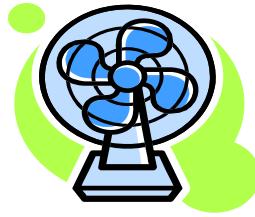
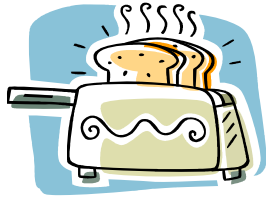
The process of increasing rental rates in a State Moderate Rent facility, beyond the normal inflation factor, is lengthy and cumbersome, involving

numerous notices, public hearings and other matters: it typically takes between three and six months. This increase in rental rates would create a hardship for our neediest working families. Our properties have already suffered deterioration due to the State's capital disinvestments and they currently have little or no market appeal to families of greater means than low and moderate income residents. Most low-income housing programs receive an operating subsidy to make up the difference between the residents' effective ability to pay and the real cost of operating the complex. This is the case in the Federal low income housing program, Federal Section 8 program and the State RAP program. The only subsidy for the State Moderate Rent Program to help fill this gap had been the PILOT program, and now that has been eliminated.

Mr. Fox urged the Committee to restore the PILOT, with two years of funding retroactive to July of 2007, so residents and our vital housing infra-

(Continued on Page 4)

Household Electrical Appliance Safety

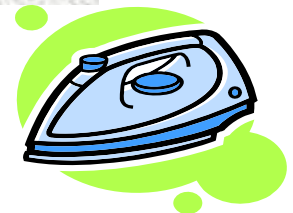
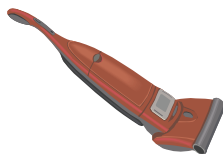


Electrical fires can be prevented by following a few simple rules:

1. Always follow the manufacturers safety precautions
2. Don't overlook seemingly harmless warning signs:
 - a. Overheating
 - b. An unusual smell
 - c. Short circuits
 - d. Sparks
 - e. Sputters
3. If any of the above occur, the appliance should be immediately turned off and disconnected from the electrical supply source.

As a precaution you should always:

1. Routinely check the wiring on electrical appliances
2. Replace old, worn out or damaged electrical cords
3. Use Electrical extension cords safely and don't overload wall sockets
4. Keep all clothes, curtains and other potentially flammable items away from heaters



Executive Director

(Continued from Page 1)

resource would have a significant impact on Connecticut's supply of affordable housing for working families.

The Stamford Housing Authority has been working since 2003 to undertake the complete revitalization of Vidal Court, a severely distressed and obsolete state Moderate Rental housing complex. We have secured special enabling legislation from the General Assembly and have received a commitment of property acquisition and gap funding from the Office of Policy and Management. During the past 12 months, the SHA has secured the off-site properties which, in combination with the original site, will enable us to undertake the development. The first phase – a 95-unit, mixed income, family development - has been fully designed and is the subject of a 2008 application for CHFA financing and an allocation of 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits that will be presented to CHFA in the next few weeks. As a result of proposed changes in the Qualified Allocation Plan for 2008, con-

sisting of the elimination of public housing revitalization from Special Class I and significant changes in the scoring criteria, the Vidal Court revitalization may not receive an allocation of Low Income Housing Tax Credits. Our project would thereby be infeasible.

The Stamford Housing Authority (SHA) is concerned that the proposed changes in Connecticut's LIHTC Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) would render its current and future revitalization projects of state and federal public housing complexes infeasible.

While we understand that CHFA might be concerned about the extent to which Connecticut's total annual allocation of 9% Tax Credits is being dedicated to public housing revitalization initiatives, the SHA feels that the proposed QAP will all but eliminate this important class of projects. We propose, as a possible alternative, the preservation of the previous Special Class I designation to include the revitalization of state and federal housing complexes. So as not to preclude the fund-

ing of other worthy projects, however, we propose that CHFA establish a limitation of some portion of the total state allocation (i.e. a *setaside*) for these initiatives. This would create a discrete funding pool that may be accessed by open competition between like applicants. We feel that this Class should give weight to applications that are ready to proceed, have been the subject of special legislation or DECD (8-64a) disposition approval, have obtained commitments of state or federal capital grant funding, and demonstrate considerable public effort, meaningful resident consultation and agency support.

After much public outcry from Housing Authorities in the state, CHFA has decided at this point not to implement the proposed changes. For the time being, everything will remain status quo. I will keep you posted on any new developments regarding this item.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes Update

(Continued from Page 2)

structure are not harmed. The cost is \$2,204,000 a year for two years for PI-LOT and \$1,704,890 a year for two years for tax abatement for non-profit properties.

The elimination of the State's PI-LOT commitment affects residents in

31 municipalities throughout the state. Ironically we are punishing the very municipalities that have stepped up to the plate to deliver affordable housing. Terminating the PILOT, a program in existence for over 30 years, sends the message to other municipalities that the State may curtail its previously expressed commitment to other programs

that encourage towns to provide affordable housing.

Connecticut NAHRO and the Stamford Housing Authority request that the Connecticut General Assembly restore the PILOT program and Tax Abatement Program for the residents of Connecticut.

Storm Doors at Oak Park and Lawnhill Terrace

Please note that we have been having a problem with doors coming off the hinges at Oak Park and Lawnhill Terrace as people do not close them tightly. When a strong wind comes along, the doors then fly off and need to be replaced.

Please be sure to close your door

tightly when you exit your unit. If a door needs to be replaced, each resident will be charged a fee of \$268 for the new door plus the cost of installation. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

