ACT Board of Directors Meeting  
March 27, 2010

MINUTES

present:
CASLS: Susan Hegel  The Guidance Center: Gail Council

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:15

Children With Voices program
Presentation by Gail Council, Children With Voices program at The Guidance Center. Main office at 5 Sacramento St, Cambridge. Program focused on Cambridge, Somerville, Medford and Everett but handles situations from anywhere around Boston when children are involved.
Domestic violence can be an unrecognized habit. Program helps mainly women, deals with housing issues, filling out forms (helping understand them), negotiating with CHA re: evictions, people being harassed by family abusers. There is a need for residents to work with their CHA housing “agents.” CHA doesn’t have domestic violence specialists now. People can experience trauma just in negotiating with CHA. Fear of abusers often disrupts communications. Court houses, police and fire departments have domestic violence advocates, victims can get help from lawyers like CASLS and the District Attorney’s office. Advocates must be familiar with problems of domestic violence and abuse. Printed materials were handed out describing Guidance Center workshops on domestic violence in which children express their experiences and learn how to deal with violence in the home.
Susan Hegel explained current policies for families with domestic violence: through police it is possible to get an emergency restraining order issued at any time, 24-7.
CAPZ spoke briefly about CHA’a Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) policy.

February minutes
BC motion, seconded by CAPZ second to accept minutes of February ACT Board meeting.
MOTION PASSES 12 -0-0

Board vacancies
ST proposed that former public housing Board member JR be reseated to fill vacancy created by resignation of LG. No motion for lack of quorum. There are vacancies in public housing districts 6, 7 & 8 as well as in voucher seats.

General
The Chair clarified ACT members’ responsibilities when speaking about ACT in a public arena. We can explain our structure, purpose and activities but not try to represent ACT in ways that have not been decided by the Board. The Chair reminded members of the CHA workshop on the voucher program scheduled for Monday March 29 at the YWCA.

Committee Reports
MOU [Memorandum of Understanding]: Patience is needed, this will be a slow and hopefully steady process. CHA appears willing to implement ACT’s suggestion to train CHA staff in customer service. Some private management firms already do this. The Memo of Understanding will be a contract between CHA and residents organized in ACT. As per ACT’s
bylaws, the ACT NT [Negotiating team] has insisted that CHA maintains relations with the Tenant Councils independent of relations with ACT. NT has explained ACT’ outreach to the Tenant Councils. NT trying to get CHA to agree to guarantee regular meetings roughly six times per year. CHA resisting NT proposal to set aside time for public comment at Board of Commissioners meetings. NT wants to raise concerns of Section 8 residents regarding issue faced by landlords dealing with CHA. Section 8 landlords have contracted certain obligations toward residents and CHA. MOU Committee needs suggestions from ACT members on how to approach concerns of landlords.

A&O [Assistance and Outreach]: The initial ACT-sponsored meeting of tenant council reps on March 20 was largely successful. A written report was distributed in the last mailing and at the Board meeting. Weakness was in absence of non-English-speaking people at the meeting. The residents called the next meeting for Saturday April 17. There was discussion of translation and interpretation resources available.

The Voucher subcommittee will met in the ACT office March 31

Office: CASLS will host a training session for ACT office volunteers and other interested ACT members at the ACT office April 5.

Finance: A requisition form has been developed to keep track of purchases made for ACT by individuals. This will systematize reimbursements and make it possible for the Treasurers to track expenses. Copies of the form were distributed to the Board.

TAC [Technical Assistance]: TAC will meet on Monday, May 10 in the Manning Terrace Room to prepare for upcoming CHA policy releases, especially the May 20 hearing at the YWCA on the new MTW Report. On April 1 CHAPA’s public housing committee will meet at 18 Tremont St. Boston. ACT is a member of CHAPA.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30