

**NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

September 29-30, 2021

MINUTES PART #1

ROLL CALL TO CONVENE THE MEETINGS

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:
Chair Reg Foster
Vice Chair Eleanor Evans
Treasurer Ed Scheideler
Commissioner Penny Kirk
Commissioner Janice Bennett

NHA STAFF PRESENT:
Angie Medeiros, Executive Director
Deb Tambeau, Resident Services Coordinator

GUESTS: Janice Bennett, Sue Biasizzo, Ross Donald, Richard Dey, Kalpana Shaw

The Chair declared a quorum and stated that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by the Secretary of the Needham Housing Authority (NHA) by preparing a Public Notice dated Sept 27, 2021, setting forth the date, time, and place of this meeting. Said notice was filed with the Clerk of the Town of Needham and provided to persons requesting it.

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AGENDA

A. Cooks Bridge After-School Program Reboot -- Discussion & Next Steps

- 1. Recap of Current Situation**
- 2. Resident Input/Recommendations**
 - **Tenants Association**
 - **Parents**
 - **Other Residents**
- 3. Presentation, Review & Discussion of Proposals (current and any new)**
- 4. Review/Discussion of Questions/Issues (current and any new)**
- 5. Next Steps**

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Chair Foster opened the meeting on September 29, 2021 at 5pm

Chair Foster asked and the Board agreed that, given the purpose of the meeting, all attendees should be promoted to be “panelists”, so we could have a free and open discussion among all of us. Jessica Reese, Sue Biasizzo, Ross Donald and Richard Dey then joined the meeting as panelists.

Chair Foster opened with a very brief recap of the current situation with the After School Program and how it’d been damaged by the “double whammy” of the pandemic and the struggles of previous resident services director. He also laid out the objectives of this special board meeting. He invited other participants to comment. Janice Bennett and Sue Biasizzo provided background on how important and successful the program has been in the past.

The President of the Cooks Bridge Tenant Association Jessica Reese then presented her proposal (attached). Before she started, Ms. Rees said that though no parents are attending our meeting tonight, everyone she’s talked to are very interested.

Ross Donald then provided his comments.

Jessica Reese then read her proposal to the participants and added additional “color commentary” on various important elements and key objectives.

Chair Foster then asked other participants with proposals to present them, so we’d have them all before us before we got into general discussion and brainstorming. Commissioner said that he agrees with much of what Ms. Reese is proposing. He went on to read his proposal, amplifying and elaborating on important points (attached).

Commissioner Penny Kirk went next with her proposal and analysis, which took the form of a list of “Pros” and “Cons” (attached). She noted many of the obstacles that need to be overcome, and she provide numerous examples of success stories.

Chair Foster asked Commissioner Janice Bennett, as our Tenant-Commissioner, to present her proposal and views. Ms. Bennett shared personal stories from her own family’s involvement with the After School Program, and the support they’d received, illustrating how important the program has been to the entire Cooks Bridge community.

After asking if anyone else had other proposals or comments, Chair Foster moved the meeting to the next agenda item

Review/Discussion/Comments of Questions/Issues (current and any new)

Many parties have submitted questions and issues to be addressed. They are all in the Board meeting packet and have been shared with other interested parties. Chair Foster asked all parties bring each questions up one-at-a-time, so they can be addressed and discussed.

- a. **Scope of Proposal from the Cooks Bridge Tenants Association.** And others The current proposals are recommending expanding the program to middle schoolers and high schoolers. Should we try to just restart the current program, then think about adding older kids later? The consensus answer is: yes.
- b. **Is the current space adequate for the expanded program plus use as a community room?** It is configured to be 4 bedroom apartment. The consensus answer is: the original Cooks Bridge community room (currently the NHA office) would be much more suitable.
- c. **Parent Surveys.** We have responses from 7 of the 29 families at Cooks Bridge. Ages 6-13 – 10 kids; ages 14-17 kids. That’s a great start. How many of these families would actually use a restarted

After School Program? Can we get responses from the other families, even if they're families with mostly high school kids? What about the needs from High Rock Estates kids? This is a work-in-progress. Jessica Reese: the Tenants Association will continue to try to get responses.

- d. **Beacon Academy.** Ms. Kirk described the role of Beacon Academy. Very interesting to all attendees. Ms. Kirk get a web site link to everyone...it's BeaconAcademy.org.
- e. **Resident Services Coordinator Perspective.** Deb Tambeau provided a recap and additional perspective on the pre-pandemic program and the efforts that have been made to get the program restarted. Pre-pandemic: program doing well, providing help, tutoring, outdoor activities, field trips to museums, etc. \$4,001 fundraising Jan/Feb 2020. This was great, and we all agree that it is essential to help kids with school. Then pandemic hit. NHA/NPS coordinated meals to families and activity boxes from Parks & Rec. and virtual tutors from NPS. NHS staff discussed cleanup and upgrades to facility. Painting and repairs. Good stuff was kept. Broken, worn out stuff was discarded. Staff used the pandemic period to spruce up the place and make it look good. NPS donated new furniture and four desktops. Spring, Summer 2021: tried to get parent interest in restarted program. Only 3 kids by end of summer. BIDH provided \$5,000 grant in April, conditioned on improving MCAS scores. NPS restarting task force by Keith Forbes attempted to help NHA. Other town agencies tried to assist too. Idea: NPS high school kids for tutoring. Meetings during the Summer. Little response or expression of interest from families. Some families responded: don't want NHA or NPS involved, they just want the After School program to be parent run. Is the conclusion: families want a family/parent run program, without NHS or NPS involved. They are looking for space, money to do the program themselves? No says Commissioner Bennet and Ms. Reese; the only issue is privacy. Residents don't want NHA staff to not know info like grades and/or if students are failing.
- f. **What is the mission and expertise of the NHA?** Janice, Cheryl, parents and later Penny were instrumental in getting the prior successful program going, and sustaining it.
- g. **Should the 4 bedroom unit formerly used for the After School Program be put back in service to provide housing to a potential homeless family? Should the NHA Office be relocated off-site, and the building be returned to its original use as a community room and potentially the restarted After-School Program?** Executive Director Angie Medeiros noted that there was a waiting list of families who qualified for a 4 bedroom unit, some who might be homeless. Affordable 4 bedroom units are relatively scarce.

At this point, Chair Foster noted that we've run out of time, and suggested that we start off tomorrow with Question 4g and the remaining questions.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01pm to resume at a date/time certain: September 30, 2021 @5pm

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**NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

September 30, 2021

MINUTES PART #2

ROLL CALL TO CONVENE THE MEETINGS

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chair Reg Foster
Vice-Chair Eleanor Evans
Treasurer Ed Scheideler
Commissioner Penny Kirk
Commissioner Janice Bennett

NHA STAFF PRESENT:

Angie Medeiros, Executive Director
Deb Tambeau, Resident Services Coordinator

GUESTS: Jessica Reese, President of the Cooks Bridge Tenant's Association (CBTA)
Janice Bennett, Commissioner, and Treasurer of CBTA
Richard Dey, Resident, Seabed's Way

Chair Foster called the second part of the Needham Housing Authority Special Board meeting to order at 5:02 pm. Chair Foster rolled called the Commissioners and declared a quorum. He stated that adequate notice of this meeting had been provided by the Secretary of the Needham Housing Authority (NHA) by preparing a Public Notice dated September 27, 2021, setting forth the date, time, and place of this meeting. Said notice was filed with the Clerk of the Town of Needham and provided to persons requesting it. He stated that the session is being recorded and conducted via Zoom per Open Meeting Law.

Chair Foster stated that Angie Medeiros is attending the meeting but cannot join by video because of a family emergency, but can listen in. Chair Foster noted that Deb Tambeau is present at this meeting. Chair Foster also recognized the following guest: Jessica Reese and Richard Day.

AGENDA

Cooks Bridge After-School Program Reboot -- Discussion & Next Steps

Item #4 Review/Discussion of Questions/Issues (current and any new)

Item #5 Next Steps

4g Continued. Should the 4 bedroom unit formerly used for the After School Program be put back in service to provide housing to a potential homeless family? Should the NHA Office be relocated off-site, and the building be returned to its original use as a community room and potentially the restarted After-School Program?

Chair Foster began with reviewing where we left off at the September 29, 2021 meeting. He stated that Angie Medeiros ended the September 29 meeting by noting that she would like the Commissioners to consider offsite office space for Needham Housing Authority (NHA) staff. He added that the four-bedroom unit at #42 Captain Robert Cook Drive (CRCD) that is currently offline and is used as a community room be brought back online and offered to one of the 22 families currently on the waiting list.

Commissioner Scheideler stated that he looked at family housing vacancies for both CRCD and High Rock in June. There were five vacancies in June, six in July, 12 in August, and six in September. He stated that he failed to see the rush to put unit #42 CRCD back online. He noted that the NHA office is currently occupying what was originally the community room for families at CRCD. He added that if the office were to move offsite, that space could be restored to families, and #42 CRCD could be offered to a family on the four-bedroom waitlist.

Commissioner Bennett stated that High Rock is currently clearing space for an afterschool program and community room. She added that if #42 CRCD is put back online, the community at Captain Robert Cook Drive would be without space for the current programming. She added that the alternative would be for NHA to move offsite.

Chair Foster stated that he is not against the NHA office staff moving offsite. Chair Foster asked the Commissioners to think about the pros and cons of having a four-bedroom unit offline. He noted that more than 20 families are on the waitlist for a four-bedroom unit and reminded the Commissioners of the NHA mission statement to provide affordable housing to families in need.

Commissioner Bennett responded that a four-bedroom unit could house four or five children but that a community room could provide more children with over 10 or 15 years of an opportunity to go to college. She added that the community room at Seabed's way is not an option, it is not set up for families and is not an adequate alternative.

Commissioner Scheideler noted that if the NHA staff should move out of the building they are in and return that building to the families of Captain Robert Cook Drive to use as their community room, the problem would be solved. Chair Foster noted that there is space around Needham for rent. Commissioner Bennett pointed out that Ms. Medeiros mentioned moving the NHA office to another location within the Town in a previous conversation.

Commissioner Kirk stated that she is not against moving the Captain Robert Cook Drive community room into the current NHA office space. However, she added that the NHA office space would need to be reconstructed and reconfigured to accommodate the needs of the families and for programming.

Vice-Chair Evans expressed that she hadn't realized until recently that the NHA office was formally the community room for the families of Captain Robert Cook Drive. She added that it makes sense to move the NHA office offsite. She also added that she assumes there are no requirements that the NHA office be on the Captain Robert Cook Drive property. Chair Foster noted that there is also a budgetary concern in terms of leasing space.

Chair Foster invited Jessica Reese to weigh in. Ms. Reese stated that she agrees with the Commissioners. She added that she would not want to take housing away from anyone. Ms. Reese also noted that the NHA office would need to be reconstructed and reconfigured to accommodate the community's needs. Chair Foster agreed with Ms. Reese's sentiments and recounted the history of the space when he first came on board as a commissioner. Commissioner Bennett pointed out that the area used to house a daycare.

Chair Foster asked Deb Tambeau to weigh in. Ms. Tambeau stated that returning the NHA office space to the community and putting unit #42 CRCD back online makes sense. Chair Foster responded that giving the office space back to the community and putting #42 CRCD back online would be a win-win situation but that some research would need to be done. He added that finding suitable office space should be relatively quick and obtaining a rough idea of costs is needed as well. Ms. Medeiros stated that she has been looking for space around Needham. She also stated that the community should have their own community room, and she should be able to house a family that needs housing. Ms. Medeiros also agreed with Chair Foster that the space should be reconfigured to suit the community's needs and programming.

Vice-Chair Evans suggested that housing authority office space be added to the modernization plans on the NHA property if it is more cost-effective than renting. Chair Foster stated that he agrees completely. He went on to describe how that would fit into the plans.

Chair Foster invited Richard Dey to weigh in. Mr. Dey stated that residents at Seabed's Way are handicapped in one way or another. He stated that we are in wheelchairs, and use walkers, we have impaired hearing and impaired vision, we have various mental illnesses, we have language barriers, and many use the parking lot to walk around and to smoke. He added that when children are their riding their bikes they are hazards to the residents and to drivers or when they are using the community room for birthday parties, they are loud and running all over the place. He stated that the idea of using the Seabed's Way community room for a daycare or birthday parties is not empathic to the needs of the community at Seabed's Way.

EEC Licensure of After School Program

Chair Foster brought up the issue of licensure and yielded the floor to Vice-Chair Evans to summarize what she uncovered about licensure. Vice-Chair Evans stated that the Mass Dept. of Early Education and Care (EEC) licenses childcare programs, and there are many detailed license requirements if one is subject to licensure. She stated that there are a number of criteria that a program can fall under to be exempt from licensing. She added that to be exempt from licensing, the entity has to apply, and EEC has to approve their request. Vice-Chair Evans described programs that would meet the exempt qualifications. She stated that a drop-in program would be suitable to the Captain Robert Cook Drive community.

Commissioner Kirk stated that she has also been in touch with the EEC and spoke with Megan Meehan. Commissioner Kirk mentioned that a copy of an exemption that was filed thirteen years ago might be on file in the NHA office. She added that if she is able to find the document, it would be an easier route than applying for licensure. If the exemption is not found, then the next step would be to reapply. Commissioner Kirk explained that reapplying is an arduous process but could be done.

Other Questions and Issues

A general discussion followed on background checks and specific policies that would need to be in place to keep children safe. Vice-Chair Evans stated that she has a contact at EEC that she could reach out to who could provide further guidance. Chair Foster noted that he would be in favor of Vice-Chair Evans

cross-checking this with a senior person at EEC. He stated that he is looking to call programming enrichment rather than after-care programming. He added that he appreciates the stories from Commissioner Bennett and Ms. Reese on the benefit to children from afterschool programming. He stated that it makes a lot of sense to him that children of families that qualify for housing need programs such as Head Start and other programs to make up for things that parents are not able to provide or do not have the time to provide.

Discussion of NHA's Mission

Chair Foster referred to the primary mission of the NHA and the enabling legislation for the creation of housing authorities. He went on to talk about the idea of bringing in a third party to provide the services relative to an afterschool or enrichment program. He asked the Board for their opinion on this concept.

Commissioner Bennett asked what would happen to the tutors and their work-study program? She stated that we already have tutors in place. Chair Foster noted that he would like the Commissioners to consider another option should licensing become a blocking factor.

Commissioner Scheideler read a portion of the NHA mission statement which includes the following,

"...To also include offering program and resources to improve the quality of life of residents, program participant, and the broader Needham community."

He also referred to the HUD policy section 964, paragraph 12,

"The HUD policy on the Tenant Opportunities Program. HUD promotes Tenant Opportunities Programs to support activities to enable residents to improve the quality of life and resident satisfaction and obtain other social and economic benefits for residents and their families. Tenant Opportunities Programs are proven to be effective in facilitating economic uplift as well as improving overall conditions of housing communities."

Commissioner Scheideler stated that financial assistance in the form of technical assistance grants is available to prepare and manage activities in public housing developments. He added that there are other opportunities to try to find assistance in the form of grants. He stated that if the NHA were to use a third party, it would be paying a substantial amount of money for them to manage programming instead of using in-house costs that are very manageable. He stated that there had been volunteers that have raised a considerable amount of money for the programming that has taken place, noting that there has been minimal dollar cost to the NHA.

Commissioner Scheideler stated that he senses a great effort to kill the afterschool program that many of us want, which is terribly unfortunate. Chair Foster stated that an effort to kill the program is not coming from him and that he wants to understand all the issues. Chair Foster indicated that he is trying to get to a point where something can be done.

Discussion of Continuing the After School Program by Outsourcing to a 3rd Party

A discussion followed on examples of why a third-party solution should be considered. Commissioner Scheideler stated that he would always favor doing in-house if it can be done, which should be examined first before going to a third-party option. Commissioner Kirk stated that when an in-house program works, it would be incumbent upon us to develop it and support it.

Vice-Chair Evans stated that she is in favor of looking at all options. She added that she is not outright opposed to looking at a third party. She noted that Commissioner Kirk has a background in early

childhood education and setting up childcare programs and volunteers is something that she can oversee. She added that she wouldn't suggest bringing in a third-party because we can, but rather to look at running the program based on the previous model as well as consideration of a third-party model.

Ms. Reese stated that to stay in-house, even just to start, for cost reasons would be a good idea. She asked if programming could take place under an umbrella licensure from a third-party, but it would be our own program run by our parents? Chair Foster responded that when he checked in with the Needham Extended Day Program (NEDP), a parent-run program, he was told that they also had to obtain EEC licensure and that it was an arduous process to get and to renew. He stated that NEDP also has to receive approval from Needham Public Schools to run their programs by putting out an RFP every three years. Chair Foster stated that the Director of NEDP would welcome the opportunity to speak with the Board if they have any questions. He stated that NEDP receives vouchers from the stated as well as \$60K in scholarship revenue as a result of fundraising that has taken place over the years. He added that there are five or more NHA families that are using their program this year.

Commissioner Scheideler noted that there are two rates for the NEDP. One is for \$570/per month, and the other is \$540/per month. He stated that the \$540/per month covers older children, and \$570/per month covers kindergarten and first grade. He also pointed out annual costs and transportation costs that would apply to NEDP versus using an in-house program, adding that the cost of NEDP would be totally prohibitive. Chair Foster stated that the Executive Director of NEDP mentioned that it is not an issue for low-income families to want to use their program. Commissioner Scheideler suggested that Chair Foster ask if 10 or 11 NHA families wanted to use the program would NEDP be able to provide that much support. Chair Foster stated NEDP gives out \$60K in scholarships in addition to vouchers. There are approximately 80 children in each of the Needham elementary schools using the services of NEDP and many of them, including NHA families, receive vouchers and or scholarships.

Discussion of NHA Parent Support/Demand for Restarting After School Program

Chair Foster turned the conversation to parent support. He commended Ms. Reese on the work she did in obtaining parent surveys. He added that he would encourage getting more parents to respond to the surveys. Ms. Reese stated that three families have high school students she didn't speak with them regarding the program. She also stated that a lot of the older kids are first and second-year college students. She stated that she could definitely get more information on high school students but that most of the participants will be younger.

Discussion of Next Steps

Based on the discussion over the last two meeting, Chair Foster proposed that we consider the following next steps:

1. Moving NHA Office Off-site -- Chair Foster stated that he loves the idea that was brought up at the beginning of this meeting about the NHA office space being restored to a community room for the families of Captain Robert Cook Drive. He added that it is a win-win no matter what. He stated that he would like to propose as a next step that the NHA staff weigh in on what lease/rent options would look like as well as to think about any issues we haven't considered in terms of the office being offsite.
2. EEC Licensing Requirements -- Chair Foster stated that a critical next step would be getting more information on the license exemption, which will hugely influence the direction.

3. Continue Parent Survey – Chair Foster suggested that doing a further survey based on the discussion that has taken place over the past two meetings, September 29 and 30, to see if we can't get a better sense of what nearly all the parents would be looking for. Chair Foster stated that one of the things he heard from the meeting yesterday was that the parents don't want the NHA and the school system to do anything. He stated that this tells him that we should not be doing anything, and he is not entirely sure of what that statement really means. He stated that getting more and better information in this area is essential.

Commissioner Scheideler stated that the statement that parents do not want the NHA involved is not an accurate statement. He stated that there is a tremendous distrust among the residents for the office. He stated that the real meaning of that statement is not that they don't want programming on the premises, they don't want the office involved. He stated that an indication of the level of distrust from the residents to the NHA office is when many residents are required to go to the office, they take someone with them to be a witness because they don't trust what happens in that office. He added that this is a fundamental distinction to make that we are not saying that the parents don't want an afterschool program they don't want the office involved.

Chair Foster stated that based on the proposals that were received yesterday, it is his understanding that parents want a parent run program where space is provided for them and they want to be left alone to do their own thing.

Commissioner Kirk read aloud a written statement relative to Deb Tambeau's interpretation of damage in the CRCD community room was not correct and that if she would like to report back to her Commissioner Kirk would be glad to listen.

Chair Foster asked the Commissioners if they had any next steps besides the ones he summarized. Commissioner Kirk stated that she liked his summary of next steps. She also stated that at some point, we would need to consider if we are going to start this program or not. She added that it is clear to her that the program should be restarted.

Commissioner Bennett stated that next steps should include finding out quickly about the licensure. She added that she thinks we will be okay if Commissioner Kirk can find the exemption certificate.

Commissioner Scheideler stated that he would like to set a date for the next meeting and make it a special meeting devoted to the afterschool program again.

Chair Foster stated that he would like to see how fast Vice-Chair Evans can get the information about the licensing, and the staff can get information about lease/rental options as well as costs. He added that this would be a good time to build this in the budget cycle with the upcoming budget meeting. He stated that it is a win-win situation to use the office as community room space and putting unit #42 CRCD back online.

Chairman Foster recapped: there are four next steps: move the NHA office off site; follow-up on the EEC licensure requirements, obtain more parent information if possible, and schedule another special meeting on the afterschool program.

Commissioner Bennett noted that there are two or three vacant 3 bedroom apartments that could produce an additional six or eight children that could possible participant in afterschool programming.

Chair Foster adjourned the Needham Housing Authority Special Board Meeting at 6:40pm.

Minutes Prepared by

Cheryl Gosmon

ATTACHMENTS

September 16, 2021

Needham Housing Authority
28 Captain Robert Cook Dr.
Needham, MA 02494

Dear Angie,

I am writing to communicate some of my ideas I'd like to implement in the possible reopening of the Cook's Afterschool Program. I want to bring excitement and fun filled activities of interest, for all students involved, with an underlying educational lesson. My hope is to also bring structure and discipline to keep the kids accountable for their homework assignments and in turn, this could help better themselves in the classroom.

Considering the success of the former program before the Pandemic, this proposal will coincide with the same format and implement new ideas. I'm looking to create success stories for these kids to help in their educational journey. I also want to create a safe space for the kids to come and get help when necessary and give them opportunities to participate in activities that they may not otherwise be able to, due to certain circumstances.

In the enclosed proposal you will find my plans for the reopening of the Cook's Afterschool program and also the responsibilities of the Director's position.

I appreciate you for allowing me the opportunity to present this proposal. I look forward to working together in the future.

Sincerely,

Jessica Reese

Cook's Afterschool Program Proposal

- SAT Prep (for the older kids)
- Help with college applications (for the older kids)
- Tutors helping
 - Nobles and Greenborough
 - Olin
 - Babson
- Charles River YMCA
 - 60 Minutes of play
- Cooking classes
- Art classes
- Science projects
- Gardening (prepping for fall planting)
 - I spoke with the manager of the Needham Community Farm and they recieved a grant to start planting at CRCD. She agreed to use some of the grant to do some classes with the kids in the spring.
- Field Trips

As Director, my repsonsibilities include:

- Establishing a relationship with local schools and colleges in order to locate student tutors, particularly Babson and Olin College and Nobles and Greenough.
 - Solicit donations from local businesses, NHA and non-profits such as Needham Community Council, local banks, and the Exchange Club, etc.
 - Develop a plan for needed equipment and supplies, procure and put in place for all rooms in unit #42, the community room for CRCD.
 - Develop a program of study and a variety of extra-cirrucular activities as stated above.
 - Develop an orientation for any incoming tutors with an introduction of expectations.
 - Develop an orientation booklet for the incoming tutors.
 - Develop a program of study with the help of the tutors.
 - Step in to help when tutors are on break or not available.
 - Implement extra help, substitute tutors, etc. when tutors are away on break.
-

In order to help the students who are not receiving any extra help outside of the school day, I would like to get started immediately on getting things in place to get the program open ASAP. This includes tutors, supplies and making sure everything is in working order i.e. stove, refrigerator, sinks etc.

As Director, I will be an employee of the NHA, and will be paid for hours worked. The Executive Director and Resident Services Coordinator will not need to have responsibilities for the program.

Proposal for Reinstatement of the Cooks After School Program

This is a process that should begin immediately, so the Manager/Director position (superseding the current Director position) can be posted and the candidate hired, availability of student tutors can be determined, donations can be solicited, equipment and supplies can be purchased, and a start date can be planned.

1. Considering the success of the program before the Pandemic, this Proposal will re-introduce the same format.
2. The director will be an employee of NHA, and will be paid for hours worked.
3. Per Angie, the initial setup fixtures and supplies, that were discarded, will be replaced by NHA.
4. Reconnect the stove so cooking projects can resume.
5. If parent input is available from the parent meeting, it will be included in this proposal.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Manager/Director Responsibilities:

Establish a relationship with community representatives at local schools and colleges in order to locate student tutors (particularly Babson, Noble and Greenough and Olin)

Solicit donations from local business, NHA and non-profits such as Needham Community Council, local banks, service clubs as the Exchange Club, etc.

Develop a plan for needed equipment and supplies, procure and put in place for all rooms in #42, the community room for Captain Robert Cook Drive

Develop a program of study, and a variety of extra-curricular activities such as field trips and enrichment visitors like story tellers, artists, musicians, poets, writers, chefs, science programs

Produce an orientation booklet for incoming tutors

Direct the orientation and introduction of expectations with incoming tutors

Procure consumable supplies and equipment as needed on an ongoing basis

Work with student tutors to coordinate programs of study on an ongoing basis

Participate as a tutor when school tutors are in short supply

When college tutors are on extended break, reach out to the community for short term tutors among adults in the community . Sources would be church volunteer groups and Senior Center volunteers

- A. WHETHER OR NOT TO HAVE AN AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
- B. WHAT STEPS ARE NEEDED TO PUT AN AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM IN PLACE

MEMORANDUM

TO: THE NHA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NHA, ANGIE MEDEIROS, THE PRESIDENT OF THE RESIDENT ORGANIZATION, JESSICA REESE
FROM: PENNY KIRK, COMMISSIONER
DATE: SEPTEMBER 22, 2021

A: WHETHER OR NOT TO HAVE AN AFTER SHOOOL PROGRAM

PRO:

The history of the Cook after School program is well known. Janice Bennett and Cheryl Gosman conceived of the idea about 17 years ago. It morphed into what is now a mentoring program at the High School. In the meantime a casual after school program continued at Cooks. About 13 years ago I became the RSC and learned from Cheryl and others that the children of Cooks had the lowest MCAS scores in the entire town. This was unacceptable especially since we had Babson students coming to the program twice a week to hang out and be role models.

It was an easy leap to get more students from Noble and Greenough and the high school, create a formalized (but casual) tutoring program, get funding to buy the necessary equipment and supplies, create a handbook/orientation booklet for the tutors, write a song, sign up the children, get parent permission, hire a Director and open the Cooks After School program.

As everyone knows the program was a success from the start and by the time I was ready to retire the constant improvement of grades among our children was recognized by the Governor and the program was given a commendation for improving MCAS score which affected the standing of both the Eliot and High Rock schools.

Between a RSC who came close to ignoring the program and the Pandemic the program suffered. When the Executive Director ordered the entire unit #42 "cleaned out", everything was taken out and thrown away. There are a few chairs and some folding tables, one book case and one cupboard. It's very clean and entirely unusable. So far, until everyone is able to be vaccinated, there can't be an after school program. However, with only a few months until children 5-12 can be vaccinated, there is an opportunity to outfit #42 with additional supplies that would accommodate older students and adult who would want to use the unit as a community room.

CON:

There is no conclusive proof as yet that the parents want the program. The school department is willing to help, but there is no real plan as to how they can. There is controversy about whether the children should be going to other after school programs in town. The

children have expressed their thoughts in letters saying they do want the program back as it was.

The town school department is looking for information that they can't have access to regarding students in the program. They have concluded that they can't put a program together for the Cooks residents.

In the meantime there is a funding issue. Ms. Medeiros has said that anything that is needed for the unit can be re-purchased. This will be a hefty bill. In addition one room has been taken as an office. This would have to be eliminated. There is no Director as of now. There is funding from Beth Israel which could be earmarked for the program but is not clear as of now. Other funding can be found but it is not in place now. The Pandemic is not under control. The program would not be able to admit anyone who is not vaccinated and the vaccine for 5-12 year olds is not approved by the appropriate agency.

Some of the Commissioners would like to know what the parents think. The President of the Resident Organization and Janice Bennett are in the process of acquiring that information. It must be noted that some parents are new to Cooks and have no idea of the history of the program. They have no reason to know if they want the program or not. (historically, parents sent their children as much as a free baby sitting service until they began to see the results). Ms. Medeiros's last remark on the subject was that she wants and plans to put the #42 unit on line for rent.

B: STEPS NEEDED TO PUT AN AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM IN PLACE AND OUTFITTING IT TO ACCOMMODATE OLDER STUDENTS AND ADULTS FOR EVENING USE.

There is every reason to supply the residents of Cooks Drive with a Communities Room as the other neighborhoods have. #42 can certainly serve the additional groups. Historically the Communities United group supplied two teachers once per week to provide an early childhood program for children not in school. This was fluid depending on how many preschoolers there were in the neighborhood. They met once per week in the morning. Also, as young people were applying for Beacon Academy, Mr. Byrd, a Needham resident and teacher at Dexter School, tutored the young people about how to take the PSAT which was required for admission to Beacon. This tutoring took place after the After School program was closed for the day. Everyone who did this was admitted to Beacon and are very grateful to Mr. Byrd.

Looking at the necessary equipment and supplies:

Several desks for one person and a tutor.
Chairs for the desks and for the big table in the main room
A large table for the man room for meetings and meals
A small T.V.
Computers or lap tops (most students have their own)
Book Cases for each room

Cupboards for arts and crafts equipment and supplies
Curtains for all windows
A recreated banner about the Commendation
Art and crafts materials (paints, crayons, brushes, sewing materials, etc., etc.)
A supply of books (these can be donated by the library) Children are encouraged to take a book without having to return it.
Musical instruments
A complete supply of blocks
A complete supply of counting blocks
China, silverware, cooking pots, cooking instruments,
Frames for hanging coats
Frames for holding wet and muddy shoes and boots
Maps and graphs that can be marked and erased
White boards (there are only two left)
Paper / writing supplies
A movie screen or large screen TV for evening movie events
Outdoor equipment such as balls, bats
Gardening equipment for the raised garden the Community Farm will donate

This is a basic list reflecting everything that was thrown out. Some things can be donated.