

Public Housing Advocacy Coalition
Attn: HACA Board Members

6/23/14

Dear Housing Authority of the City of Asheville Board Members:

The Public Housing Advocacy Coalition has formed around shared concerns and opportunities presented by the implementation of the RAD program and the future of public housing in our city. The Coalition includes public housing residents, members of the Resident's Council, concerned citizens, and representatives from many local nonprofits who work with public housing residents. This letter reflects the concerns and recommendations of the Public Housing Advocacy Coalition.

The city of Asheville and Buncombe County currently have a shortage of affordable housing options for families. Public Housing plays a unique role in addressing affordable housing needs. The Coalition is invested to work with HACA staff and board toward solutions to protect this public resource and support the safety, health, and success of its residents. We seek to build shared accountability and open communication between HACA staff, board, residents, and the community.

In the interest of improving communication around RAD implementation and building trust between residents and staff, we ask the HACA board to take the following actions:

1. Act upon the request from the Resident's Council for neutrally facilitated resident information sessions around the RAD program to take place in all or most public housing communities. The Resident's Council should be involved in helping set the date and selecting facilitation.
2. Provide written notification of the information sessions posted at every development's office at least two weeks prior to the sessions.
3. Commit to sending at least one HACA board member to attend each RAD information session to listen to residents and answer questions.
4. Do not move forward on any final approval vote for RAD implementation until after the facilitated sessions are completed and a final report of public comments from all the sessions are made available to the HACA board and residents.
5. Make HACA board agendas available online to the public at least two days before meetings and make sure that any action items related to RAD implementation are explicitly stated as such.
6. Ensure that the Chapter 17 document on the RAD proposal is available on the HACA website and at the manager's office of all Housing Authority sites. (We understand that the document has been distributed to most sites, but is still not online.)
7. Ensure adequate resident participation in the planning and implementation of the RAD program by including at least two residents on HACA's RAD Committee.

Thank you for your service to the community and leadership on the HACA board. We believe that this process offers a unique opportunity to engage residents, staff, and the community in the future vision of public housing and to build improved lines of communication and accountability.