

Haringey Leaseholders' Association Committee Meeting

Meeting held on Friday 9 April 2010 at the Civic Centre, Wood Green

In attendance

Committee:

Sue Brown (Chair) (SBr)
Rita Batzias (RB)
Piers Johnson (PJ)
Nick Martin-Clark (NMC)
Delsie Grandson (DG)
Mark Bobb (MB)
Kali Mercier (KM) [not consistently present]
Bob Towersey (BT)

Leaseholders:

Shirley Perlman
Justice Iroquay
Ann Goodhew
Leo Grandson
Catrina Zahoor
Alena Breckova
Anne Crellin

Apologies:

Emeka Ekeowa
Ian Lush

The meeting was opened by Sue Brown at 19:05

1. Item 3 from the agenda was taken first and Mark Bobb, Kali Mercier and Bob Towersey were duly elected to the committee nem con.
2. PJ having arrived late SBr explained that NMC was a committee member as his resignation had never been accepted and he had now withdrawn it and that the new members had been elected. SBr went through a temporary code of conduct point by point for the immediate purposes of the meeting after the difficulties of the last committee meeting in December. Each point was adopted unanimously (see attachment) and a vote in favour of the adoption of the overall document was taken at the end (1 against, no abstentions). PJ pointed out that there was nothing in the temporary code of conduct about possible misbehaviour by the Chair and asked what would happen in that case. NMC suggested that that point would be better raised under item 5 when the permanent code of conduct was to be discussed. PJ accepted this suggestion.
3. SBr proposed to read through the minutes of the meeting on 4th of December 2009. PJ pointed out that the version before the committee differed from that originally prepared by Belinda shortly after the 4th of December. SBr said that the current version contained her corrections. PJ said that the current version was incorrect. SBr explained that the practice of approving the minutes allowed for committee members to raise points of accuracy and that that was what she now proposed to do. SBr read through section 1 of the minutes to

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do with the meeting with Lynn Featherstone MP and that section was agreed for accuracy. It was noted that the action point concerning the letter to Lynn Featherstone on dispensation had not been acted on. SBr said that she had had an email from Lynn Featherstone and would be bringing that to the next meeting. This section of the minutes were approved for accuracy.

SBr then read out section 2. PJ said that, on a point of accuracy, he did not remember the then Vice-Chair saying that HfH's grant offer was insincere and that she had said the HLA should seek legal advice on the offer. SBr and NMC said they clearly remembered the Vice-Chair's comment. SBr agreed to amend the minutes to reflect the fact that the then Vice-Chair had suggested seeking legal advice. MB suggested recording all future meetings to resolve this sort of disagreement. BT sought reassurance that any recording would be for the use of the committee only. This was voted on and adopted unanimously. SBr said that the matter of the letter from HfH would be looked at again by the committee but there was no discussion of the HfH proposal. This section of the minutes were approved for accuracy.

SBr then read out the section on door knocking and invited comments. PJ called the minutes a minimal description of a very big row. He said he had been talking to all parties concerned and that the minutes were incomplete because they did not include an account of a row between Catrina Zahoor and NMC that had taken place before the meeting. He said that what was fundamentally going on was a big difference of opinion on how to run meetings and how to run the HLA between Sue and Nick on the one side and himself and a bunch of other people on the other. He said it had not been discussed since the December meeting. SBr said that this was not relevant to the accuracy of the minutes and asked PJ to address that. PJ said that the minutes did not properly reflect what happened. PJ suggested that he could write a list of things that should be added. SBr agreed that he could do this if he wanted. PJ said that he would do so. PJ said that Nick's behaviour was one thing that should be written about. SBr asked him to describe exactly what he meant. PJ said that Nick was aggressive. SBr said that PJ's comments were in breach of the code of conduct in that they were a personal attack. She asked all those present whether they agreed that Nick was aggressive. PJ and three observers raised their hands. PJ said that the recent disagreements were all Nick's fault. There was uncertainty about whether it was Nick's behaviour in general or at the meeting that was the issue. NMC said that he felt that the question should be restricted to his behaviour at the meeting because that was what the minutes were about and asked PJ to give an example of behaviour he did not like. He said that he was not going to go down the path of itemising what Nick did wrong. SBr said that in that case there was nothing to add to the minutes. SBr asked if anyone had anything to add to the minutes. DG checked that it was the minutes from 4 December being talked about. PJ left the meeting. The minutes were agreed for accuracy. MB and KM left the meeting to attend to their small baby.

NMC asked the committee to agree a motion that the Treasurer's conduct at the December meeting would have breached the code of conduct had it been in place. SBr said that in her opinion saying that someone should be beaten up was serious misconduct. She asked both the committee and observers whether they agreed and to consider whether there should be some sanction for that behaviour. She suggested that the Treasurer should be asked at the very least to apologise to the committee. DG agreed. BT said it was unacceptable behaviour with or without a code of conduct. SBr said that there had been opposition to introducing a code of conduct and a lot of misbehaviour and that that was why she had introduced the temporary code of conduct at the beginning of the meeting.

There was a general discussion about the recent difficulties. NMC proposed mediation to try and resolve the problems. He said that the Treasurer did not need to apologise to him personally but that he would like her to withdraw her remarks about him as an Outreach officer and that maybe she should apologise to the committee. SBr said she would like the Treasurer to acknowledge that her behaviour was unacceptable. This was agreed. The meeting asked SBr to write as diplomatic a letter as possible stressing the excellent

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job that the Treasurer had done for the HLA but asking her to apologise to the committee and withdraw her remarks.

BT and RB were against mediation because of the cost. BT also thought it was hopeless. DG said that SBr should wait for the response from the Treasurer before suggesting mediation. SBr said that she thought that the Treasurer was unfortunately so anti-Nick and herself that she would probably not accept anything unless they went. NMC said he would like to go because he felt he had done his bit and was tired but not if it wasn't done in the right way. He said that it would be wrong to get rid of SBr as if she was a rag doll to be thrown away. If she stepped down it was a big event. SBr said she didn't want to do the job forever but that she wanted to go out on a high and be absolutely sure that the people she handed over to were going to look after the HLA and know what they were doing. The ironic thing was that if Alena had behaved properly then SBr would probably have started doing a handover to her but her behaviour had ruled that out. SBr said the HLA should look into mediation and its cost for the next meeting. This motion was agreed.

ACTION POINT: SBr to look into costs of mediation.

4. It was proposed to take item 5 early because of shortage of time. It was agreed that what had already been agreed in the temporary code of conduct was acceptable for the permanent one. SBr then went through those sections that were different (see attached). Sections 2 and 3 were agreed. On the section entitled 'Conduct in the running of the organisation' SBr read through the paragraphs individually and they were agreed with no objections. SBr said that some of these provisions should also go into the constitution. SBr also read through the section entitled 'Procedures for possible breaches of the code' and the two sections 6.3 and 6.4 that were not in the temporary code were agreed unanimously.
5. Under AOB, SBr notified the committee that Catrina Zahoor had stated that, following her resignation, she had deleted her copy of the database, leaving the HLA with just one copy held by the Treasurer. It had previously been agreed that for safety and security reasons, there should be more than one copy of the HLA database, held by different people. SBr asked for the committee's approval for her to write to Lynne asking her for a copy of the database. SBr also said that she had e-mailed the Treasurer to ask for the cheque books in order to pay certain expenses but had received no reply and asked for the committee's backing for this request. The committee agreed that both these matters should be included in the letter SBr was to write to the Treasurer. DG said that a date for a reply should be included in the letter to the Treasurer.

AG mentioned the key-leaseholder scheme and said it was potentially very valuable. She encouraged leaseholders to give it a go and make it work. SBr said that the HLA had backed this scheme in the past and would continue to do so, asking for confirmation of this from committee members, which was given. She said the HLA would publicise the scheme as much as possible and encourage leaseholders to participate.

6. SBr said she would let committee members know about the date of the next meeting, which would probably be in a month's time.

The meeting closed at 21.05.