

HARINGEY LEASEHOLDERS' ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT HARINGEY CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, N22 ON WEDNESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2012

Present

Sue Brown (Chair) (SB), Nick Martin-Clark (Treasurer) (NMC), Peter Gilbert (Secretary) (PG) and Rita Batzias (Committee Member) (RB). They were all present for the whole of the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Anne Gibson, Delsie Grandson and Kate Worley.

Treasurer's Report

NMC reported that since the last meeting he had spent £250 to maintain the website. SB added that some annual subscriptions were due to be received in October. NMC added that before those were taken into account HLA had about £1,600 in the bank. HLA would also be in receipt of £1000 for the period of a year for which recognition had now been granted. HLA could also appeal for new subscribers in the mail-out that would notify leaseholders of re-recognition.

NMC added that he had had to change the cheque-book because of attempted frauds totalling roughly £4,000. The bank had refunded charges that had been made because the fraud had resulted in a temporary overdraft.

Re-recognition of HLA

NMC reported that the officers report to the HfH Board on 25 September recommending re-recognition had been accepted with no dissension. Phil Goodwin had commented that provided that HLA stuck to the rules there would be no problem. Jonathan Card, the Board Chair, had mentioned to the Board that HLA Committee members were in attendance.

SB said that she was not satisfied with the period of recognition, which was in conflict with the recognition criteria. NMC said that he had mentioned this issue to Eamon McGoldrick on 19 September, but when he had seen Mr McGoldrick on 25 September the latter had said that it was too late to change the recommendation in the report and that he thought that it was OK to include a period of a year. SB commented that HLA needed to arrange a meeting with HfH fairly soon to discuss this. What was the point of the period set out in the recognition criteria if it was disregarded by HfH, which could lead to a recurrence of the problem that HLA had experienced in 2010. HLA had to insist that both organisations followed the rules.

PG pointed out that the recognition criteria set out as a guide to the application form said that re-recognition was based on an annual application. NMC agreed that HLA should discuss the matter with HfH and make its point carefully. SB emphasised that when a period of recognition ended had to be clear. NMC added that at the meeting on 31 August with HfH Sharon Morgan had said that to extend the recognition period to 16 months would be too long. He quite understood why HfH did not want to change it from 15 months following a group's AGM. One way of resolving the issue would have been to recommend that HLA was recognised with immediate effect and to explain in the report that the period was determined by previously-agreed criteria and that organisations must apply for recognition annually.

SB commented that if HfH wanted representative organisations to stick to the recognition criteria, so must the ALMO. If HfH wanted the period to be a year from when recognition was granted at a HfH Board meeting, HfH should negotiate the change with residents via the Tenant Participation Panel and incorporate any agreed change in the recognition criteria.

PG was asked to write to Eamon McGoldrick to suggest a meeting where this could be resolved.

Legal Action

Information Commissioner – Emails between HfH Officers and HLCG

NMC advised that the Information Commissioner's office had decided that Haringey Council should release to him a redacted version of the emails between HfH officers and members of the HLCG from late 2010 until the end of February 2011. This should be sent to NMC by Monday 23 October.

SB commented that the membership should discuss at a General Meeting the conditions that the Committee acting on behalf of the Association would ask HfH to meet for HLA to withdraw its appeal against de-recognition. These might include, for example, an apology, payment to HLA of a sum to compensate for the time its officers had spent on the appeal, HfH reclaiming the ultra vires payment that it had made to HLCG, payment to HLA of the increased grant that HfH had been offering at the end of 2009 via a voluntary annual levy on leaseholders, and the lease to HLA of a small office at a peppercorn rent.

Alena Breckova

It was agreed that SB should write as Chair to Alena Breckova to offer her, as the leaseholder member of the HfH Board, a working relationship with HLA now that the Association had been re-recognised as the representative body for HfH leaseholders. If Alena wanted, the Committee would be willing to consider mediation, or meeting at a time and in a manner of her choosing, to try to put the problems of the past behind us.

If Alena simply ignored SB's letter, the Committee would ask whether HfH had let her have the database of leaseholders' names and addresses to enable her to mail her election leaflet. The Committee would also build a case for a complaint on behalf of HLA to the Board that she had misused her position on the Board, that using the HLA name on her election address had misled leaseholders, that she and other members of the HLCG had not taken up the offer of mediation, that she had not declared her interest at the Board meeting of 19 January 2011 which had received a report that leaseholders were setting up the HLCG as an alternative representative body, that she had known that HLCG was being funded by HfH without the knowledge of the Board and that accordingly she had been in breach of the code of conduct for Board members.

HLA Website

NMC said that he had paid the website administrator to maintain it for another year. He added that it was not worth transferring to another administrator at present, and agreed that the site needed to be updated now that HLA had been re-recognised.

General Meeting

It was agreed that PG write on behalf of HLA to Eamon McGoldrick (cc Sharon Morgan) to ask whether he would be able to speak at the next General Meeting, proposed for Saturday 27 October, on HfH's vision of the future for the housing that it manages and the implications for leaseholders. We should also ask whether HfH could agree the wording of a notice for the GM that also notified all leaseholders that HLA has been re-recognised, as well as whether HfH would send by 13 October a communication to all leaseholders with which the notice of the GM could be enclosed. The Committee should also notify the Journal that HLA had been re-recognised and let them have a copy of the notice of the GM.

Date of Next Committee Meeting

Monday 8 October 2012, when, subject to being able to arrange with HfH for a mail-out, we would finalise the agenda for the proposed General Meeting. PG was asked to book a room at the Civic Centre.