



Heritage Park Resident Meeting Notes - May 20, 2024

Resident Survey is at this link: www.surveymonkey.com/r/HPMay24

About 35 Heritage Park residents attended an in-person meeting on Monday, May 20 to discuss the ongoing Section 18 application process as well as learn more about Raleigh Housing Authority's (RHA) relocation planning. [Presentation slides can be found here](#). The same presentation was given virtually on Tuesday, May 21 and Wednesday, May 22 via Zoom.

Sonia Anderson, Director of Housing Operations, gave updates on Heritage Park. Ms. Anderson reminded residents about the tennis camps for kids 8-15 that includes transportation. Space is limited, so interested residents should fill out their application soon.

Mr. Ashley Lommers-Johnson, RHA'S CEO, addressed the group, thanking all for attending. He also reminded everyone that a big reason why we are redeveloping is because of the high costs that would be involved with maintaining the property, due to the conditions of this older neighborhood. Our desire is to provide safe homes that are conducive to community.

Staff were introduced. RHA Real Estate Development Team: Kenya Pleasant, Chief Real Estate Development Officer, Rachel Agunbiade and Chris Whitenhill, project managers. Housing Operations: Regional Property Managers, Melissa McCormick and Vanessa Woods. Nicole Smith will be the new property manager at Heritage Park starting in June. Frank Dunn, live-in maintenance at Heritage Park. Elizabeth Canaday, Housing Choice Voucher Manager. Regina Hardaway, Project-Based Voucher Administrator. Laura McCann, Special Assistant to the CEO, was introduced as the one heading up the relocation efforts for RHA, including for Heritage Park. Katie Lebrato, Communications Manager.

Residents are highly encouraged to open and read our emails, look for fliers and mailings, attend meetings and online virtual sessions. It's important to communicate with RHA staff and representatives throughout the relocation process. Residents should attend meetings as they are able so that they are informed and able to plan for the move.

Kenya Pleasant provided an overview of the redevelopment plan process. Discussions began at the beginning of 2023, and we are now in the Section 18 Plan approval portion of the process. With Section 18 approval, RHA will transfer Heritage Park to a new entity, as required by HUD, but RHA will control the site through an affiliate of RHA. Once the disposition is complete, RHA will be able to apply for residents to receive a tenant protection voucher, which will enable rents to continue to be based on household income. Section 18 approval allows RHA to go after other funds that can be invested into the redevelopment. RHA will provide at least 122 subsidized units at the new Heritage Park, still based on 30% of income, plus additional unsubsidized affordable housing. We currently estimate that we can add at least 4x as many units that exist currently. We have posted a link to more detailed [HUD Section 18](#)



[information](#) on our website. The HUD Section 18 application will be submitted by June 30, 2024, and the approval process is expected to take **60-90 days**. Following that approval, we will be officially allowed to move residents. RHA will give a minimum of a **90-day notice** to residents when they need to move.

Laura McCann shared more details on the relocation plan draft, which has been emailed to residents and posted on our website. All current residents in good standing have a right to return. This means you are a legal U.S. resident, you are on a Heritage Park lease agreement, have made rent payments as scheduled, or are in a repayment agreement with your manager, **and** you are not being evicted by your manager. If you are behind on rent payments, you need to reach out to communicate with your manager to work out a payment plan. Lease compliance will be necessary to stay in housing.

RHA will pay for resident's reasonable costs of relocation. Residents may choose a fixed amount based on their bedroom size, based on the [Uniform Relocation Act](#) or actual "reasonable" moving costs, which will require budgeting and receipts. Residents will also need to complete a survey to identify moving preferences. RHA plans to hire at least two relocation staff members over the next few months to be onsite to serve residents. They will also get information to each resident individually, serving as case managers and will go door-to-door, ensuring all residents are receiving assistance in all steps of the process. Residents will be provided with a customized, detailed plan that meets their individual needs.

The RHA team is entering into long term (15-20 year) agreements with local property owners for the [Project-Based Voucher \(PBV\) program](#) to hold apartments for Heritage Park residents. This is also an opportunity for those who wish to be part of the "early mover" group, prior to Section 18 approval. Many properties are brand new and will have units available in the next month or two, with up to 200 total units coming online. The Board of Commissioners made a formal decision that Heritage Park residents will get the highest preference on all waiting lists when they are ready to move. We will work with individual families to remove barriers and help as best as we can. Residents will be notified when waiting lists will open for Heritage Park residents. A paper application process is in place, but RHA is working to have applications available online, and staff will assist with filling out applications. Residents in good standing have a right to return and will not lose their housing assistance because of redevelopment. **RHA will not have work requirements or a 10-year limitation on residency for the new Heritage Park neighborhood.** Residents will also be eligible for help with moving costs if they choose to return to Heritage Park after construction is complete.

Residents have multiple options for moving:

- 1) Another RHA public housing property
- 2) Housing Choice (Section 8) voucher for another property
- 3) Project-Based Vouchers available at various apartment complexes in the Wake County area
- 4) Some residents may also have the option to "port" to another housing authority, depending on the type of voucher you qualify for.



Residents should review the [Heritage Park Relocation Draft Plan](#). **Feedback is needed by May 31, 2024**, for RHA to incorporate your input into the final plan that will be submitted to HUD as part of the required relocation process.

Please mark your calendars for future meetings:

- Tuesday, May 21 at 6:30pm (Virtual via Zoom)
- Wednesday, May 22 at 12pm (Virtual via Zoom)
- **Wednesday, June 26 at 6:30pm (In-person)**
- Daytime office hours to speak with the RHA Real Estate Development Team and Partners. **Wednesday, June 26** – More details to come, save the date!

Presentation slides: www.rhaonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Heritage-Park-Resident-Meeting-PPT-NEW_5-20-2024.pdf

Resident Survey is at this link: www.surveymonkey.com/r/HPMay24

Questions? Contact the Property Manager: heritagemanager@rhaonline.com, 919-831-6223

Q&A

(Questions from Monday, May 20 meeting)

How early can we move?

Residents can opt to move as early as summer 2024. Please be sure to fill out the [resident survey](#) indicating your preference to be an early mover.

Will we be able to stay on the property while construction is going on?

RHA has considered a phased relocation, but we have a number of concerns related to quality of life.

- **Site costs:** Development partner estimates that the total cost for site work is estimated to be around \$20-\$25 million. For a phased demolition, it would add 40%-50% more cost and would limit the number of units we can build.
- **Inconvenience:** As we have seen with nearby construction
- **Safety:** Living on an active construction site creates potential safety issues for residents and their families. This is exacerbated by the fact that there is only a single access point on site. .
- **Utilities:** Water and electricity would need to be moved twice, which would add even more costs, and RHA couldn't guarantee consistent utilities while residents were onsite during construction.

What about families with school-aged children? How will we manage that?

RHA will have case managers to work with individuals to address all concerns related to school, work, medical or other needs.



What happens to our security deposit if we move to another community?

If you move to an RHA-owned Public Housing neighborhood, we will transfer your security deposit for you. If you choose to use a voucher, RHA will provide you with a refund of your security deposit to give to your new landlord.

What if I don't have an email address to receive information or a voucher?

RHA staff distributed flyers about the meeting to residents in our one-bedroom units which tend to be occupied by our seniors. We will meet in-person with all residents to help them process their relocation. Vouchers will be provided to residents both in-person and will be digitally in our computer system. RHA staff will maintain a database of all residents with their preferred communication method. Residents are encouraged to complete the survey and/or indicate on the sign-in sheet what is the best way for RHA to reach them.

When will funds be available for moving?

RHA can assist early mover residents, even without receipt of HUD funds. We are also offering the Ready to Rent Program free of charge to Heritage Park residents. The next class is coming up in a few weeks. Please see your manager to sign-up.

How is RHA reaching residents who can't attend any meetings?

Staff is keeping track of each resident to ensure they attend an in-person or virtual meeting, and if they can't come to us, we will go them.

(Questions from Tuesday, May 21 meeting)

I heard you say that you all are going to rebuild 122 units. Considering we have a homeless crisis, have you thought about making the extra units available to the homeless population first before accommodating the community who already has resources to housing?

RHA does not currently know the mix of income for the 550-900 units we plan to build, though it will be a range of 30%-80% of AMI as well as market rate units. We will have at least 122 units that are deeply affordable. Some of the unhoused population may be served through that tier of housing unit. We do recognize the crisis, and we're trying to address that now through our [Strategic Plan](#) that aims for creating at least 2,000 more affordable units and partnerships for project-based vouchers. We are also actively working with others who provide services for people who are transitioning from homelessness.

Has the section 18 application been submitted?

RHA plans to submit the application to HUD by June 30

I feel there should be a public comment opportunity to make comments on the relocation plan during a City Council meeting.

While RHA has plans to share our relocation with elected officials, the Council doesn't have a part in creating or approving the plan. This is an internal document, and it is not something that the City will process or approve.



Is the application open for review prior to submission?

There are no plans to provide the Section 18 application for public review.

Is the process RAD/SECTION 18 MIX?

The new Heritage Park is applying for Section 18, not [RAD or Rental Assistance Demonstration](#).

RHA can make exception & include RHA relocation plan as part of public comment [with Raleigh City Council]. Just ask VP & your lawyer. Transparency means everything when engaging the disenfranchised population.

***This question was entered as the meeting ended and was not answered live.*

HUD does not require a public comment period. Yet, RHA is providing a 15-day public comment period to the proposed relocation plan. The public comment period concludes on Friday, May 31.

(Questions from Wednesday, May 22 meeting)

If residents choose to move to a new property with a Property-Based Voucher (PBV), what is the process for that? How will they know if their income qualifies?

RHA will manage paying your subsidy and residents will apply with individual landlords. Our case managers will assist each resident in completing applications and providing any financial information the new property owner may require. RHA is also working hard to provide additional benefits to residents, such as expedited security deposit returns.

Previously, I was living on a property with a 10-year limit. If I reach that limit while I am relocated, am I still able to return to Heritage Park?

RHA will not have limitations or requirements like we did with other properties that were redeveloped in the past through Hope VI grants, like Walnut Terrace. Residents will be able to relocate and move back into the new Heritage Park with no time limit restrictions.