

RIVERMEAD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

The Leaseholders Association for owners of Rivermead Flats, Wilford Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham.

MINUTES OF EGM HELD 7:00PM MONDAY 16 JANUARY 2006, THE BEECHES.

Present from the Committee: JT, SG, MW, TW, JG, TM, CG, OP

Also 30 residents.

JT opened the meeting at 7.15pm. He said that the committee has done a lot of work since the AGM. This meeting is to tell the residents what has happened and what comes next.

Agenda:

1. Aims, constitution and recognition of the RRA
2. Renovation works
3. Floodwall

1. Aims, constitution and recognition of the RRA

JT explained the 2 ways of getting RRA recognised by the freeholder.

- 1) Ask for written notice. He had received a reply today. FW want to know what is the RRA's constitution, list of members. We will reply.
- 2) If necessary, we can apply to the Rent Assessment Panel. If we meet certain conditions (e.g. 60% of residents members) we can enforce recognition.

If we get legally recognised, we have certain rights, e.g.:

- Right of consultation on major works
- Right to challenge service and admin charges
- Right to manage - appointment of a manager
- Right to extend the lease
- Right to buy the freehold

A resident said from the floor that there was talk of this in 1971, but there was complacency. JT replied that there has been complacency on both sides. FW need to see a "show of strength". A resident asked what happens if only a few people want to buy the freehold? JT explained that we can't do it as individuals. We would need a percentage of each block. Initially 20% support is needed, and ultimately 60% support is required. Another resident said that there is a middle ground: we can keep the current freeholder, but replace the management company and get in someone more local.

JT noted that the RRA constitution at present has simple requirements but does not give the RRA much clout. He proposed we take a new constitution using the model given in the Government booklet "Tenants Associations" published by the Residential Property Tribunal Service.

The proposed constitution:

- Allows sub-tenants to be Associate Members, but they would not have the right to vote.
- Outlines a recommended committee structure
- Outlines the rules for elections

TW said that having this constitution would greatly help in getting legal recognition by the

Residential Property Tribunal if it was required.

A resident said that the existing constitution did not include sub-tenants because sub-tenancy was not common when it was devised.

JT proposed that RRA adopt a new constitution based on that outlined by the Residential Property Tribunal Service

For: 26 Against: 4

One resident said he wanted more time to study the proposed constitution. Another asked whether the new constitution and these minutes can be made available to all members, to which the Committee answered yes.

2. Refurbishment

JT told the meeting that the Committee would meet with FW to discuss these works in detail in the following week. The subjects to be covered were: the nature of the major works, finance, nominated contractors, auditors, possibility of setting up a sinking fund, site security, public access.

3. Floodwall

TW gave a brief presentation on the proposed flood defence work, part of the West Bridgford Flood Alleviation Scheme. He said the current floodwall was built in response to the major flood of 1947. Now the EA propose to raise the height of the wall. This will reduce the risk of flooding but does not completely eliminate it.

JT proposed a motion that the RRA supports the construction of the new floodwall to show the goodwill of Rivermead residents towards the scheme. This was carried unanimously.

CG said that there would be an EA road show on Saturday to display their proposals.

JT outlined what will happen and when. Big trees, the hedge and fences will be removed in early February. It is probable that the riverside path will not re-open after this until the work has been completed. Heavy plant will not access the construction site through Rivermead, but there may be some access through the Complex for Transit vans etc. JT said that the EA claim no-one has objected to this access, but noted that we have not in fact been officially notified! He said it is not clear how the Complex will be protected if there is a flood while construction is underway.

JT said the EA thinks the bit of the wall adjacent to Rivermead will be finished after about 1 year. Final completion and re-opening of the path should take place after about 2 years. The path will be widened to 3m. There will be a single access from Rivermead over the wall with a cycle ramp. There will be a new boundary fence. JT noted that lighting along the path is a matter for the Council. It is not known where access points to the riverside garden will be. Some features are under discussion: patio, shed, pavilion, jetty. The new floodwall will be entirely concrete.

A resident asked if the cycle ramp can be used for wheelchair access? TW replied he understood this will not be a disabled access. Another resident asked whether the works need Council approval. TW replied no, different rules apply for works such as these. A questioner

asked about security, can the construction site be enclosed completely? TW replied that the EA would not allow spikes on top of the wall, etc., but may be able to improve site security. A further question was about security of the riverside garden after the works have been completed. JT said there will be secure fencing, with alternating balustrade posts in steel.

CG said that she believed we will lose the slipway and asked whether the meeting had a feeling about this. JT said it was true the slipway will be demolished. There will not be doors through the new floodwall. He said we may be able to keep the slipway itself, or if we lose it we may be able to get compensation.

MW asked if we have seen how the EA intend to reinstate the garden? TW replied no but we have been assured we can have input. ID expressed the view that we should not lose anything we currently have. JG said that the EA say they will reinstate like-for-like. A resident from the floor pointed out that improved riverside amenities should add value to our flats.

OP asked what is the tenant's right to compensation from the EA for inconvenience and loss of amenities as opposed to the freeholder's? JT replied that we pay for the right to "enjoy" the land, so we are entitled to compensation. TW added that he believes there is the possibility of compensation for Freshwater, and also for residents. He said that the EA are prepared to pay reasonable surveyor's fees and compensation, and if necessary and appropriate, reasonable legal fees will also be paid.

TW said that a local surveyor, John Brailsford, and solicitor, Shacklocks, have been recommended and the RRA should consider enlisting the services of these in order to have professional advice.

TM asked if we are at the point where we need a solicitor yet, particularly as EA are only paying "reasonable" fees. MW asked whether the solicitor would carry out the same function as a "liaison officer" between us and the EA. TW replied that the RRA hope to liaise with EA through sub-committees.

In further debate about compensation, the view was expressed from the floor that we need to find out how much it is likely to be, how and when can we get it, and would it be possible to put any compensation against the refurbishment costs. A resident said that he has a flat on the ground floor, river side, and will lose his view of the river; this must deserve compensation. The Committee agreed.

TW proposed a vote that the RRA should appoint John Brailsford as surveyor. This was carried unanimously.

TW said he would like the RRA to produce a newsletter. A resident said that the newsletter should include the names and flat numbers of the Committee members. SG reminded the meeting that information often appears on the RRA noticeboards.

JT introduced Councillor Wheeler of Rushcliffe Borough Council Compton Acres Ward who was attending the meeting as an observer.

4. AOB

A resident asked what lighting will be reinstated on the riverside path after the flood defences

are completed. JT answered that lighting is handled by the County Council, but the Borough council can give them a steer.

A resident expressed concern about security on Rivermead and asked if we can get a beat officer to patrol the area?

JT told the meeting that it is proposed to hold another EGM to discuss the refurbishment works on 20 February 2006, 7.00pm.