



Berkeley Housing Authority

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Telephone: (510) 981 5470 Fax: (510) 981 5480

Office of the Executive Director

Item 5

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 30, 2014
To: Honorable Chairperson and
Members of the Berkeley Housing Authority Board
From: Tia M. Ingram, Executive Director
Subject: Status of Berkeley Housing Authority Operations

This report summarizes the highlights of our current activities and advises upcoming projects:

HUD REPORTING/COMPLIANCE

- 1. 50058 Reporting. As required, we submit certifications to HUD via the PIC system – documenting completion of the annual recertification for continued eligibility:

	<u>Jun 2014</u>	<u>Jul 2014</u>	<u>Aug 2014</u>	<u>Sept 2014</u>
Utilization (units)	98.10 (1,793)	98.39 (1,797)	98.63 (1,802)	97.76 (1,806)
Utilization (\$)	97.84%	99.70%	102.18%	97%
Port Outs			130	120
Late/Missing Annual Recert	8	11	11	12
Late/Missing Annual Inspect	6	5	6	10

- We consistently continue to perform all the required eligibility tasks. Notwithstanding the very small number of late or missing certifications, this may not reflect all the completed work. For example, a late RX could be complete, but because it is a “future” (effective date is in the next month) certification not submitted to HUD.
- The report is updated monthly, the weekend following the end of the month. The month of September ended on Tuesday, thus the report for September was updated the weekend beginning October 3rd.

- 2. Financial Management Assessment. The 3-day on-site financial review was conducted September 22nd through September 24th. I am very pleased to report a successful engagement, no findings, and bountiful accolades for Finance Manager Jesy Yturralde and her staff. The reviewers:

- a. Validated our administrative cost, noting that our cost per unit were in the mid-range of comparable agencies;
- b. Validated our 110% Payment Standard, as reasonable given our rental market;
- c. Commended BHA for its efforts to survive sequestration with minimal impact on assisted households;
- d. Commended staff on the thorough, organized records;
- e. Acknowledged our proactive responses to distribution of rental subsidies; utility reimbursement payments; and utility allowances; and
- f. Saluted staff for the remarkably miniscule variances in our cash.

I most certainly concur with the raving remarks, acknowledging the stellar performance Jesy Yturralde, Finance Manager, and her staff of two, Virgilio Ocampo and Jayla Fuentecilla.

3. Disposition Proceeds. We interpret the January 2014 HUD disposition approval letter to allow for use to cover operating deficits in the S8 Voucher Program. However, one can read certain sections of the document to suggest that may not always be the case. For example, the letter includes a condition "...subject to current and any future HUD regulations." In an effort to confirm our understanding/position, we obtained a legal opinion from Goldfarb and Lipman which will be shared with the SF HUD Field Office. We discussed this issue conceptually with Miguel Correa, Director of HUD San Francisco's Office of Public Housing and he will confer with HUD legal staff to confirm the appropriate response to concerns/questions raised by our Auditor.
4. FY 2013 SEMAP Remote Confirmatory Review. I am pleased to report receipt of HUD's findings that there were no changes to the self-certified SEMAP report to the FY 2013 "High Performer" designation as per the results of HUD's "Remote Review." (Attachment 1)
5. 2014 SEMAP Certification. We have been advised of an error in our 2014 certification. HUD recognizes the need each PHA has to establish Payment Standard that reflect the local market. The two conditions are that the Payment Standard not be less than 90%, but no more than 110% of the applicable Fair Market Rent (FMR). When setting the Payment Standard at 110% we rounded, creating a Payment Standard just pennies over 110%; nonetheless, over and a violation. The adjustment likely reduces our score but we believe that our certification of High Performer will remain intact.
6. Semi-Annual Labor Standards Enforcement Report. The report to HUD submitted on October 2, 2014 covered the six month period beginning April 1, 2014 and ending on September 30, 2014. We were required to report on two projects, per HUD regulations that, when 9 or more Project-Based units are awarded by a housing authority, the Davis-Bacon/prevaling wage laws are triggered:
 - a. Strawberry Creek Lodge – for rehabilitation activity; 23 Project Based Vouchers awarded. No discrepancies were noted.
 - b. Berkeley 75 – for rehabilitation activity; for this project we reported an unresolved \$84,000 wage violation. We are closely monitoring the situation for

evidence of proper restitution before we execute the master Housing Assistance Payment Contract.

7. HUD, SF Region, Public Housing Director. I am pleased to report a positive introduction to Miguel Correa, Public Housing Director. Correa began his appointment with an outreach (email and personal phone call) to every Executive Director in the region. In addition, he visited BHA's office on September 18th for a briefing. He showed great interest in the disposition project, and pledged his support, and that of his office, as the project moves forward. Unfortunately, he has a conflict, and will not be able to attend the December 2nd grand opening celebration.

ADMINISTRATION

1. Grand Opening! Please mark your calendars for Tuesday, December 2nd, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., for the grand opening celebration of 75 units of fully rehabilitated family housing units. The festivities will be held at the Francisco St location (corner of San Pablo Ave).
2. Strategic Planning Effort. We have cleared all the hurdles and entered into contract with the Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) for the engagement effective September 15, 2014; interview principals on the contract include Surlene Grant, managing Senior Facilitator and Co-facilitator Ana Cortez
3. Sublease. To facilitate initial lease-up, Related (Berkeley 75) sublet space in our office (February 15, 2014 to February 14, 2015). We were recently advised that Related intends to lease other private space beginning in November. The sublease (February 2014 - October 2014) created \$12,000 in unrestricted revenue for BHA. However, the Related sublease occurred during the initial year of our lease – the period that will serve as the basis for our first rent adjustment (to reflect energy consumption). The basis will not be a true indicator of BHA's future consumption as Related staff (3-5 persons) typically worked more days/longer hours, than BHA) during the initial lease-up phase utilizing lights, computers, etc. To a great extent, the majority of the foot traffic was created by in-office appointments scheduled by and for Related staff. We are not pursuing another tenant at this time.
4. Utility Allowance Study. Housing authorities are required to assess utility costs annually and to update utility allowance schedules when there has been an increase in rates of 10% or more. This study utilizes complex metrics and statistical usage data that must be obtained from local utility companies, and then accurately analyzed and "crunched." Production of the schedules has been outsourced, due to lack of in house capacity, to Alan Fox, a former HUD employee, now a consultant for housing authorities across the nation, and for HUD HQ. We approached two firms to provide quotes on conducting the 2015 study, and two subsequent updates. Mr. Fox once again provided the most cost effective option. Because the price for conducting the study is so minimal (\$900 for year 1, \$500 for subsequent updates), and under the \$50,000 threshold required to have Board approval, the Executive Director is authorized to enter into contract for this HUD required study.

5. City Consolidated Plan. The City has embarked on the HUD required Consolidated Plan. As in the past, BHA was asked to provide information about services we provide for inclusion in the Housing Element. While we are happy to provide information about our services, this mandatory planning process is an opportunity for BHA to contribute more broadly by identifying impediments to affirmatively furthering affordable housing in the City. This is particularly important as we look to the future – when:

- a. the City of Berkeley will have 0 low income public housing units, and a modest number of Below Market Rate apartments;
- b. market rental rates are exceedingly high and increasing;
- c. competition for rental units throughout the City is at an all time high – with the addition of commuters to San Francisco;
- d. owners are leaving the S8 program for unsubsidized tenancies with rents that are several hundred dollars above the Payment Standard (set at 110% of Fair Market Rents);
- e. families coming from BHA’s wait list often must “port-out” to find a rental unit; and
- f. we reach the “maximum cap”, and can no longer “project base” vouchers to create and/or preserve affordable housing units.

Key dates leading to adoption of the Consolidated plan are:

- November 10th or 17th – Public Hearing
- February 5th – Draft Plan to the Housing Advisory Commission
- March 5th – HAC action on the Plan
- April 28th – Public Hearing (City Council)
- May 15th – Consolidated Plan submitted

We are seeking to work closely with City staff and the local Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) and Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) on this critical planning effort.

6. Section 8 Project Based Vouchers.

New Awards. In the past and per our Admin Plan, we considered a new round of awards in October. We selected this date to be more in sync with the City’s schedule for Housing Trust Fund and/or CDBG awards. We have very limited capacity (80 to 90) in terms of vouchers that can be project based before we reach the finite size of our program (HUD allows housing authorities to project-base up to 20% of their Annual Contributions Contract (ACC) in terms of vouchers). It is critical that we reserve the full capacity until the Board has engaged in discussion (study session), and adopted standards for new awards and renewals. We anticipate scheduling the study session early next year (2015).

Expiring awards. As reported previously, we have 4 PB voucher contracts (representing 135 Vouchers) that are within 24 months of expiration (Attachment 2). The first contract to expire/mature (June 2015) is for 17 units awarded to SAHA for University Neighborhood Apartments. We have begun

talks with SAHA, and will be returning to the Board with a recommendation no later than the January 2015 meeting.

As we contemplate renewal of the existing awards it is important to remember the necessary trade-off between renewal of existing awards or award to new projects that create new affordable units.

Our capacity to project base vouchers is a valuable commodity, and highly sought after by for-profit and non-profit developers alike. They can also be a valuable financial resource for BHA, if managed strategically. Thus, we are working to develop internal capacity to better evaluate proposals from our non-profit partners requesting renewal and/or award of project based vouchers.

7. RHCP Loan. As you recall, the Authority has an outstanding loan of \$763,689 with the State from 1982 (we have asked the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to confirm that the \$763,689 represents their total claim) when the 14 units were constructed via the Rental Housing Construction Project (RHCP); these funds are currently held in escrow pending a decision by the State to apply the balance to our loan, or release some or all to BHA. Chairperson Norris, and BHA's Executive Director met with HCD Director Claudia Cappio on October 15th; the meeting was very cordial, and provided an opportunity for Cappio to visit one of the rehabilitated units. We were assured a decision was forthcoming within days of the meeting.
8. BHA Commission. Mayor Bates reached out to the community at large, and identified two potential candidates for the BHA Board. Sybedeh Viveros (staff of Mayor Bates), Chairperson Norris and Executive Director Ingram interviewed both candidates. The consensus was that either would be ideal Commissioners. I am pleased to report the City Council, on October 21st, affirmed Mayor Bates' recommendation, and appointed Gerris Wilkerson to the BHA Board.
9. Labor Contracts. The negotiating team (Tia Ingram and James Diamond) met with SEIU Local 1021 and Local One on October 8th. All parties continue to negotiate in good faith; we exchanged proposals, and I believe we are close to reaching agreement on a contract. We will update the Board on the proposed terms during the closed session.
10. PHA Plans. Every public housing authority is required to adopt a Five Year Plan, and an Annual Plan. BHA submitted its first Plans as a "Section 8 only" Authority, including a Five Year plan starting Fiscal Year 2014 (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2019), and an Annual Plan. These documents are intended to serve as comprehensive guides to BHA policies, programs, operations, and strategies for meeting local housing needs and goals. The critical document is the Administrative Plan; this 18 chapter document covers everything from applying for assistance, to how subsidy levels are determined, to rules governing the Section 8 Project Based Program and the Moderate Rehabilitation Program, to how decisions are made in the event the program size must be reduced (families must be terminated) because there is insufficient funding to support all the current contracts.

11. Going Green. As a cost savings measure, and with due regard to the environment, we recently launched two programs:

- a. Direct Deposit. As of September 1st, 287 landlords had not registered for direct deposit, and were required to come to visit the office to receive payment. Owners were overwhelmingly understanding, with 92 enrolling in direct deposit. Of the remaining 195 owners, many shared fear/anxiety of *any technology* – as the basis for their decision to continue with a manual check, even if it means having to come to the office each month.
- b. Utility Reimbursement Payments. We currently have 47 households that pay \$0 for rent, and receive a monthly payment from BHA in the form of a utility allowance. Of the 47 households, 4 are over-housed. We are working with our software vendor to program the system to generate a single payment to the local energy provider (PG&E), for application of the reimbursement funds to individual accounts. The project will also provide an opportunity for us to confirm utility service is in place, and the party responsible for the bill.

OPERATIONS

1. Utilization/Leasing. I am pleased to report the following as of August 30th

Units Leased*	Port outs**	Average HAP	Average Family Rent	Seekers (Voucher Holders)	Success Rate
1,806	130	\$1,022	\$356	65	35%

- a. 18 vouchers issued in July and August 2014;
- b. 6 net increase in contracts;
- c. 23 decrease in portability reflects absorption of contracts (not any decrease in requests to port out).

*Families continue to report lack of available units as the primary reason for wanting/needing to port-out before their voucher expires. Interesting, a number of families port-out, only to return to Berkeley for the same reasons others wish to live in this City, and the high level of service from BHA staff.

2. Portability

We *exchange* a lot of clients with the Oakland and Alameda County Housing Authorities under HUD’s “portability” rules. We currently *absorb* all incoming portable contracts; of our 1,935 authorized units, 130 vouchers are currently being *managed* in another jurisdiction.

Outgoing contracts	Oakland	Alameda County	Contra Costa	Other
September	85	55	3	11
October	67	57	4	11

When a family exercises portability – the receiving housing authority has two options:

- a. Manage the contract meaning pay the landlord the monthly subsidy, but bill the initial housing authority for 100% and retain 80% of the administrative fee earned each month; or
- b. Absorb the contractmeaning relieve the initial housing authority of all financial responsibility for the contract, and retain 100% of the administrative fee earned each month.

Managing can be mutually beneficial to the initial and receiving housing authority as both earn some fee for the contract. However, managing comes with the added burden of monthly billing and reconciliation in PIC (HUD's data software tracking system). Ultimately, the receiving Housing Authority retains the right to manage for any period, and to decide to absorb the contract when it is advantageous to do so. We are responding now to OHA's notice that they are absorbing all incoming contracts AND the 85 contracts previously managed. This creates a large drop in our lease rate, and adversely impacts our administrative fee earnings; this loss can only be overcome by leasing of units in Berkeley by newly awarded voucher holders. For Fiscal Year 13-14, of the 132 terminations [end of participation], 59 or 45% were contracts that were absorbed.

3. Owner Rent Demands.

This owners' rental market is resulting in rents considerably above Payment Standard, and thus out of reach for our Voucher holders. In September-October we responded to several requests from owners to increase the rent on existing tenancies to amounts \$200+ or more above Payment Standard. Working with the Rent Board, we confirmed:

- a) The maximum an owner can receive for rent, without triggering rent control is Payment Standard [for the unit size]; or
- b) Payment Standard plus the Annual General Adjustment (1.7% for 2014), but the unit becomes subject to registration, payment of fees and other conditions of the local rent control program.

As the information was shared with owners, all 15 agreed to reduce the rent increase to Payment Standard. This resolved the issue for the moment, but the much larger issue is the availability of rental units within our Payment Standards. To that end we are continuing to work with the Rent Board to track the trends; reminding owners of the benefits of participating in the Section 8 program; and contemplating the impact on the program if we should decide to request HUD approval of a 120% exception Payment Standard.

As an indication of what is happening in the rental market, note the text from an email received from a non-assisted household: *"I'm writing to see if I could get some advice on an upcoming rent increase. I live in a house in Berkeley with 4 other roommates. Our landlord is raising the rent by about 15% and I'm wondering if we have any recourse in the matter. They sent us a notice 60 days in advance of the increase. If it goes through, I wouldn't be able to stay in the house, so any information you could offer would be helpful (phone would be preferable). Thank you!"*

4. Unit Inspections/Hardware. We advised you in September of problems experienced with the handheld devices used in the performance of our unit inspections. Working with the City's IT Department, we are making progress towards a solution – which will likely be a conversion to *tablets*. At this point we anticipate a total cost, including the two-tablets and software upgrades, of \$4,800 or less.
5. Affordable Housing. As administrators of the Section 8 Voucher program, we are keenly aware of the challenges low-income household experience in finding and maintaining housing in this rental market.
 - a. Section 8 Tenancies. In a down rental market, the Payment Standard is a great incentive to owners looking to fill vacancies. However, we are in the midst of a period where the S8 Payment Standard is often less than market rent, and owners are looking to terminate perfectly good S8 assisted tenancies. See the attached article from a story done involving the Oakland Housing Authority (Attachment 3).
 - b. HUD to Owner Project Based Assistance. Although there is little we can do to assist, BHA is often looked to by households receiving other types of rental assistance for help with issues impacting their living situation. Attached is a recent appeal from residents at Redwood Gardens, a 169 unit, senior housing development (Attachment 4), expressing concerns about living conditions and ongoing maintenance/rehabilitation activities. We alerted other City agencies and the HUD SF Field office to the concerns, but are otherwise unable to offer assistance, as the Project-based contract is between HUD and Redwood Gardens, with BHA not being party to the contract.

Although we have no direct influence in some matters, our very presence in the City provides a resource for affordable households looking for assistance with their housing needs.

- c. Senior Housing Development. We received a report from a concerned resident at a senior development (non-profit cooperative) reporting fraud, misappropriation of funds, discriminatory practices in determining rent charged to certain individuals, and other lease violations. There are a few residents residing at the property with S8 tenant based contracts; we have not received any complaints from these renters. We referred the matter to the HUD Office of Inspector General.

CONTACT PERSON

Tia M. Ingram, Executive Director, (510) 981-5471

Attachments:

1. Sept. 30, 2014 HUD Letter "Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) Remote Review"
2. Section 8 Project Based Vouchers - Expiring awards
3. 2 Investigates: Landlords use questionable tactics to evict low-income tenants
4. October 8, 2014 Email from Redwood Gardens Resident

BERKELEY HOUSING
AUTHORITY

2014 OCT 7 AM 8 09

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
San Francisco Regional Office - Region IX
600 Harrison Street
San Francisco, California 94107-1387
www.hud.gov
espanol.hud.gov

SEP 30 2014

Ms. Tia Ingram
Executive Director
Berkeley Housing Authority
1936 University Avenue, Suite 150
Berkeley, CA 94704

Re: Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) Remote Review

Dear Ms. Ingram:

This letter is to convey the results of this office's remote review of your PHA's certification to HUD of performance on six of the SEMAP indicators for fiscal year end 2013.

We reviewed the SEMAP questionnaire your agency submitted, along with related materials. Results and determinations of the review are outlined in the enclosed summary. The review was limited in scope, in that it sought to confirm that the basic required support was in place for your SEMAP certification. The review did *not* involve a individual examination of each sample; rather, the review validated that the right sample was pulled and that it was subjected to testing consistent with the SEMAP review criteria.

Based on our review, we concluded that no change to the HUD SEMAP rating provided to you based on your original certification is warranted.

We appreciate your cooperation during the review process. If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Glover Johnson, Portfolio Management Specialist, at (415) 489-6448. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miguel A. Correa".

Miguel Correa
Director
Office of Public Housing

Enclosure

BERKELEY HOUSING
AUTHORITY

2014 OCT 7 AM 8 09

Berkeley Housing Authority
Section Eight Management Assessment Remote Review
Results and Determinations
September 24, 2014

Indicator 1. Selection from the Waiting List

PHA Certified Score 15
HUD Review Score 15

Indicator 2. Rent Reasonableness

PHA Certified Score 20
HUD Review Score 20

Indicator 3. Determination of Adjusted Income

PHA Certified Score 20
HUD Review Score 20

Indicator 4. Utility Allowance Schedule

PHA Certified Score 5
HUD Review Score 5

Indicator 5. Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Quality Control Inspections

PHA Certified Score 5
HUD Review Score 5

Indicator 6. Housing Quality Control Enforcement

PHA Certified Score 10
HUD Review Score 10

Indicator 7. Expanding Housing Opportunities

PHA Certified Score 5
HUD Review Score 5

Project Based Assistance - HAP Terms/Expirations

Property	Qualifications	Total	HAP Signed	HAP Contract Term	HAP Expires	Start Renewal Conversation
University Neighborhood Apts.	Disabled & HOPWA	17	June 2005	10 Years	June 2015	May 2014
Sacramento Sr Homes	Seniors (62+); (HOPWA)	39	Oct 2006	10 Years	Sept 2016	Aug 2015
Helios Corner	Seniors (62+)	59	July 2007	10 Years	June 2017	May 2016
Ashby Lofts	Families, Disabled & Seniors	20	Aug 2007	10 Years	July 2017	June 2016
Adeline St Apartments	Disabled households	17	April 2013 (renewal)	5 Years	March 2018	Feb 2017
Oxford Plaza	Families; HOPWA	24	Feb 2009	10 Years	Jan 2019	Dec 2017
Allston House	Families	4	May 2010	15 Years	April 2025	March 2024
Creekside Apts.	Families	2	May 2010	15 Years	April 2025	March 2024
Hillegass Apts.	Families	4	May 2010	15 Years	April 2025	March 2024
Shattuck Senior Homes	Seniors (62+)	5	May 2010	15 Years	April 2025	March 2024
NCLT	Families	2	July 2010	15 Years	June 2025	May 2024
NCLT	Families	1	July 2010	15 Years	June 2025	May 2024
NCLT	Families	1	July 2010	15 Years	June 2025	May 2024
Harmon Gardens	Emancipated Youth	5	Aug 2011	15 Years	July 2026	June 2025
Hearst Avenue Apts.	Disabled and Families	4	June 2013	15 Years	May 2028	April 2027
BHA	Disabled; Families	75		15 Years		
Strawberry Creek Lodge	Seniors (62+)	23		15 Years		
		302				

2 Investigates: Landlords use questionable tactics to evict low-income tenants

Monday, October 13, 2014

Melanie Woodrow

OAKLAND, Calif. —

2 Investigates reveals East Bay landlords who are doing everything they can to evict low-income tenants who are either living in rent-controlled apartments or receiving assistance from the Section 8 housing program.

Industry insiders say this trend is a sign of the times. As the housing market bounces back landlords can get more money by renting to new tenants who are not part of the Section 8 housing program. Getting out of the program is not as simple as opting out. Landlords must first get tenants to agree to leave or they need just cause to evict.

But some landlords aren't willing to wait, and 2 Investigates uncovered some questionable tactics being employed to force low-income residents out of their homes quickly.

Surging rents

According to a report by MPF Research, Oakland had the highest annual rent growth in the nation at 9.4 percent. San Jose came in second at 8.9 percent and San Francisco came in ninth at 5.1 percent.

"Landlords want to get the maximum rent they can," said Lisa Greif, an attorney with Bay Area Legal Aid.

Landlords who run rent-controlled apartments can only raise rent a certain percentage while tenants are living in the unit. Those same landlords can raise rent more when new tenants move in, giving them an incentive to have more frequent turnover.

A similar situation arises for landlords who enroll in the Section 8 housing program. Tenants in the program receive a voucher from the city's Housing Authority to cover a portion of their rent. It is the renter's responsibility to make up the price difference. Once a landlord agrees to participate in the Section 8 program, if he or she wants to raise the rent, the increase must be approved by the Housing Authority.

Opting out

There is no way for landlords participating in the Section 8 housing program to simply opt out when they feel like it. In order for a landlord to end his or her participation in the program, the landlord must first end the existing leases of all the Section 8 recipients. If those tenants won't agree to voluntarily move, the landlord must have just cause to evict them.

"It can't just be because they no longer want to accept Section 8, that is not a valid reason or they want more rent that's not a valid reason under just cause either," said Greif.

Greif says it's a sign of the times. As the housing market bounces back, landlords can make more money by leaving the Section 8 housing program.

One family's struggle

2 Investigates was contacted by Shadeema McDonald, an Oakland resident and Section 8 tenant, when she worried that she would be evicted by a landlord who wanted to raise rents. McDonald lives with her parents and takes care of them both.

"My mom, she's a dialysis patient now; my dad had a couple of strokes," explained McDonald.

All three are Section 8 recipients and receive rent assistance in the form of a voucher from the Oakland Housing Authority. After their OHA voucher kicks in, the family pays \$595 a month for their three-bedroom home. In May, McDonald's landlord sent her a 60-day notice warning he'd be increasing rent to \$2,200 a month.

"I don't even think it's feasible," McDonald told 2 Investigates.

Neither did the Oakland Housing Authority. It denied Landlord Jim Chen's request because it said it "exceeds fair open market rents."

So Chen responded by saying he no longer wanted to participate in the Section 8 housing program and that McDonald had 90 days to sign a new lease at a higher rent or get out. But he didn't give the McDonalds a "just cause" reason for their potential eviction.

"Tenants shouldn't feel forced to move out in this situation," said Greif.

2 Investigates wanted to ask Landord Jim Chen about the notices he sent McDonald. He directed us to his attorney who agreed to speak with us off camera and said his office did not draft the notices. After 2 Investigates got involved, Chen withdrew his notices, meaning the McDonalds do not have to move.

Limited options

Prior to learning she wouldn't have to move, Shadeema McDonald began looking for a new home. Most rentals were out of her budget and many raised another problem.

"Everywhere I'm looking, no one wants section 8 recipients," said McDonald.

McDonald believes landlords know they can get more rent from higher income tenants. She says she is also relieved she'll be able to stay in her Oakland home caring for her parents. She says she couldn't imagine the alternative.

"It'd be devastating," said McDonald.

Ingram, Tia

From: Eleanor Walden [ewalden3@comcast.net]
Sent: Wednesday, October 08, 2014 2:23 PM
To: Ingram, Tia
Cc: Arlene Merryman; Gary Hicks; avram gur arye; Mary Yan; Laura Vita Weiss; Autumn Dann; Peni Hall; Violet McFall; Judith Gilbert; King Collins; Cynthia Johnson; Philomena Burkhardt; Vic Sadot; Gerta Farber
Subject: Assistance for Residents Committee at Redwood Gardens

To: Tia Ingram

I hope that you can find time to effect a meeting with a group of residents from Redwood Gardens. Since we have some sensitive and important concerns about the changes that are being inflicted on us, and we are mostly all elderly or disabled I request that you make time to come up here and confer with us.

I am writing to you as a co-chair of the Residents' Committee of Redwood Gardens. The residents here have been under siege from the CSI Corporation to the health and safety, the peace and comfort, of their apartments.

We are under an avalanche of intrusion to the peace and comfort of our apartments at Redwood Gardens. CSI, The corporation that NOW owns the HUD funded housing building on the South/East side of Berkeley, having taken it over from the John Stewart Corp., has started MAJOR building reconstruction; the residents have not been consulted as to their needs or opinions; the announcements, such as they are, have been patronizing (read: insulting).

We intend to attract attention of any press, political, advocacy agency, and legal facility that may be able to help us.

Please call or email me to let me know what time is convenient to you.

Yours truly,
Eleanor Walden
510-848-6397