



City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division

Guide to the Boston Housing Authority proceedings

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Historical note

The Boston Housing Authority (BHA) was established by order of the Boston City Council on October 1, 1935, pursuant to St. 1935, c. 449, s. 5 which empowered cities and towns of Massachusetts to establish housing authorities. Such a body is responsible for providing decent, safe and sanitary housing for families unable to afford housing without public subsidies and for clearing substandard, decadent or blighted open areas under the provisions of MGLA c. 121B. To carry out these responsibilities BHA develops and manages housing projects and leases housing when necessary. It also performed the functions of an urban redevelopment authority until such a body was established separately pursuant to St. 1957, c. 150.

The management and governance of the BHA has deviated from that of other housing authorities since 1975, when BHA was sued in Boston City Housing Court by a group of BHA tenants, represented by Greater Boston Legal Services, over poor conditions in housing projects under the authority's control. As a result of the ruling in favor of the tenants, a court-appointed master prepared a report listing recommendations that provided the basis for a consent decree signed in 1977 by BHA, Greater Boston Legal Services and the Boston Public Housing Tenants Policy Council. The decree detailed a series of improvements that BHA was to make over the course of three years. The master, responsible for

monitoring BHA's compliance with the consent decree, gave approval for all major decisions made by the BHA board and administrator. In 1979, the judge ruled that BHA had failed satisfactorily to fulfill the terms of the consent decree and BHA was placed in receivership, with its board of commissioners and administrator replaced by a court-appointed receiver. Since 1990, when the receivership ended, BHA has been directed by an administrator whose activities are reviewed by a nine-member monitoring committee appointed by the mayor of Boston.

Source: Massachusetts State Archives catalog record

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Scope and Contents note

This collection contains the proceedings of the Boston Housing Authority from 1936-1974. The collection is comprised of 61 volumes in 11 boxes and includes minutes, personnel schedules, bids for construction and furnishing, reports, and housing development plans.

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Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

The Boston Housing Authority records were transferred to the City Archives from the Massachusetts State Archives on January 26, 2010.

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