

ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST
WPA INVESTMENT GROUP, LTD
WITH RESPECT TO WILLOW POND
APARTMENTS (LIHTC FILE # 94039 /
CMTS # 1229)

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BEFORE THE
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF
HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

AGREED FINAL ORDER

General Remarks and official action taken:

On this 30th day of July, 2015, the Governing Board (“Board”) of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (“TDHCA”) considered the matter of whether enforcement action should be taken against **WPA INVESTMENT GROUP, LTD**, a Texas limited partnership (“Respondent”).

This Agreed Order is executed pursuant to the authority of the Administrative Procedure Act (“APA”), Tex. Gov’t Code §2001.056, which authorizes the informal disposition of contested cases. In a desire to conclude this matter without further delay and expense, the Board and Respondent agree to resolve this matter by this Agreed Final Order. The Respondent agrees to this Order for the purpose of resolving this proceeding only and without admitting or denying the findings of fact and conclusions of law set out in this Order.

Upon recommendation of the Enforcement Committee, the Board makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law and enters this Order:

WAIVER

Respondent acknowledges the existence of their right to request a hearing as provided by TEX. GOV’T CODE § 2306.044, and to seek judicial review, in the District Court of Travis County, Texas, of any order as provided by TEX. GOV’T CODE § 2306.047. Pursuant to this compromise and settlement, the Respondent waives those rights and acknowledges the jurisdiction of the Board over Respondent.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Jurisdiction:

1. The Department has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Tex. Gov’t Code §§2306.041-.0503, and 10 TEX. ADMIN. CODE §1.14 and 10 TEX. ADMIN. CODE Chapter 60, both of which were replaced by 10 TEX. ADMIN. CODE §2 as of November 19, 2014.

2. During 1996, Dallas/Glen Hills, L.P., a Texas limited partnership (“Prior Owner”) was awarded an allocation of Low Income Housing Tax Credits by the Board, in an annual amount of \$350,260 to rehabilitate Willow Pond Apartments (“Property”) (HTC file No. 94039 / CMTS No. 1229 / LDDL No. 100).
3. Prior Owner signed a land use restriction agreement (“LURA”) regarding the Property. The LURA was effective October 1, 1996, and filed of record on December 30, 1996 at Document Number 2521702 of the Official Public Records of Real Property of Dallas County, Texas (“Records”.) In accordance with Section 2 of the LURA, the LURA is a restrictive covenant/deed restriction encumbering the property and binding on all successors and assigns for the full term of the LURA.
4. Respondent purchased the Property on April 3, 2009, and the property continues to be subject to the LURA.
5. Respondent is a Texas limited partnership that is qualified to own, construct, acquire, rehabilitate, operate, manage, or maintain a housing development that is subject to the regulatory authority of TDHCA.

Compliance Violations¹:

6. Property has a history of violations and was the subject of a previously signed Agreed Final Order on January 13, 2013, agreeing to a \$5,000 administrative penalty, which was to be partially forgivable provided that Respondent complied with a series of requirements outlined within the Agreed Final Order. The Agreed Final Order was violated and the administrative penalty has been paid in full.
7. On October 10, 2014, TDHCA issued notice that a new finding was identified during its review of the Entrance Interview Questionnaire that was submitted as required by the Agreed Final Order referenced above in FOF # 6. The responses to the Entrance Interview Questionnaire indicated that Unit 2002 was not being used for residential purposes, and was instead being used as a children’s community center. Use of the unit for non-residential purposes and not making it available to the public for rent is a violation of Section 4(c) and Appendix A of the LURA, which require 100% of the units in each building to be made available to members of the public who qualify for occupancy, and is considered an event of noncompliance. The October 10, 2014 TDHCA letter provided a 90-day corrective action period to either (a) convert the unit back to residential use, occupy it with a qualified household, and submit the full tenant file to TDHCA, or (b) request a material LURA amendment to allow the unit to be used for non-residential purposes. The deadline to respond to this new finding was January 8, 2015. TDHCA issued a second letter on April 24, 2015, indicating that no response had

¹ Within this Agreed Final Order, all references to violations of TDHCA Compliance Monitoring rules at 10 TEX. ADMIN. CODE, CHAPTERS 10 AND 60 refer to the versions of the code in effect at the time of the compliance monitoring reviews and/or inspections that resulted in recording each violation. All past violations remain violations under the current code and all interim amendments.

been received, and that the new finding was being referred for an administrative penalty. The finding remains unresolved.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Department has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code §§2306.041-.0503, 10 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 1.14 and 10 TEX. ADMIN. CODE Chapter 60, both of which were replaced by 10 TEX. ADMIN. CODE §2 as of November 19, 2014.
2. Respondent is a "housing sponsor" as that term is defined in Tex. Gov't Code §2306.004(14).
3. Pursuant to IRC §42(m)(1)(B)(iii), housing credit agencies are required to monitor for noncompliance with all provisions of the IRC and to notify the Internal Revenue Service of such noncompliance.
4. Respondent violated Section 4(c) and Appendix A of the LURA by using Unit 2002 for non-residential use as a children's community room.
5. Because Respondent is a housing sponsor with respect to the Property, and has violated TDHCA rules and agreements, the Board has personal and subject matter jurisdiction over Respondent pursuant to TEX. GOV'T CODE §2306.041 and §2306.267.
6. Because Respondent is a housing sponsor, TDHCA may order Respondent to perform or refrain from performing certain acts in order to comply with the law, TDHCA rules, or the terms of a contract or agreement to which Respondent and TDHCA are parties, pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code §2306.267.
7. Because Respondent has violated rules promulgated pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code Chapter 2306 and has violated agreements with the Agency to which Respondent is a party, the Agency may impose an administrative penalty pursuant to TEX. GOV'T CODE §2306.041.
8. An administrative penalty of \$1,000 is an appropriate penalty in accordance with 10 TAC §§60.307 and 60.308, which were in place at the time of the violation. It remains appropriate under the replacement rule at 10 TEX. ADMIN. CODE §2, which became effective on November 19, 2014.

Based upon the foregoing findings of fact and conclusions of law, and an assessment of the factors set forth in Tex. Gov't Code §2306.042 to be considered in assessing such penalties as applied specifically to the facts and circumstances present in this case, the Board of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs orders the following:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Respondent is assessed an administrative penalty in the amount of \$1,000, subject to possible deferral as further ordered below.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent shall pay and is hereby directed to pay the \$1,000 administrative penalty by cashier's check payable to the "Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs" on or before October 28, 2015, to the address indicated below, with no further demand from the Department unless Respondent chooses to submit a Material LURA Amendment Request as indicated below on or before October 28, 2015.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent shall convert unit 2002 back to residential use on or before October 28, 2015 unless it chooses to submit a Material LURA Amendment Request as indicated below.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, if Respondent submits a Material LURA Amendment Request on or before October 28, 2015, including the required processing fee, requesting a reduction in the number of restricted units to permit continued usage of unit 2002 as a children's community room, the administrative penalty shall be waived.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that if Respondent complies with the terms and conditions of this Agreed Final Order and chooses to submit a Material LURA Amendment Request as indicated above, the satisfactory performance under this Agreed Final Order will be accepted in lieu of the assessed administrative penalty and the full administrative penalty will be deferred and forgiven.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that if Respondent fails to satisfy any conditions, otherwise violates any provision of this order, or chooses not to submit a Material LURA Amendment Request as indicated above, then the full administrative penalty in the amount of \$1,000 shall be submitted to the Department on or before October 28, 2015.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, if unit 2002 continues to be used as a community room without permission from the Department and the violation is identified again by the Compliance Division during a future corrective documentation review, desk review, onsite file review, or onsite physical inspection conducted after the date this Agreed Final Order is approved by the TDHCA Board, and the finding is not timely resolved during the corrective action period set by the Compliance Division, this will be considered a new violation and may be referred back to the Enforcement Committee for consideration of an additional administrative penalty.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent shall follow the requirements of 10 Tex. Admin. Code 10.406, a copy of which is included at Attachment 1, and obtain approval from the Department prior to consummating a sale of the property, if contemplated.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Material LURA Amendment Request and/or any administrative penalty payment must be submitted to the following address:

If via overnight mail (FedEx, UPS):	If via USPS:
TDHCA Attn: Ysella Kaseman 221 E 11 th St Austin, Texas 78701	TDHCA Attn: Ysella Kaseman P.O. Box 13941 Austin, Texas 78711

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the terms of this Agreed Final Order shall be published on the TDHCA website.

Approved by the Governing Board of TDHCA on _____, 2015.

By: _____
Name: J. Paul Oxer
Title: Chair of the Board of TDHCA

By: _____
Name: James "Beau" Eccles
Title: Secretary of the Board of TDHCA

THE STATE OF TEXAS §
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COUNTY OF _____§

Before me, the undersigned notary public, on this _____ day of July, 2015, personally appeared J. Paul Oxer, proved to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument and acknowledged to me that he executed the same for the purposes and consideration therein expressed.

(Seal)

Notary Public, State of Texas

THE STATE OF TEXAS §
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COUNTY OF TRAVIS §

Before me, the undersigned notary public, on this _____ day of July, 2015, personally appeared James "Beau" Eccles, proved to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument and acknowledged to me that he executed the same for the purposes and consideration therein expressed.

(Seal)

Notary Public, State of Texas

STATE OF TEXAS §
§
COUNTY OF _____§

BEFORE ME, _____, a notary public in and for the State of _____, on this day personally appeared _____, known to me or proven to me through _____ to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that (he/she) executed the same for the purposes and consideration therein expressed, who being by me duly sworn, deposed as follows:

1. “My name is _____, I am of sound mind, capable of making this statement, and personally acquainted with the facts herein stated.
2. I hold the office of _____ for Respondent. I am the authorized representative of Respondent, owner of Willow Pond Apartments, which is subject to a Land Use Restriction Agreement monitored by the TDHCA in the State of Texas, and I am duly authorized by Respondent to execute this document.
3. Respondent knowingly and voluntarily enters into this Agreed Final Order, and agrees with and consents to the issuance and service of the foregoing Agreed Order by the Board of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.”

RESPONDENT:

WPA INVESTMENT GROUP, LTD, a Texas limited partnership

WILLOW POND PARTNERS, LLC, a Texas limited liability company

By: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Given under my hand and seal of office this _____ day of _____, 2015.

Signature of Notary Public

Printed Name of Notary Public

NOTARY PUBLIC IN AND FOR THE STATE OF _____

My Commission Expires: _____

Attachment 1

Texas Administrative Code

<u>TITLE 10</u>	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
<u>PART 1</u>	TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
<u>CHAPTER 10</u>	UNIFORM MULTIFAMILY RULES
<u>SUBCHAPTER E</u>	POST AWARD AND ASSET MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS
RULE §10.406	Ownership Transfers (§2306.6713)

(a) Ownership Transfer Notification. All multifamily Development Owners must provide written notice to the Department at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to any sale, transfer, or exchange of the Development or any portion of or Controlling interest in the Development. Transfers that are the result of an involuntary removal of the general partner by the investment limited partner must be reported to the Department, as soon as possible due to the sensitive timing and nature of this decision. If the Department determines that the transfer, involuntary removal, or replacement was due to a default by the General Partner under the Limited Partnership Agreement, or other detrimental action that put the Development at risk of failure, staff may make a recommendation to the Board for the debarment of the entity and/or its Principals and Affiliates pursuant to the Department's debarment rule. In addition, a record of transfer involving Principals in new proposed awards will be reported and may be taken into consideration by the Executive Award and Review Committee, in accordance with §1.5 of this title (relating to Previous Participation Reviews), prior to recommending any new financing or allocation of credits.

(b) Requirement. Department approval must be requested for any new member to join in the ownership of a Development. Exceptions include changes to the investment limited partner, non-controlling limited partner, or other partners affiliated with the investment limited partner, or changes resulting from foreclosure wherein the lender or financial institution involved in the transaction is the resulting owner. Any subsequent transfer of the Development will be required to adhere to the process in this section. Furthermore, a Development Owner may not transfer an allocation of tax credits or ownership of a Development supported with an allocation of tax credits to any Person or entity unless the Development Owner obtains the Executive Director's prior, written approval of the transfer. The Executive Director may not unreasonably withhold approval of the transfer requested in compliance with this section. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a Development Owner shall be required to notify the Department but shall not be required to obtain Executive Director approval when the transferee is an Affiliate of the Development Owner with no new members or the transferee is a Related Party who does not Control the Development and the transfer is being made for estate planning purposes.

(c) Transfers Prior to 8609 Issuance or Construction Completion. Transfers (other than those that do not require Executive Director approval, as set forth in subsection (b) of this section) will not be approved prior to the issuance of IRS Form(s) 8609 (for Housing Tax Credits) or the completion of construction (for all Developments funded through other Department programs) unless the Development Owner can provide evidence that the need for the transfer is due to a hardship (ex. potential bankruptcy, removal by a partner, etc.). The Development Owner must provide the Department with a written explanation describing the hardship and a copy of any applicable agreement between the parties to the transfer, including any Third-Party agreement.

(d) Non-Profit Organizations. If the ownership transfer request is to replace a non-profit organization within the Development ownership entity, the replacement non-profit entity must adhere to the requirements in paragraph (1) or (2) of this subsection.

(1) If the LURA requires ownership or material participation in ownership by a Qualified Non-Profit Organization, and the Development received Tax Credits pursuant to §42(h)(5) of the Code, the transferee must be a Qualified Non-Profit Organization that meets the requirements of §42(h)(5) of the Code and

Texas Government Code §2306.6706.

(2) If the LURA requires ownership or material participation in ownership by a qualified non-profit organization, but the Development did not receive Tax Credits pursuant to §42(h)(5) of the Code, the Development Owner must show that the transferee is a non-profit organization that complies with the LURA.

(e) Historically Underutilized Business ("HUB") Organizations. If a HUB is the general partner of a Development Owner and it (i) is being removed as the result of a default under the organizational documents of the Development Owner or (ii) determines to sell its ownership interest, in either case, after the issuance of 8609s, the purchaser of that general partnership interest is not required to be a HUB as long as the LURA does not require such continual ownership or a material LURA amendment is approved. Such approval can be obtained concurrent with Board approval described herein. All such transfers must be approved by the Board and require that the Board find that:

(1) the selling HUB is acting of its own volition or is being removed as the result of a default under the organizational documents of the Development Owner;

(2) the participation by the HUB has been substantive and meaningful, or would have been substantial and meaningful had the HUB not defaulted under the organizational documents of the Development Owner, enabling it to realize not only financial benefit but to acquire skills relating to the ownership and operation of affordable housing; and

(3) the proposed purchaser meets the Department's standards for ownership transfers

(f) Documentation Required. A Development Owner must submit documentation requested by the Department to enable the Department to understand fully the facts and circumstances that gave rise to the need for the transfer and the effects of approval or denial. Documentation includes but is not limited to:

(1) a written explanation outlining the reason for the request;

(2) a list of the names of transferees and Related Parties;

(3) detailed information describing the experience and financial capacity of transferees and related parties holding an ownership interest of 10 percent or greater in any Principal or Controlling entity;

(4) evidence and certification that the tenants in the Development have been notified in writing of the proposed transfer at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the date the transfer is approved by the Department. The ownership transfer approval letter will not be issued until this 30 day period has expired.

(g) Within five (5) business days after the date the Department receives all necessary information under this section, staff shall initiate a qualifications review of a transferee, in accordance with §1.5 of this title, to determine the transferee's past compliance with all aspects of the Department's programs, LURAs and eligibility under this chapter.

(h) Credit Limitation. As it relates to the Housing Tax Credit amount further described in §11.4(a) of this title (relating to Tax Credit Request and Award Limits), the credit amount will not be applied in circumstances described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection:

(1) in cases of transfers in which the syndicator, investor or limited partner is taking over ownership of the Development and not merely replacing the general partner; or

(2) in cases where the general partner is being replaced if the award of credits was made at least five (5) years prior to the transfer request date.

(i) Penalties. The Development Owner must comply with any additional documentation requirements as stated in Subchapter F of this chapter (relating to Compliance Monitoring). The Development Owner, as on record with the Department, will be liable for any penalties imposed by the Department even if such penalty can be attributable to the new Development Owner unless such ownership transfer is approved by the Department.

(j) Ownership Transfer Processing Fee. The ownership transfer request must be accompanied by corresponding ownership transfer fee as outlined in §10.901 of this chapter (relating to Fee Schedule).

Source Note: The provisions of this §10.406 adopted to be effective December 9, 2014, 39 TexReg 9518