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January 6, 2025

Dear Councilor Flynn,

Thank you for your letter. I agree on the urgent need to improve the elevator situation at Ruth Barkley; as you know, thanks to the Mayor and Council's support through the City capital budget, we have bid out a design contract for the eight tall elevators there and are in the process to award it to a certified engineering firm. One of those elevators is the 14 East Brookline one that you reference (not #16), which has had a long-term outage; unfortunately, it isn't viable to repair it without fully modernizing it, so we would expect it to be the first one prioritized within this contract.

As for 42 Harrison Archway, we already bid out and awarded a modernization project for both its cabs, and have been awaiting the arrival of parts so that work can commence. The contractor has informed me that it will begin tomorrow, January 7th. That project will begin with the cab that has been out for the long-term there. During any modernization process, obviously one cab will have to be offline for an extended period so that it can be modernized.

For that reason, we have offered transfers to households at 42 Harrison Archway and 14 East Brookline St that are concerned with continuing to rely on a single elevator cab, and we are seeking to accommodate those who wish to take us up on that offer. We also have an elevator protocol that enables us to employ a chair service contractor to get residents down and up for major appointments in the case of an extended outage. Unfortunately we have to give the contractor about 24 hours of notice, which means that it doesn't work as a back-up when the elevator fails on the same day as an appointment. This caused one resident to miss a medical appointment in December; we proactively scheduled the chair service so that resident could attend a second appointment, but ultimately the elevator was repaired by the time of the second appointment. In the future we will make sure residents know that for a critical medical appointment, they can call Boston Fire to carry them down if BHA cannot order the chair service in time.

Starting next week, my maintenance supervisory team will be temporarily headquartered at Ruth Barkley Apartments, in order to ensure further on-the-spot responsiveness to issues that arise at that site. Thank you for your concern regarding your constituents and our residents at Ruth Barkley; I hope we can continue to advocate together for the investments that this site has sorely need for so long.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kenzie Bok", is written over a horizontal line.

Kenzie Bok

Administrator
Boston Housing Authority

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