



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

340 North Washington Avenue, Scranton, PA 18503 | (570) 348-4101 | www.scrantonpa.gov

January 4, 2025

Scranton Housing Authority Board of Directors
400 Adams Avenue
Scranton, PA 18510

Dear Board Members:

It has come to my attention that descriptions of your last meeting, which included discussion around rent increases and financial distress at Park Gardens, have been purposely misconstrued to incite rumors that are harmful to the residents of Park Gardens, and troubling to neighbors in Green Ridge. The rumors that have been circulating are false and, predictably, politically motivated.

I write in advance of your upcoming monthly meeting on January 6 and special meeting on January 13 to convey that it is important to make clear during these sessions that there is no risk to Park Gardens residents – no one is going to be forced to move.

Please also make it clear that there is no “plan,” as alleged via social media and calls and emails to neighborhood association members, to convert the development to Section 8 housing. In fact, regulations that govern housing authorities limit Section 8 vouchers at housing authority properties to an extremely specific set of conditions and steps that must be taken.¹ There is no path forward for SHA to use Section 8 at Park Gardens.

Park Gardens has been home to many senior citizens over the decades. As there is a need for a financially viable plan for the development, perhaps that could include formalizing a senior citizen age threshold *moving forward* and pursuing funding available for the needs of that population. Scranton needs more housing units across income levels and life stages; Park Gardens should remain a place for seniors who want to age with dignity.

The falsifying of what was discussed during your meeting is regrettable. I hope that as we enter this new year our community can commit to facts, solutions, and caring better for each other.

As Housing Authority Board Members, you exemplify the leadership and care for your neighbors we need more of. Thank you for stepping up for our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paige Gebhardt Cognito".

Paige Gebhardt Cognito
Mayor, City of Scranton

¹ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-24/subtitle-B/chapter-IX/part-982/subpart-H/section-982.352>