

# Local 237 Head Convenes Task Force to Revive HA

By DAVID SIMS | Posted: Monday, October 15, 2012 4:00 pm

Teamsters Local 237 President Gregory Floyd Oct. 3 launched a task force to discuss and recommend changes to the beleaguered Housing Authority, saying that his union and other voices had been excluded from a \$10-million report on the agency by a consultant.

“We were not asked by the Boston Consulting Group to participate in their survey,” Mr. Floyd said in a phone interview. “So together, a coalition of experts and clergy and our members are collectively coming up with solutions on how to make the HA work better and reduce the two-year work backlogs.”

## Mix of Experts and Activists

Mr. Floyd, who represents 9,000 HA employees, is helping to steer the task force. Its other members include Victor Bach, a housing policy analyst at the Community Service Society; Nicholas Bloom, the Chair of Interdisciplinary Studies at the New York Institute of Technology and an author of a book on public housing; and Bishop Mitchell Taylor, the president and CEO of the East River Development Alliance.

Other community groups and HA resident and employee groups are also represented on the task force. One of the first reforms being sought is a change to the centralized system of calling in problems or work orders for housing projects.

“The one general idea is that the call center needs to be revamped,” Mr. Floyd said. “They’re just taking the complaints, but there’s no coordination of who should be doing the work, how many trades you need to be doing the work.

“Some of that control should go back to managers and superintendents,” he continued. “You’ll have someone showing up to help, only to find out someone else has come in to do the work. Or a carpenter will show up when you need a plumber as well.”

## Tough Times for Agency

HA Chairman John B. Rhea has launched his own efforts to restructure the agency after a summer of bad press, mostly from the Daily News, detailing a backlog in work orders and unspent capital funds.

The Boston Consulting Group report, which was kept under wraps for months, recommended some bureaucratic changes but stopped short of endorsing a dramatic overhaul of the way the HA does business.

Mr. Floyd said he hoped Mr. Rhea would heed his suggestions. “We haven’t spoken to him yet, but he will be receptive to looking at the ideas,” he said. “Whether he takes the suggestions is another

question to be determined. But NYCHA is in desperate need of help, and we're going to give our opinion on what should be done. And we're going to do our very best to help NYCHA."

David R. Jones, president of the Community Service Society of New York and another member of the task force, added, "This task force will include input from those who live and work in public housing, and in many ways, best understand its shortcomings. We seek to preserve and strengthen HA communities."