



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Barney Heath
Director of
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Malcolm Lucas
Housing Planner

Members

Esther Schlorholtz, Chair
Donna Rigg, Vice-Chair
David Hedison
Judy Korzenowski
Josephine McNeil
Tatjana Meschede
Alexandra Weiffenbach
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CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Fair Housing Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Date: June 7, 2023
Time: 8:00 a.m.
Place: Virtual (Zoom)

Members Present: Esther Schlorholtz, Chair
Donna Rigg, Vice Chair
Judy Korzenowski
Josephine McNeil
Alexandra Weiffenbach
Steve West

Members Absent: Tatjana Meschede
David Hedison

Staff Present: Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner
Jini Fairley, ADA/Sec. 504 Coordinator
Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director

Public Present: Alicia Bowman, Council
Julia Malakie, Council
Pamela Wright, Council
Sharyn Roberts, League of Women Voters Newton
Nancy Kritzman, Commission on Disability
Kathy Pillsbury

Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner served as recorder, Esther Schlorholtz, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

1. Approval of May 2023 minutes

- Upon a motion by SW, AW seconded the motion. The minutes for May 2023 were approved 6-0-0.



2. Zoning Redesign Presentation

- Jennifer Caira gave an overview of where Planning is at with the proposed village center overlay district and showed the latest version they have been working on. This work will also pertain to the MBTA Communities Law and what the next steps are. JC explained that this has been a multiyear effort and planning has done background research, qualitative and quantitative analysis of what makes good village centers. The process planning went through was outreach and engaging with the community to come up with a set of zoning priorities. The next Zoning and Planning meeting is on June 26, 2023, to discuss the latest iteration.
- JC continued to go over the maps that were in the presentation and explained the methods that could be used to bring the specific villages into compliance with the MBTA Communities. Planning is proposing a 15,000 square foot footprint. See [presentation](#) for more details. JC explained that the City of Newton is one of the 177 communities that have to comply with section 3 that was adopted in 2021. JC stated that the city is enabling at least 330 units of multifamily housing near transit, specifically the MBTA Greenline. The first deadline is set for December of 2023 and after that there will be a number of other requirements, during which unit capacity will be a big focus. She explained that it does not mean that new development has to be built, the requirement only needs to reflect in the zoning. The decided zoning plan has to allow MBTA's requested requirements. JC concluded with, after the public hearing Planning will be adding any suggestions from council and doing more refinement of the zoning. The presentation ended and she gave the committee information to some resources about the zoning reform and gave her contact information for any additional questions.
- JM asked if the level of affordability could be lowered for the population that really needs it, specifically very low and extremely low income and is there any conversation or are people raising this up in their discussions when it comes to zoning. JC stated that there have been discussions and planning have been researching. Planning came up with the conclusion that the projects for this demographic attract the non-profit mission driven developers that use different types of financing. Planning is trying to create and provide incentives that could be used by for profit developers to getting a bonus to provide deeper affordability. ES stated that she agrees with JM that there should be discussions about this but noted that there is a serious financial feasibility issue when it comes to deeper affordability when creating developments unless there are public subsidies and subsidized rentals. She said that the MBTA Communities law is a market-driven solution to encourage cities and towns to build more housing units near transportation nodes to help address the severe housing shortage in the state caused largely by local restrictive zoning policies. She expressed the importance of Newton passing a compliant zoning plan by the end of the year.

3. Update on Fair Housing Testing

- ES gave an update about the Fair Housing Testing that Suffolk Law will be performing for the WestMetro HOME Consortium. Testing will be done for the 13 communities and the testing started in April 2023 and will be hopefully complete in December 2023. Currently eight of the communities have been tested and Newton is one of the tested. ES stated that she was pleased that the testing is happening and expressed how long the committee has been engaged in advocating this to happen and how important it is and referenced the one the city did in 2005. There will be 10 tests per community.
- JM asked if there was material that was forwarded about Suffolk Law School for people to learn to become testers and mentioned that she would like to reach out to tenants who

receive subsidies who really had the experience looking for somewhere to stay in Newton. ML stated that he sent the flier and that he would resend the email for the committee follow up. ES continued to state that the focus of the testing is by race and public subsidy, and that this testing unfortunately does not include disability discrimination.

4. Subcommittee Updates

- **Lottery Results & Lease-ups Sub-Committee**
 - Scheduled meeting on June 13th Group has decided to focus on what is presently going on at current lotteries. ES spoke about the discussions with Planning regarding the Chelmsford Housing Authority model of contracting with developers/owners on lotteries and affordability compliance. TM is continuing to evaluate what data to collect for analyzing lottery results. BH had previously asked the committee for a checklist that the committee should recommend. JM stated that this document/language should be placed in the permitting process to make it a requirement for data to be collected.
- **Membership & Nominating Sub-Committee**
 - No update. ES stated that previously BH said that he is going to speak to the mayor about the committee's proposal in updating the membership requirements.
- **Fair Housing Award Sub-Committee**
 - The ceremony went well. ES stated that it was really great to honor Kathy Laufer and Ted Hess Mahan. ES stated that the committee was grateful to the mayor for including it in the newsletter and she thanked the people who helped to make the ceremony possible. ES asked the committee to start thinking about the next one.
- **Landlord/Tenant Training Plan**
 - AW gave an update regarding the Newton Housing Authority providing a training program on Fair Housing for Landlords and Tenants. She said they are still seeking a presenter.
- **Fair Housing Literature Sub-Committee**
 - No update

5. Fair Housing Committee Priorities Discussion

FH Protected Groups

- **Promote housing choice for diverse populations to advance Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH), with focus on race/ethnicity, public subsidy, and disability**
- **Promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging in Newton**
- **Promote effective processes/practices for new affordable homeownership and resales**
- **Promote improved practices for real estate professionals to achieve more housing choice for diverse populations**
- **Identify and work to overcome barriers to successful tenancies and to improve processes/practices for tenant selection in lottery and market rate multifamily rental housing**

Learning/Teaching

- Enhance FH literature and website information and access for the public
- Promote FH training for real estate professionals, landlords, tenants, the public and committee members

Data and Analysis

- Promote data collection on multi-family rental and new homeownership occupancy
- Enhance Project Review of Housing Developments to advance AFFH
- Support AI/Consortium Fair Housing Testing and FH testing in Newton

Collaboration

- Collaborate with Related Newton Commissions and Committees to increase affordable housing for households of various sizes and lower incomes and to encourage increased funding for affordable housing
- Promote affordable housing production in coordination with other City commissions and committees
- Support federal, state and city initiatives that promote AFFH
- Collaborate with Human Rights Commission on Fair Housing Complaint Process
- Contribute to Newton's FH-related plans
- Address committee membership appointments with representation from Human Rights Commission and legal counsel with FH specialty

6. Next meeting Wednesday, August 2, 2023

*Supplementary materials are available for public review in the Planning Department of City Hall (basement) the Friday before the meeting. For more information contact **Malcolm Lucas at 617.796.1149**. The location of this meeting/event is wheelchair accessible and Reasonable Accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities who require assistance. If you need a Reasonable Accommodation, please contact the city of Newton's ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, Jini Fairley, at least two business days in advance (2 weeks for ASL or CART) of the meeting/event: jfairley@newtonma.gov or (617) 796-1253. The city's TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1089. For the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), please dial 711