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Malcolm Lucas
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Members

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

Fair Housing Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Date: November 1, 2023

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Place: Virtual (Zoom)

Members Present: Esther Schlorholtz, Chair

Donna Rigg, Vice Chair

Judy Korzenowski

Tatjana Meschede

Steve West

Members Absent: Josephine McNeil

Alexandra Weiffenbach

Staff Present:

Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner

Jini Fairley, ADA/Sec. 504 Coordinator

Lara Kritzer, Director of Housing and Community
Development

Allison McIntyre, Housing Development Planner

Public Present:

Julia Malakie, Council

Sharyn Roberts, League of Women Voters Newton

Nancy Kritzman

Brooke Ghaly

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

To view meeting documents, [click here](#).

1. Approval of September and October 2023 minutes

- Upon a motion by TM, JK seconded the motion. The September and October 2023 minutes were approved 5-0-0.



2. Annual Training Program Updates

- ES stated that the committee has been planning with Suffolk Law. ES stated the first training is now formalized for January 17 at 8:30 am. The training will be for real estate professionals. ES stated that they are now coordinating with Suffolk Law to provide a training for landlords and tenants. There is not a formal date at this time, but the committee would like to have it around the first two weeks of December. ES stated that if this presented time is too soon that a later date will be around the fall of next year. ES stated that it would not be cost associated because HUD funds Suffolk to provide training. The goal is to target tenants, especially from the Newton Housing Authority and the 12 suburban communities that are part of the WestMetro Home Consortium. ES stated also the training will most likely be in the evening and will be a hour and a half as recommended by the committee.

3. Cambridge Resident Experience Study Follow-up

- ES stated that TM produced a presentation with a summary and thought it would be really valuable for the committee to review. The Cambridge Resident Experience Study involved the study of inclusion and bias among inclusionary housing program participants of affordable housing and mixed income housing these includes residents and owner and their experiences of inclusion and bias.
- ES stated that she and planning met with Chris Cotter, Director of Housing and Community Development at the City of Cambridge to get their efforts on this and why did they do the study and what are the results from the study. ES also stated that she would like to know how Newton and the WestMetro HOME Consortium could benefit from this study. ES stated that a staff member who joined the meeting stated that Cambridge residents in the inclusionary housing program generally really like living in their housing and neighborhood.
- ES stated that they also mentioned that 40% if all renters and 41% of all owners of affordable IEHP, that inclusionary housing program units reported encountering bias or discrimination, at least several times in the past year, about 10% in each group experienced bias less than once a year. Being and IEHP participant, having low income, households with children, and having a disability was seen as a trigger for bias.
- LK stated that this is the first time the City of Cambridge has looked into this, but this is something that they have suspected, but they were very appreciative to have the study and information and they are trying to figure out how to best act on it. LK stated that the City of Cambridge saw less bias where developments had support services and staff on the ground with helping and coordinating with tenants. LK stated that the discussion was very positive and that we will learn more from them as they continue to work on this topic.
- ES stated that this is a very big issue and has lots of data to work through and factors that have not previously been thought through. ES stated that we want to continue to think about this because of its importance for Newton and the surrounding suburban communities to aim to be able to find ways to help people who live in these communities feel welcomed and supported and not experience bias. NK stated that support come in many ways and where she live the support that they receive is need based, but a lot of times there is emotional and what may be happing in the community this type of support is not being given and did not want the committee to confuse by using the word support. NK thinks that some of the issues of financial and race differences need to be addressed in a different training based on what the discussion

is about right now. ES stated that these are excellent points and aligned with what the discussion with Chris Cotter talked about and stated that it is very complex.

- SW stated that he agrees with what was said and stated that bias may also be happening because of ignorance and that if people are trained, they could start to move in a better direction. SW stated that he thinks when it comes to landlords denying reasonable accommodations and disability cases, they are thinking of the budgets bottom line whether they are right or wrong. SW stated that this is illegal, and this is where training will help better the decisions. SW stated that the larger properties that have the funding for resident services staff do the work really well but when it comes to smaller and scattered sites this work becomes much harder. SW stated that he thinks training should happen and feels that we can do as much training as we can but he also suggested that community outreach so there can be awareness. SW stated that he has been a renter and has heard many statements that he does not pay real estate taxes although he is paying the rent so the landlord can pay taxes. SW concluded that it would be great if we can find a way to raise awareness and acceptance.

4. Fair Housing Subcommittee Lottery Data Integration Discussion

- ES referred to the attached items and spoke of the years work that the committee and subcommittee have been working on to come up with analysis of lottery results and who benefits from those protective classes in Fair Housing. The goal is to identify barriers and to access data from lotteries and their application process in order for people to get affordable housing.
- TM stated that the subcommittee did some testing and that the testing showed disproportionate effects upon protected populations. ES stated that the subcommittee is recommending going forward for planning to incorporate their data in planning' process. LK stated that she will look into this to see if we are not duplicating efforts because developers of affordable housing already have data that is collected. LK also stated that because she is new and still learning that she is not ready to say right now what is the best thing to do.

5. Affordable Homes Act Discussion

- ES wanted to bring this to attention about Governor Healy's administration and the proposal of the Affordable Housing Act. ES stated that this proposal is the strongest she has seen throughout her lengthy career in affordable housing in Massachusetts. ES stated that housing production and preservation is very challenging, and this proposal has been put together and it is before legislation now. They have identified that Massachusetts needs to produce 200,000 homes by 2030 to tackle the housing shortage to meet demand. One proposal is to allow accessory dwelling units to be built by right in single family zoning districts in all communities.
- There is also a proposal for public housing reform, additional funding, and the establishment of a local option real estate transfer fee between 5 and 2%. This would be paid by the seller of properties on the portion of the sale over 1 million or the county median home sales price which will be up to the local communities to determine what portion of the local tax. ES stated that this is the first time that she has seen a fair housing aspect of this to propose to establish and Office of Fair Housing in the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities.

6. Subcommittee Updates

- **Lottery Results & Lease-ups Sub-Committee**
- **Membership & Nominating Sub-Committee**
- **Fair Housing Award Sub-Committee**
- **Fair Housing Literature Sub-Committee**

7. 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**

Next meeting Wednesday, December 6, 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