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Newton Housing Partnership (NHP)

June 25, 2024 from 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Virtual meeting: <https://newtonma-gov.zoom.us/j/84323764043>

Meeting ID: 843 2376 4043

- 1. Review and Approval of May minutes, 2024 Meeting Summary**
- 2. Election of Chair and Secretary**
 - a. Partnership members to elect a new Chair and Secretary
- 3. Introduction of New Members**
 - a. Introducing Bryan Decker and Nicole Stewart
- 4. Priorities Group Update**
 - a. Update from David Rockwell and Ann Houston on the Priorities Group
- 5. Newton THRIVE Update**
- 6. Mitigation Fees Update**
- 7. Real Estate Transfer Fees Update**
- 8. Project Updates**
 - a. 78 Crafts St.
 - b. 528 Boylston St.
 - c. 41 Washington St.
 - d. West Newton Armory
 - e. West Newton Family Navigation Center (FamilyAid Project)
 - f. 136 Hancock St. and 169 Grove St. (City Project)
 - g. 144 Hancock St. (Civico Project)
 - h. Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance Update
- 9. Upcoming Meeting**
 - a. Next Meeting: July 23, 2024, 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm via Zoom
 - b. Cancel August 27, 2024 Meeting

Attachments:

- May meeting minutes

Meeting Access Instructions

No in-person meeting will take place at City Hall.

The Newton Housing Partnership will hold this meeting virtually on June 25, 2024 at 5:00 pm.

Access the meeting audio and video on your smartphone:

- 1) Open your smartphone's app store. If the Zoom app is already installed on your smartphone, this step is not necessary.
- 2) Download the "ZOOM Cloud Meetings" app.
- 3) At the above date and time, open the ZOOM Cloud Meetings app, and tap, "Join a Meeting."
- 4) Type the following Meeting ID into the dialogue box: 843 2376 4043

It is also possible to open your smartphone's internet browser app, navigate to www.zoom.us, and join the meeting with the same Meeting ID: 843 2376 4043. Doing so would provide access to the meeting's audio and video.

OR

Access the meeting audio only on your phone or smartphone:

- 1) Dial +1 305 224 1968
- 2) Dial the following Meeting ID: 843 2376 4043

OR

Access the meeting audio and video on your computer:

- 1) Open your internet browser on your computer
- 2) At the above date and time, copy the following link into your browser's URL bar:
- 3) <https://newtonma-gov.zoom.us/j/84323764043>
- 4) Type the following Meeting ID into the dialogue box: 843 2376 4043

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.

DRAFT

Newton Housing Partnership Meeting

Notes from

May 28, 2024 Meeting

Conference Call Meeting

5:00pm-7:00pm

Partnership Members in Attendance:

Mark Caggiano, Eliza Datta, Chuck Eisenberg, Lizbeth Heyer, Ann Houston, Josephine McNeil, David Rockwell, Albert Simmons

Others in Attendance:

- City of Newton Staff: Shaylyn Davis-Iannaco, Lara Kritzer, Allison McIntyre, Barney Heath,
- City Councilors Block and Malakie (Ms. Malakie joined at Agenda Item #3)
- Boylston Properties: Andrew Copelotti, Lexie Natale, Michela DeSantis
- Members of the community

1. Minutes of the March, 2024 Meeting

The minutes for the March 26 and April 30 meetings were unanimously approved (motion by Chuck Eisenberg, second by Eliza Datta) with one typographical correction offered by David Rockwell – in 8th line under the “144 Hancock (Civico Project)” item, replace the word “for” with the word “more”, so that the phrase reads “...and \$200,000 *more* than the developer’s offer...”

2. 78 Crafts Street

Andrew Copelotti, supported by comments from his colleagues Lexie Natale and Michela DeSantis, presented an updated slide show highlighting the changes in the project that have been made in response to comments from the ZBA and community – unit count reduced from 307 to 295 (with associated reduction in the affordable units from 62 to 59), reduction of one story in the front section of Building A to reduce massing, improvements in first-floor facades for better screening of the garages, elimination of one of the driveways into the Building B parking lot from the main road for better pedestrian and bike safety, inclusion of a tot lot and expansion of open space, and façade setback and roofing changes in Building C to reduce its massing. He said the developer is working on an upgraded stormwater system to meet the City of Newton standard of absorption of 2” of water (above the state building code standard of 1”), and working on off-site traffic calming improvements to mitigate traffic impacts.

In response to questions from NHP members, Andrew and his team indicated:

- Affordable unit BR mix is nine studios, 26 one-bedroom, 18 two-bedroom, and 6 three-bedroom units.
- Developer expects ZBA hearings to conclude in September; next hearing is Monday June 3 (Zoom).
- Tot lot will have two play structures and benches

- Construction will last 24 months; once permitting is complete, it will take 8-10 months to finish documentation and assemble financing. Developer hopes to break ground in fall of 2025.
- Plans for property management aren't set, but they have used Bozzuto and Greystar in the past.

Comments from NHP members and staff included:

- Chuck Eisenberg encouraged the developer not to reduce the project size any further.
- David Rockwell commented that the revised project is an improvement, as a lot is essential for the volume of household who will live there.
- Barney Heath confirmed that the nearby senior housing development by Mark Development is stalled due to litigation, and that it therefore is not likely to be under construction at the same time as 78 Crafts.
- Josephine McNeil emphasized the importance of providing resident services to the low-income households. Andrew said the developer plans to make these arrangements once the property manager is in place. Chuck Eisenberg that a part-time resident services coordinator would be necessary.

Chuck Eisenberg asked about NHP providing a support letter, which Andrew welcomed. Josephine requested that language be included about the encouragement of provision of resident services. David indicated that there was language we used on that subject for the 528 Boylston support letter, that can be included here.

VOTED: Motion was made by Chuck and seconded by Ann Houston to approve the preparation of a support letter. Josephine offered an amendment to Chuck's motion to include the language about resident services, which was accepted by Chuck. As amended, the motion passed unanimously.

Lizbeth added a comment that the 78 Crafts proposal and process demonstrates how difficult the provision of truly affordable housing is, and thanked the developer for finding a way to house so many households at 50% of area median income.

3. Update 144 Hancock Street (Civico Project)

Shaylyn Davis-Iannaco and Barney Heath updated the NHP members as follows:

- Shaylyn reported that the developer withdrew its request for a waiver of the requirement under the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance for two onsite affordable units, doing so at the May 7 meeting of the City Council Land Use Committee. She said Civico is revising the plans to add more bedrooms, but not more units, in such a way that the revised development will comply with the various IZ requirements regarding equitable placement, unit size and unit quality.
- Barney reported that the developer is appearing at the June 4 meeting of the Land Use Committee to present the revised development.
- Mark Caggiano asked if the project would be coming back to the NHP for review, and Barney indicated it would not. He added that the changes are likely to be within the parameters of the original Special Permit (a determination to be made by the Commissioner of Inspection Services), and David added that the project does not need further City Council review unless the Commissioner finds the changes are significant enough.

Chuck suggested the process on 144 Hancock suggests the need for a new review of the IZ ordinance. Barney noted that the City is about to engage RKG Associates for such a review, that it would occur sometime in the next 12 months.

4. 136 Hancock St. & 168 Grove St., Walker Center (City Project)

Shaylyn and Barney updated NHP that this project is scheduled to go back to the Real Property Re-use Committee on June 12. Shaylyn said the City would like affordable housing advocates to attend. At this meeting, Barney said that Planning hopes that the Committee will start the process of establishing a Joint Advisory Planning Group (JAPG).

David asked what is known about the site's development capacity, noting he had heard something about 5 to 11 units. Barney responded that this was the orally reported conclusion by the engineering firm Weston & Sampson. He added that both affordable housing and school expansion for the neighboring Williams School has been the idea for this parcel since it was acquired by the City.

5. Priorities Group Update

Ann Houston introduced the work of the Housing Priorities Task Force* and began with a query to the NHP about **where the Task Force's work when finished should be disseminated.**

- She suggested that the NHP, the Newton Affordable Housing Trust, and the Fair Housing Committee are the clear candidates, in order to have a common database among these City advisory agencies.
- David suggested the City Council and the Mayor's Office as well. Ann added that she is contemplating some type of community forum on this information, which was welcomed by Lizbeth.
- Josephine added that the Task Force should reach out also to low-income elements of the Newton population, and suggested the Newton Housing Authority, the non-profit housing organization Newton Community Development Foundation (NCDF), the low-income residents of the Trio and Austin Street mixed-income developments, and the United Citizens for Affordable Housing in Newton (U-CHAN) organization. At Ann's request, Josephine agreed to work with her on reaching these people and organizations.
- Mark suggested that the large and small non-profits in Newton, like the Boys and Girls Club, should also be included. He added that the Mayor's office has a list of clergy.

Ann then moved to the slide show. The first slide listed the Task Force's **selected four priority areas:** Preservation vs New Production, Household Type (senior, any age, and residents needing supportive services), Affordability Level, and Leverage of City Resources. Mark added that Rental vs Ownership should be added, to which Ann agreed. He also suggested Assisted Living.

The second slide reflected **data sources.** Ann noted that much of the research to date focused on the distinctions between the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) list and affordable properties not on the SHI list, and indicated that the Task Force has captured those properties missing from the SHI list. She also reminded NHP that the SHI list includes the market-rate units that are part of 40B rental developments, but not the market units in 40B ownership projects. Adding the non-SHI units brought the total unit count from 1,900 to 3,545 (units must be affordable at up to 80% AMI to be counted). In response to

questions, Shaylyn clarified that for projects permitted under the IZ Ordinance, only the affordable units are added to the SHI. Ann also noted that she has added what the Task Force is calling “potential” units, which are those permitted but not yet built, which brings the total count to 5,306.

The third slide reflected **rental vs ownership** units in the database. Newton’s affordable housing inventory is overwhelmingly dominated by rental units (98% of the 3,545 units; 99% of the 5,306 units). Chuck noted that this is because there are no subsidy sources for affordable ownership.

The fourth slide reflected **household type**, and Ann noted that, when more recent projects (the non-SHI and the “potential” groups) are added, the longtime dominance of senior housing over housing for all ages has disappeared. Not counting the non-SHI and potential units, 54% of the units are for seniors, and 43% for all ages, while those percentages change to 36% for seniors and 58% for all ages with the non-SHI units included, and to 28% for seniors and 68% for all ages, when the potential units are included. David noted that many of the recent 40Bs are for all ages, not seniors, though Chuck added that 2Life and the Newton HA have added substantial units for low-income seniors. Ann noted that 2Life has fully leased up the 174-unit Opus project, focused on middle-income, rather than low-income, seniors. Lizbeth pointed out it is important to recognize that seniors, nearly all of whom are retired, have very low incomes, and are particularly needy of appropriate and stable housing.

The fifth slide reflected **permitting source** (40B Comp Permit, Special Permit, and Unknown Permitting). Ann noted that Newton has reached its “safe harbor” status with regard to 40B, meaning that 40B applications, while still available, do not enjoy the benefit of right of appeal of ZBA decisions to the state Housing Appeals Committee. To date, 60% of the 3,545 units on the SHI, and 48% of the 1,900 affordable units, were permitted with Comprehensive Permits under 40B. Eliza Datta remarked on the important role which 40B has played in delivering affordable housing in Newton, and added that this underscores the importance of recent zoning reforms under the MBTA Communities Act.

Ann left the meeting at 6:33pm, just as she finished discussing the fifth slide, and said the Task Force will continue its work in coming weeks.

**Members of the Housing Priorities Task Force:*

- *From NHP: David Rockwell and Chuck Eisenberg*
- *From AHT: Ann Houston and Susan Albright*
- *From Fair Housing Committee: Josephine McNeil and Tatiana Meschede*
- *From Newton Housing Authority: Vince O’Donnell*

6. Newton THRIVE update

Barney provided an update:

- Newton THRIVE, in a joint effort with the non-profit EMPATH (Economic Mobility Pathways, Inc.), began in Newton in April 2023, with a goal of enrolling 50 eligible households in two years.
- Eligibility requires Newton residency, income at or below 50% AMI, at least one child under 18 years of age, and capacity of household head for employment.
- To date, 50 households have been enrolled, with a strong element of ethnic and racial diversity (35% black, 31% white, 8% Asian, 8% Hispanic, and 17% reporting as multi-ethnic).
- 34 households consist of 3 persons or fewer, 15 consist of 4 persons or more, and one household is a single mother.

- As long as participants keep on their required schedule of meetings with their caseworkers, they receive a \$250/month stipend.
- A recent Globe article included the Newton THRIVE program in a piece about guaranteed income programs in the state.
- Barney will invite EMPATH to come to a future NHP meeting.

Josephine noted she is very familiar with this program and asked Barney to use the wording “mobility mentor” rather than “caseworker”. She also asked if NHP could receive a written report from the program, and Barney said the program’s first-year report is in preparation.

7. Recognition of Josephine and Chuck

Lizbeth noted that Josephine and Chuck, under NHP membership rules, have reached the end of their maximum term limits (two 3-year terms), and must step down. She noted that they can at their option return after a one-year hiatus. She gave strong tribute to the contributions of them both, noting Josephine’s constant focus on the needs of low-income residents and Chuck’s major contributions to Newton zoning policies. Other members shared their appreciations. Chuck thanked the members and noted the excellence of civic volunteerism in Newton. Josephine said she will not return after a year, with many remaining objectives for her time, but thanked the members and noted the value of the volunteerism exercised by retired people living in Newton. Barney added that staff will miss their involvement.

8. Leadership Transition

Lizbeth indicated that she has decided to step down as chair of the NHP, though she will remain as a member, and said that a new chair is needed. She noted that her professional and personal responsibilities have grown significantly in recent years, and she feels she can no longer provide the time the chair position requires. At the next NHP meeting on June 25, therefore, there will be elections for a new chair and a new secretary. She noted that Marva Serotkin has indicated an interest in the chair position, but that anyone can offer their services for the position and are encouraged to do so.

Meeting concluded at 7:15pm.

NEXT MEETING: June 25, 5-7pm, via Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Rockwell
6/4/24