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Director of  
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Malcolm Lucas  
Housing Planner

*Members*

Esther Schlorholtz, Chair  
Donna Rigg, Vice-Chair  
Beatrice Flores  
Judy Korzenowski  
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## CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

### Fair Housing Committee

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## MEETING MINUTES

Date: July 10, 2024

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Place: Virtual (Zoom)

**Members Present:** Esther Schlorholtz, Chair

Donna Rigg, Vice Chair

Beatrice Flores

Judy Korzenowski

Tatjana Meschede

Steve West

**Members Absent:** Josephine McNeil

**Staff Present:** Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner

Jini Fairley, ADA/Sec. 504 Coordinator

**Public Present:** Julia Malakie, Council

Sharyn Roberts, League of Women Voters Newton

Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner served as recorder, Esther Schlorholtz, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

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

### 1. Approval of June 2024 minutes

- Upon a motion by SW, JK seconded the motion. The May 2024 minutes were approved 4-1-2, with one member absent and two abstentions.
- ES asked DR to introduce and welcome Beatrice Flores as a new member to the committee replacing Alex Weifenbach from the Newton Housing Authority. BF stated that she received her letter from the Mayor and her term ends July 1, 2027.



## **2. Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance Discussion**

- ES stated that the committee has discussed and narrowed down their recommendations significantly as best as they could. ES thanked SW and JF for their work and contributions. ES then gave a brief summary. They narrowed it down to three categories, affordability, accessibility, enhancing city oversight and data collection.
- Affordability: The focus will be on exploring housing opportunities at lower incomes, currently Newton is averaging around 65% AMI. ES stated that they are asking the consultants to recommend having a goal of achieving 55% of AMI on average. ES also wants to recommend consideration of reducing or increasing the minimum rental for sale unit threshold requirement from the current seven units to a lower or higher number, depending on feasibility. There was continued discussion on choosing a lower or high number regarding the payment in lieu and the feasibility for developers. The committee decided to recommend a decrease in the threshold if feasibility analysis indicates.
- Accessibility: The recommendation is to ask the consultants to consider ways to increase development of affordable units that are more accessible and available to households at 50 and 30% AMI, if feasible. JF asked if the FHC is open to state that there should be mandatory training for landlords, property management and that the training will be in an ongoing schedule because of the staff turnover. ES stated that that was a great point and stated that they have been providing trainings and plan to have one in the fall via NHA with Suffolk Law for tenants and landlords. ES asked JF to help frame and figure out a training that would directly address the accessibility issues, and JF stated that she would be willing to help because she has experience, and she has connections with property management.
- Enhance City Oversight and Data Collection: The recommendation is to evaluate and recommend improvement to the city's oversight, reporting, and data collection process for developers, owners and agents of properties on their fair housing, affordability and accessibility obligations. Secondly, the committee wants the city to evaluate owners, developers and agents of both small and large properties that need additional training and assistance to ensure ongoing compliance with the IZ obligations.

## **3. Fair Housing Training Plans**

- ES stated that the recent training went well, but the process has changed for the set up. ES stated that there were some issues with the webinar function and that there was not an RSVP option. The presenter had become ill and there was not a way to contact people who signed up to cancel. ES stated that she needed to coordinate with LK about the next one with the NHA to eliminate issues. TM recommended using google calendar because it syncs with her calendar and it would be very helpful, and she also stated that a survey should be given at the end of the training for feedback and to help the FHC on how much they reach people. ES stated that would be helpful and thought that Suffolk Law does have an evaluation system that they use and understands that the city does not have that capability. TM stated that a brief survey could be sent out to the email list.

## **4. Discussion on Resident Experience Training**

- ES stated that it has been a few months since the committee has had discussion on this matter and stated that this is still very important to talk about and find out a way to begin to work on how the city can improve the experience for the tenants and homeowners who are in affordable units and feels that there is value in creating or doing something in terms of training. ES feels that this topic is very important and a priority. ES stated that she will

keep this on the agenda until the committee figures out how they would like to address this topic.

- TM asked for a brief summary and asked who the target audience is, management or tenants. ES stated it could be both, she stated the results from the Cambridge study identified that tenants and homeowners identified that a high percentage of property management had non-welcoming behaviors, and the study focused on improving that behavior. ES stated that tenants would benefit from knowing what their rights are, to learn to empower themselves, and to come up with ways to address their needs. ES stated that the City of Cambridge wanted to enhance their internal programs and services so they could be more responsive to tenants and homeowners. Lastly, ES stated that Maloney properties and Henry Korman discussed at a recent FHC committee meeting and stated that they would be able to help the FHC's initiative on this topic.

## **5. Fair Housing Resource List**

- ES stated that she worked on gathering Fair Housing resources together. She stated that she was impressed with the city's website. ES asked that ML could screen share the resources list with the committee and then she walked through the various items that were on the screen. Some of the items she highlighted were the Committee's resource page and the FHC Facebook page, for which she thanked DR for maintaining the page. Other items that were mentioned were the Newton Leads 2040 and HUD's Consolidated plan. The resource list is around six pages with impressive information. TM stated that the document was great and suggested making subheadings to organize it better. ES stated that was a great idea and asked TM to help with the document. TM stated that she would review it and give suggestions.

## **6. Fair Housing Project Reviews**

- ES stated that she has noticed that there have not been many of these Fair Housing project reviews lately. She stated that one of the reasons is because she does not hear about when projects are coming up, and another is that she does not have connections with developers and their attorneys. ES stated that she was grateful that JF updates her and DR about the Design Review Team (DRT) meetings. ES did state that there are not many projects that have been coming through. ES stated that the FHC did send a recommendation recently about a project and it was received but does not know the follow up with that particular project. ES asked if there were any other member who would like to take initiative and follow up to do so, because she unfortunately does not have the capacity at this time. No one responded.
- JF stated that there may be a couple projects in the pipeline and one of the proposals may be Crafts Street which is a good size project. JF also clarified that the DRT meetings are internal meetings for staff and developers, and it is not public like the Design Review Committee (DRC) committee which is public.
- ES stated that she would like to be connected with the developers of these projects, Craft Street, Shalmon, and Northland. ML stated that he would not have contacts for these developers because he does not know any, and he doesn't deal with them in his role at the city. ML stated that if JF can get him the names to reach out he could do that. JF stated that she would work on getting the contacts and forwarding them. ES thanked JF.

## **7. Subcommittee Updates**

- **Lottery Results & Lease-ups Sub-Committee**

- **Membership & Nominating Sub-Committee**

- Beatrice Flores from Newton Housing Authority is a new member of the Fair Housing Committee, and she was introduced by DR and welcomed by the committee.

- **Fair Housing Award Sub-Committee**

- There are no updates. ES stated the committee needs to start thinking of another candidate/awardee for next spring, and she asked them to keep this in mind for recommendation.

## **8. 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, family status, 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, September 4, 2024. No meeting in August 2024.**

\*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](mailto: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