

Newton Housing Partnership Meeting
Notes from November 19, 2019 Meeting
Newton City Hall
5:00-7:00 pm

Partnership Members in Attendance: Rev. Mark Caggiano, Eliza Datta, Chuck Eisenberg, Lizbeth Heyer, Kathleen Marchi, Marva Serotkin, Stephen Tise
Absent: John Hennessey, Josephine McNeil

Others in Attendance: Eamon Bencivengo, Barney Heath, Dana Hanson, members of the public

Approval of July 23, 2019 and September 17, 2019 Meeting Summaries

Moved by Chuck Eisenberg, seconded by Mark Caggiano and voted unanimously to approve the summaries.

Project Updates by Director of Planning

Barney Health, Director of Planning, presented an update on Northland and Riverside. Land Use Committee has completed their review of Riverside. The project was presented at the Council last evening; however, the Council did not have a full count so the vote for zoning change and special permit was postponed to December 2.

Alan Schlesinger, representing Northland, reported that the Council approved the zoning change at the meeting last evening. The Special Permit will be considered in 2020. The project is now 60/40 residential/commercial.

15 Riverdale Avenue 40B

Jeff Englert representing CDP, the developers for 15 Riverdale Ave, presented an overview of the proposed project. The project has 201 units with 25% affordable at 80% AMI. CDP is in discussion regarding adding some units at 50% AMI. Discussion underway to include an innovation center. CDP expects to file with ZBA in December.

The Boston Foundation Greater Boston Housing Report Card 2019

Acting Chair Lizbeth Heyer opened with explaining that the Report Card is a kickoff for developing an agenda for the NHP for the next year. Kathy Marchi and Josephine McNeil attended the meeting at TBF at which the report was presented. Kathy Marchi gave an overview of the report. In summary the report revealed the deficit of affordable and market housing in Massachusetts and presented policy changes to address the critical issue.

The presentation of the report drove discussion about next steps for the NHP. Questions/suggestions made during the discussion include the following:

- Need for education for the Council
- How to pay for service needs
- Is rezoning an opportunity
- What about land use policy
- Need for municipal engagement initiative as proposed by Engine 6
- Need for partnership among local services
- How to administer all the new affordable units
- Need for Newton specific data including elderly
- Need to connect with Newton Housing Authority
- Equity and fair housing play a role
- Opportunity to streamline approval process
- Need to look at the parking ratios used in rezoning
- Additional funding sources for affordable housing
- Opportunity for adding low income units
- Conduct survey of public land
- Engage community members in discussion about affordable housing

In summary, it was agreed that three key concerns are

- Affordability gap
- Desire for all who live in Newton to live successfully
- Race and equity

The agenda for the next meetings (12/17, 1/7) will include

1. Armory (a JAPG has started—no one from NHP on committee)
2. Dunstan Street
3. CAN DO
4. Vote on permanent Chair
5. Zoning
6. NHP agenda for 2020

Respectfully submitted,

Marva Serotkin