

Newton Housing Partnership Meeting
Notes from December 17, 2019 Meeting
Newton City Hall
6:00-8:00 pm

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

Absent: John Hennessey

Others in Attendance: Amanda Berman, Eamon Bencivengo, Barney Heath, members of the public

Approval of November 19, 2019 Meeting Summary

Elizabeth Heyer recommended the addition of the following items for the Partnership to consider during discussion about the next steps for the NHP:

- 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

Moved by Eliza Datta, seconded by Mark Caggiano and voted to approve the summary with the additions. One abstention.

Riverside Project

Representative from Mark Development reviewed the Riverside Project. The following changes were made by the developers during discussion with the community:

- Much reduced commercial space, now 65%/35% residential to commercial
- 617 total units with 108 affordable units
- 17% green space
- Purchase of Indigo Hotel and commitment to reconstruct access from 95 for a total of \$60m
- 2 passive houses
- 4-5% 3-bedroom units
- 5% ADA accessible units

- Will manage MBTA parking
- Careful phasing of construction

Zoning has been approved by the City Council. Developers have filed for a special permit. NHP will have opportunity to comment during the special permit process. The focus of the NHP comment will be on aspects related to affordable housing and accessibility.

Discussion by NHP members focused on wheelchair access from parking and missed opportunity for additional affordable units when the developer reduced the number of total units.

Chair Lizbeth Heyer deferred a vote by the Partnership until the next meeting in January.

Project Update by Director of Planning

Barney Heath explained that there is a signature writing campaign requesting reconsideration of the vote to approve the Northland project's zoning change. The Mayor has sent a detailed letter explaining the process that could lead to a ballot question vote.

The Washington Street Vision Plan was approved by the City Council. The full rezoning for the City will end in 2 years.

West Newton Armory

Steve Tise distributed a description of the current Armory building, the challenges for converting to housing and the role of various city and state agencies. Newton has appointed a JAPG (Joint Advisory Planning Group) to recommend a use for the building. 9 members were appointed. Much of the discussion focused on opportunities, if they exist, to work around the historical commissions' restrictions. The NHP was reminded that the Armory is a MA asset. Newton is eligible to purchase for \$1 if used for affordable housing.

NHP has a subcommittee tasked with developing a unique housing project. The role of the subcommittee is to follow the JAPG process (meetings are public), work with the consultant if funded and develop a draft of recommendations to be submitted during the real property reuse process. Chair Lizbeth Heyer requested the subcommittee to submit a report at the January meeting of the NHP.

Election of Officers

It was moved by Chuck Eisenberg, seconded by Mark Caggiano and voted unanimously to elect Lizbeth Heyer for permanent chair of the NHP.

It was moved by Mark Caggiano and seconded by Chuck Eisenberg and voted unanimously to elect Marva Serotkin for secretary.

Members thanked the Chair and Secretary for their work on behalf of the NHP.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the NHP will be held on January 7, 2020.

AGENDA:

- Riverside discussion / vote
- Presentation by Newton Housing Authority regarding CAN-DO acquisition proposal
- Dunstan East 40B presentation
- Report from Armory Subcommittee with focus on programming

Respectfully submitted,

Marva Serotkin