

Newton Housing Partnership Meeting  
Notes from February 18, 2020 Meeting  
Newton City Hall  
6:00-8:30 pm

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

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

Approval of January 7, 2020 Meeting Summary

Summary of the meeting was unanimously approved.

Riverside Project

The Partnership agreed to table vote on the Riverside Project and invite the developer to an upcoming meeting. Steve Tise encountered an unproductive meeting with the developer. Steve articulated his concern about the design of the project. A discussion followed regarding the scope of the work of the NHP. See below for discussion regarding the role of the NHP.

Northland Project

Chair Lizbeth Heyer reported that a letter that was reviewed by the NHP supporting the project would be circulated to the Mayor and City Council. It was recommended that the letter be added to the NHP webpage in advance of the vote on March 3.

NHA Acquisition of CAN-DO Portfolio

Barney Heath reported that CPC and CDBG approved the acquisition of the CAN-DO portfolio. The P&S will be signed in March with a close in the spring. The negotiations incorporated advice from the NHP.

40B Projects

- Dunstan East. The hearing before the ZBA is scheduled for March 17<sup>th</sup>. Discussion followed regarding a request to the developers to change the affordable unit count to 20 units at 50% vs 25 units at 80%. The developers were open to a discussion about this change when they presented to the NHP. It was moved by Mark Caggiano and seconded by Steve Tise and voted by the members to request the developer to return to the NHP and respond to this change. Barney Heath will contact the developer.
- Riverdale. The hearing before the ZBA is scheduled for April 1.

Concern was raised about transportation and parking for both projects.

### Amory

The City received a \$200,000 grant from the Commonwealth to undertake a feasibility study for converting the Amory to affordable housing. The City will be sending an RFP to a list of possible bidders.

### NHP Priorities for 2020

The discussion evolved along two tracks: criteria to use when reviewing projects and policy priorities.

#### Criteria for Reviewing Projects

- Marva Serotkin recommended that the NHP meet with developers early in the process in order to have a meaningful discussion about affordability in an effort to influence final plans. Members agreed with this position.
- The following criteria were articulated for inclusion in the review process that would be made available to developers. At the close of the meeting, a member of the Fair Housing Committee shared the criteria used by the Committee. All agreed that the list would be very helpful in developing criteria to be used by NHP.

--Affordability. Does the developer go above the inclusionary ordinance?

What is the depth of affordability? 30-50%

Are utilities included in the rent?

For 40B projects, is the developer willing to decrease AMI?

--Location. Is the developer thoughtful about location that facilitates transit access?

--Cost. Larger project is more efficient. Is scale well planned to create sense of community for the affordable units?

Are apartments sized appropriately?

- What are the proposed rents?
- Amenities. What is plan for access to garage spaces for the affordable Units?  
Has developer considered universal design to encourage Aging in place?  
What are the opportunities to build in services? How to Pay for the services?

Marva Serotkin, Lizbeth Heyer and Eliza Datta will develop a criteria grid to be submitted to the membership.

#### Policy Priorities

- Home Ownership
- Size of units: affordable vs market
- Funding for services
- Survey of City land for affordable housing development

#### Upcoming Meetings

NHP meetings will be held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month 6-8pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Marva Serotkin