

Newton Housing Partnership Meeting
Notes from April 21, 2020 Meeting
Conference Call Meeting
6:00-8:00 pm

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

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

Approval of March 17, 2020 Meeting Summary

Summary of the meeting was unanimously approved following correction that Josephine McNeil abstained.

Project Updates

Barney Heath provided the following project updates:

- Armory. The City has received proposals for the feasibility study. The proposals will be reviewed and a decision made in the near future.
- Zoning Redesign. The current focus is with the ZAP Committee. The approach for review is using the case study model and evaluating how different constituents would be impacted by each model. The first group for consideration is residential. Staff are meeting with interest groups such as architects. Barney Heath projected a summer presentation to NHP and a full Council vote in fall 2021. Lizbeth Heyer stated that commercial and mixed use is of particular interest to the NHP. A small group (Lizbeth Heyer, Chuck Eisenberg, Josephine McNeil, Eliza Datta) was appointed to review and comment on the proposal prior to the presentation to the NHP.
- Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI). A public hearing has been scheduled for May 4th that includes all cities and towns in the consortium with the consultants who will present key findings. Josephine McNeil volunteered to attend and report back to the NHP.

40B Projects

Dunstan East is scheduled for a ZBA hearing on March 18 with a focus on transportation—parking and traffic. The next meeting will be held in May. The next hearing for Riverdale is May 6th.

The proposed letter drafted by Lizbeth Heyer addressed to the ZBA regarding these projects was discussed by the members. Following considerable discussion, the following revisions were voted by 6 of the 7 members present. Josephine McNeil, who abstained, questioned whether the recommendations would make these projects more expensive and further that with increasing affordability, there is increased need to provide services.

- There will be a separate letter for each project.
- The wording for increasing the number of 3 bedroom apartments will be changed from a specific number to additional 3 bedroom apartments.
- The recommendation to shift affordability from 20% at 50% AMI from 25% at 80% AMI will be retained.
- Reference to using CPA or other funds to increase affordability will be deferred as a policy issue.
- A separate letter will be drafted regarding provision of services.

CARES Act Funds for CDBG and ESG

\$1.1M has been allocated to CDBG and \$587,000 has been allocated to ESG funds distributed among four communities. One of the goal's is to provide three months assistance to those income-eligible Newton residents living in rental housing and deed-restricted ownership units who need housing assistance due to COVID. The City has identified that the program, including CPA funds of \$2,500,000, could assist approximately 330 households. Josephine McNeil recommended using these funds for more urgent needs such as food and medical care, rather than for housing assistance, in light of the eviction moratorium.

Project Review Criteria

The criteria will be circulated prior to the next meeting.

NHP 2020 Priorities

Members reviewed the priorities list and agreed to begin with two priorities:

- What are the needs of tenants living in affordable units and how to pay for services?
- Defining criteria for living successfully that incorporates race and equity.

A small group (Mark Caggiano, Kathleen Marchi, Josephine McNeil and Marva Serotkin) was organized to define the process to be more inclusive. It was suggested that the group connect with the Newton Housing Authority and other communities around the country. Highland Park, Illinois was mentioned as one such community.

Upcoming Meetings

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Marva Serotkin