



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Barney Heath
Director of
Planning & Development

Malcolm Lucas
Housing Planner

Members

Ted Hess Mahan, Chair
Kathy Laufer, Vice-Chair
Esther Schlorholtz
Josephine McNeil
Donna Rigg
Tatjana Meschede
Rosemary Larking
Judy Korzenowski
Alexandra Weiffenbach
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CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Fair Housing Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Date: May 5, 2021

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Place: Virtual (Zoom)

Members Present: Theodore M. Hess Mahan, Chair

Kathy Laufer, Vice Chair

Josephine McNeil

Esther Schlorholtz

Judy Korzenowski

Donna Rigg

Ellen Tanowitz

Alexandra Weiffenbach

Tatjana Meschede

Members Absent: Rosemary Larking

Staff Present:

Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner

Barney Heath, Planning and Development Director

Jini Fairley, ADA/Sec. 504 Coordinator

Eamon Bencivengo, Housing Development Planner

Hattie N. Kerwin Derrick, Director of Community
Engagement & Inclusion

Public Present:

Councilor Pamela Wright

Councilor Alicia Bowman

Councilor Julia Malakie

Lee Mondshein

Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner served as recorder, Ted Hess-Mahan, Chair called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

1. Approval of March and April's meeting minutes

2. THM motioned to approve the minutes. JK moved and ES seconded for March. THM did a roll call TM abstained. ES moved and JK seconded for April. THM did a roll call March and April minutes are approved.

3. HUD DOJ Update Fair Housing Act Guidance about Land Use Laws

- JM thought that with all of the fair housing discussion and the controversy at the Zoning and Planning meeting. She stated that it would be good for the Committee to know what the Department of Justice has come out with and more importantly that it would be interesting for the council to receive this information so they could read and review this guidance. This will give them more understanding of what their role is. THM stated that he would make sure that the City Council would get copies on the guidance. KL stated that a cover letter should be written to let people know why the FHC is sending it. ES stated that she wonders if the City's legal department is aware of the guidance and thought that they should also be notified and THM stated that this was a great idea and he will add them when he sends guidance out to the Council and Planning Department.

4. The Gateway Project

- EB gave an update on the marketing. He stated that it started about three weeks ago and he has been in touch with the lottery agent. He stated that half of the print advertisement has gone out and he stated specifically the Baystate Banner will be out tomorrow and the second round will be going out next week. The public information date is on May 19, the application deadline is on June 17th and the lottery will be on July 9th. THM asked if the ads went out earlier than normal or is this the usual time that they are going out. EB stated in his viewpoint that it is a little earlier than normal. THM stated he received an interim response from DHCD for the Committee's concern about marketing. He stated the general council is on vacation and will be returning in a couple of days. So, the letter has not been reviewed yet. THM stated he also reached out to the deputy for assistance and they responded that the letter will be reviewed and will get back to the Committee as soon as possible.
- THM asked who the lottery agent is. EB responded Maureen O'Hagan at MCO Housing. THM stated that it would be beneficial to keep track of who the lottery agents are so when someone does a good job they could be recognized and if not they could be reached out to.

5. 73 Walnut Street Sale

- ML stated that the applicant applied in February 2021 and they are in the process of closing on the unit at this time. The timeline of the closing is in the next couple of weeks. THM asked if this a minority applicant and ML stated that the applicant is Asian. ML stated that the City also helped with down payment closing cost assistance with CDBG funds. ML also clarified that the sign that JM saw was not the City.
- JM asked can the City have a practice for when they are selling affordable units or when giving down payment assistance that it is an automatic notice to the community that this is occurring. She stated that the example of this property being on the market for so long because it needed repairs. JM asked was the seller able to recoup the capital improvements. ML stated that yes and there is a policy. ML also explained the price went up and the applicant agreed to the higher cost of the unit. JM asked if the City is using the same forms from the past, or are they changed based on the newer times. ML explained that the documents normally do not change because they are DHCD documents but when a unit has

a different type of restriction that is not DHCD-related, that the City's consultants are helping with DHCD to put them on the Subsidized Housing Inventory when they are not. JF stated that because her name is on most documents for the City that she was contacted and had no idea the City had a down payment closing cost program and stated that the inquirer she spoke to may have had trouble with documents. ML explained that there are guidelines, not the application, that is posted on the website. ML stated when there are homeownership units available, the guidelines are posted with the application because the program is only available when deed restricted units are available.

- JM stated that there should be some information listed somewhere if a person who is interested in a program like this can go on the website and learn about it and to keep it up and updated. JM stated that the City should not assume that people are getting information and make this information readily available for people to access. KL stated that she hopes that in the advertisement that it is made very clear that this program is available. KL stated that people should know beforehand because we do not want to discourage people from applying to the lottery. KL circled back to the price increase of 73 Walnut St and asked would it change the condo fee and was concerned would it still be affordable. ML said that it does not change and referred to the Committee's last meeting and stated that the developer stated that the condo fee is set in the beginning. ML also stated when someone purchases one of these units, they are encouraged to go to the assessor's office to let them know that they are in a deed restricted unit the assessor's office will normally confirm with the Planning Department.
- Councilor Wright asked if the program was based off of percentages and ML stated that it is a 10,000 grant. JM stated that we need to relook at the cost because of the higher market cost. JM stated that this is a low amount even for an affordable unit and she talked about the disparities and inequalities. JM stated that this administration is focused on homeownership which means there will be more money for programs like this. THM asked if ML can have a discussion with planning. ML stated that he will ask. ES stated that Cambridge has a great program that the City could research and offer junior mortgages to create more affordable opportunities. THM stated that we could put this on next months meeting and JM stated that June is too early, and they should wait until some research is done and see what the administration is going to do. And if the infrastructure bill is passed there will be definitely be more funds to use. JM stated that maybe we should create a subcommittee to begin to develop a plan for what could be done when the money becomes available.

6. West Newton Armory draft development RFP release

- EB stated that the draft of the RFP to solicit proposals for an affordable housing developer is available. It is listed on the Armory webpage and the public can make comments to newtonarmoryRFP@newtonma.gov. The comment period is over on June 1st. They are hoping to release the final RFP in mid-June and will be open for proposals to mid-September. They will have interviews until late October and decide in November or December. THM asked if it was normally the practice to have a draft RFPs sent to have public comment. BH stated that it is different and wanted to send it out to get some feed back so they will not be missing anything and would like to hear comments to get the best RFP out there. JF asked if staff could add comments. She wanted to make it known because the laws that are recognized in the RFP are incomplete for accessibility and the word special needs should not be used and explained the FHAA. She recommends an accessibility

consultant should be a part of this as well. She made this point because the City will own the property.

7. Other Business

- JM asked about the assessment for the fair housing score card. She asked BH whether the councilors know that the fair housing committee reviews the score cards. THM stated that he wrote letters but has done so for a while and asked if anyone could volunteer to help.
- THM stated that he purchased ~~an~~ a Fair Housing award that will be dedicated to the late Sheila Mondshein and he stated he and the Mayor will hope to schedule an award ceremony to present it to her husband Lee Mondshein and his family in her honor. He stated that he sent around a photo so the Committee can look at it.
- THM reminded the Committee that they must elect a new chair and vice chair for the Committee and to fill a vacancy on the Committee. KL communicated that she will not have the capacity to serve as vice chair due to other circumstances so if anyone wants to step in to let the Committee know. ML asked if the Committee would take any time off in the summer. THM stated that they can decide in June's meeting.

8. Next meeting Wednesday, June 2, 2021

*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 or (617) 796-1253. The city's TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1089. For the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), please dial 711