



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: July 7, 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
Rosemary Larking

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner
Jini Fairley, ADA/Sec. 504 Coordinator
Hattie N. Kerwin Derrick, Director of Community
Engagement & Inclusion

Public Present: Councilor Pamela Wright
Councilor Alicia Bowman
Councilor Julia Malakie
Rena Getz
Sean Roche

Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner served as recorder, Ted Hess-Mahan, Chair called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

1. Approval of May and June's meeting minutes

- THM stated that he would like to skip over the meeting minutes to get straight to setting the goals. He stated that in September he would like to have a brainstorming session. The minutes for June and July have been put off until September 2021



2. Nomination for new committee member

- THM introduced the Committee members and Planning staff. THM then introduced Maryanne Paley who has applied for the Fair Housing Committee. She will observe today and not make any comments. THM thanked her for being present and continued with the meeting.

3. Setting Fair Housing Committee goals for 2021-2022

- THM discussed the FHC coming together to prepare a brain storming meeting in September. THM cancelled August meeting. THM discussed Hattie N. Kerwin Derrick, Director of Community Engagement & Inclusion's efforts of gathering information from past meetings. THM said that issues have been raised by the committee that have not been fully attended to. THM stated that he needs some more time to think of ideas for what the Committee should be working on. He also stated that the Analysis of Impediments would be key because it lists goals that the Fair Housing Committee could and will have a role in. THM stated that he wanted to be cognizant of people's time because several Committee members stated that they needed to leave early today.
- THM stated that he wanted the Committee to look at Hattie's efforts and stated that he sent it around for review. He stated if he did not that he would and then talked about the letter to DHCD that focused on marketing issues. THM stated that DHCD responded and stated that he would circulate it to the Newton Housing Partnership, City Council and the Planning and Development Board. Then THM opened it up for discussion. JM stated that she thinks that the Committee should respond to the DHCD letter. JM would like to hear what they would like to say and to hold them accountable and asked about their points, what will be the process and when will these changes occur. THM stated that he has been on the MassHousing Appeals Committee and he was involved in changing regulations in the past, that he knows what happens before any regulations are changed and this gets sent out for public comment. THM asked JM if she wanted to send the response before the comment period and she stated yes. THM stated that they will discuss this at September's meeting. JM strongly felt that two months is a while and thinks that the Committee should respond sooner or at least she should. JM feels that this letter is just appeasing to get people off of their backs. JM wants to pressure them and wants to hear their response and would like to get specifics and commitments.
- THM stated that he will draft a letter and send it out to the Committee and asked JM for specifics. JM stated that she does not have specifics at this time and would like to review the letter again. KL stated that she will be very interested in understanding better what the City process is with inclusionary units and know the timeline of how things work in terms of the city's oversight around these units. KL stated that she felt that the Committee has been lax about meeting with Developers in the early stages and wanted to firm up the final draft of the ranking criteria. KL thinks that this process could be tightened up a little bit. THM stated that KL sent some information about 1140 Beacon Street. THM stated that he would like to have developers present, but he thinks one problem is getting the Developers to come back after they make changes. THM stated that in the very beginning there could be various changes to a project that would then go to the various boards and committees. Once it gets to decision making it is not the same proposal that was presented in the beginning. THM stated also he has fallen behind from this review process because of the demands of his job in the past month. THM said the communication with developers, attorneys and planning can be really busy as well, but he will work on following up.

- KL she stated that she thought maybe it would be a good idea if Committee members could take one development if there are many and make a report on it if something is going on or not. AB made a comment that the Developer meets with Amanda Berman to work with her because she is responsible for the process of inclusionary zoning. She stated that they will have to work with AB. THM's concern is that he will get the Planning Department's memo but when the Developers present there would be some detail changes. THM agreed and he stated that there should be a point person who can do this specific task and follow the changes. KL reiterated that the Committee needs to understand what the City's processes are and did not know that AB worked with the developer closely after all the years she has been on the Committee and this is the first time she learned this. THM stated that these are all good points and assumes that people know the process the city has. He has worked with the Planning Department for years as the Chairman of Land Use Committee. THM stated that they could put that on the agenda to get someone from planning to do this.
- JF stated that she worked with AB on some projects, and she stated that she has a tough job to figure out how affordable housing is approved, the ADA specifications required, the distribution of units, as well as the different types of units and changing costs. THM explained how the DRT works and agreed and stated that it is hard work and time consuming.
- JM stated that the FHC should get beyond these conversations and should create some processes before they go to AB with all of these tasks and give specific tasks because she has so many people coming at her. JM stated that AB would like better direction and there should be some general framework. JM stated that there needs to be a discussion about how they are going to function as a group. She also stated that the Committee needs to get some understanding about how many people in the group even are interested. JM stressed that they need to be on the same page to function and feels that the Committee is not.
- JM stated that at the September meeting they need to discuss inclusion of a facilitator and asked what stage they are at with getting one. THM stated that he has not stated that yet and asked what JM was looking for from a facilitator. JM stated with these types of discussions that someone must be objective to lead a discussion and then come up with the next steps of action. JM stated that it may cost some money, and then she referred to ARPA and thinks that the meeting would be a good use of the funds and the chair should ask the Mayor on the 8th. JM stated that they also need to discuss if this was going to be during the normal meeting time or would it be separate, talked about her schedule and stated that she would not be able to attend. ES stated that she is not comfortable with asking for these funds. ES stated that she would like to know what the other needs and demands are that might have a priority over a facilitator for the Committee. JM stated the goals of those funds are related to fair housing issues. She does not think there is any harm in asking. KL stated that in one of two sessions that the Mayor and City Council will have about ARPA, there is a listening session that will be happening on Thursday from 6-8pm, and the Mayor will be giving the public opportunity through email to ask questions. She stated that she thought that the Mayor's goals are to make sure that the City is reimbursed for extra expenses that were incurred during COVID in addition to, and then going forward. KL thought that it would be no harm in asking.
- KL asked if there are some ways to clarify about the open meeting law to meet outside of the scheduled meetings. THM stated that he would like to check in with the law

department to get an answer. HKD stated that Maura O'Keefe is the contact, and she is very responsive. THM stated that he knew her and thanked HKD.

- DR asked what the issue is if they are doing another time according to the open meeting law. She asked if they did it at another time is it just a matter of notifying the public in a reasonable amount of time. ES stated that she will be very uncomfortable with trying not to comply when setting the agenda for what the committee will be addressing over the next year and it undermines the purpose of the law.
- AB agreed with JM about the ARPA funds to help the Committee with their goals and especially with the Analysis of Impediments and she encouraged the Committee to follow through because there are some big items there and thinks there is some important work ahead for the Committee. She thinks that will be a good use of the funds. AB stated from her standpoint that ARPA funds will help with a consultant to help the FHC work through the goals and how to organize to help the group come up a process that could help towards good decisions on the important policies.
- Julia Malakie asked who in the group has been working on an RFP for testing in the West Metro Consortium from the study that was done from the recent Suffolk Law study. She stated that she was interested since she has read the study a year ago. SH stated that she was interested ~~of~~ in what is happening in Newton specifically and a study should be done. She said this was one of her suggestions with the Mayor with the ARPA funding. She feels that if the survey is done with the consortium it will be lumped in with the other communities and the data will not be transparent. ML stated that he and JM are on the committee for the West Metro Home Consortium putting together an RFP so someone can be hired to work on the goals in the AI and stated that the funds were allocated just a few months ago.
- JM said she agrees and stated that Newton could ask for more money. Committee members expressed some concern about whether the amount of money that's been allocated is too little because it is only \$100,000. Members suggested that \$100,000 to do a meaningful testing over 13 communities is not enough money. JM stated that she doesn't think it's a bad idea for Newton to do its own testing and let the \$100,000 for the consortium go to the other communities. JM reiterated that she does not see any harm with asking for funding.

4. Next meeting Wednesday, August 4, 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