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Mayor

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Malcolm Lucas
Housing Planner

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

Fair Housing Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Date: September 1, 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

Alexandra Weiffenbach

Members Absent: Tatjana Meschede

Ellen Tanowitz

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

Jim Cote

Lakshmi Narayan Kadambi

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 June and July's meeting minutes

- THM asked if there were any comments about the meeting minutes for the previous months. ES recommended that they should be moved for May and June 2021 and hold off on the month of July because of the summer months and people have not reviewed them. THM agreed and ES motioned to approve the May 2021 and the June 2021 Fair Housing Committee minutes; that motion was seconded by KL. All were in favor. September will be reviewed in October's meeting.

2. Passing of Committee Member Rosemary Larking

- THM spoke about the passing of Rosemary Larking and invited JF to speak about her experience with her. JF said that Rosemary was very devoted to affordable housing. She was a force to be reckoned with.
- JF stated that Rosemary was very devoted to fairness and affordable housing and that these were among her main areas of advocacy, especially in the most recent years. Her accomplishments were putting in a complaint into the Department of Justice, an ADA complaint, and a complaint against the Capitol Building in Massachusetts in Boston, because it was inaccessible. At the time the building didn't have an elevator. JF stated that Rosemary was a wonderful person, and she will be missed.

3. Upcoming Events

- **Sheila Mondshein Fair Housing Ceremony, Thursday,9/2/2021 @ 6:30pm, Mayor's Office**
 - This will be the first annual ceremony and stated that he will send out the link that he has received from HKD. KL asked if people were encouraged not to be there in person. HKD stated that people are invited to be there in person. KL thanked HKD.
- **Haywood House Groundbreaking, Thursday, 9/9/21 @ 9:30am-11am, 111 Kennedy Circle**
 - THM made the committee aware about the groundbreaking and stated that people should RSVP soon if interested. THM stated that it will be at 111 Kennedy Circle.
- **Harvest Fair, Sunday 10/17/2021 in Newton Centre**
 - THM discussed the Harvest Festival that will be hosted by the Human Rights Commission. Brooke Wells filled out an application for the Commission on Disabilities, Human Rights Commission, and the Fair Housing Committee to be there. Carnival rides, booths and food trucks will be there and candidates who are running for office will be present. THM stated that he will not be there because he has other engagements. KL suggest that a Doodle poll should be sent around for the hours at this event. JM asked what the volunteers from the committee will be asked to do. JF stated that if you will there for your committee you will pass out information and answer questions if needed. From 10-5 the committee will be sharing a table with the COD. Lakshmi Narayan Kadambi explained the plan of the COD. THM stated that they could also meet in person.
 - KL stated that the committee could send THM and ML suggestions to what could be passed out there and gather information for the October meeting. Alicia Bowman thought this was a great idea. She has been at many of these and suggested the committees get together to make a common phrase like "making Newton more equitable and accessible" so their table could look more attractive and coordinated.

She suggested that there be some quizzes or things that will attract the kids to the table to teach what is Fair Housing. Lastly, she suggested drawing people to the FB page with a QR Code.

4. Discuss Changing Monthly Meeting Day and/or Time

- THM stated that ML sent a doodle poll. THM stated that Tuesday and Thursdays look like it would work. DR stated that a different time would work because she will be getting her family ready for school at the current time.
- THM stated 6:30 will work for him and sending a doodle poll with other times. KL stated the evening time would not work for people who go to other meetings that are in the evening like the City Council meetings. Other members stated that later meetings would be challenging. THM stated that another Doodle Poll will be sent about potential times.

5. Draft Fair Housing Committee Letter to DHCD

- THM stated that he has drafted a letter follow up with the AFF Marketing Plan. THM stated the letter spoke to the timing of the advertisements to make sure that they get out. The FHC did receive a response from the undersecretary of DHCD Jennifer Maddix. The response stated that DHCD will look into their concern and did not give any concrete statements. JM suggested that when the follow up letter is sent that the Committee should cc their legislators. ES asked what the process is to change. She asked whether there is there a public comment process because there may be a public hearing requirement on all the changes. She said it would be good to know how that would occur, and know in case anybody wants to testify. KL stated that previously the FHC did discuss the timing, but also the distribution and the language requirements for publicizing the lotteries, and she just wanted to make sure that the committee doesn't lose that context.

6. Setting Fair Housing Committee goals for 2021-2022

- THM talked about the meeting with BH, AB, HKD, and ML. HE talked about looking at the workload of the FHC and some points came out of the discussion. One point was to look at the guideline for review of developments. THM stated that it is time consuming and that projects could be chosen and recommended not looking at every development. THM also stated that it is time consuming for the developers because they see many groups including the ZBA. THM will be in favor of incorporating the tool into planning DRT process. KL is not sure if she has ever looked at the Planning Department's memo with just a focus on the FH criteria. She thinks that the Partnership and the planning department do not have the same focus as the FHC.
- JM questioned the timing process with respect to the fair housing committee review. JM stated that the FHC does not do anything else other than the fair housing review for new housing developments. JM wanted to know whose time is being saved. THM stated that he thought the committee wanted to focus more on trainings, outreach, and other activities.
- JM asked what the Fair Housing Committee is spending their time doing and who cares what they do. She also asked what the Committee could point to that had changed in the City. She questioned "what do we do, other than review projects?" She questioned why they would be turning the fair housing review process over to

the Planning Department. She feels that taking away the review they will be doing means the Committee will be doing nothing and that if the Committee wants to disband, that they should do it. THM responded and stated that he thought the purpose of today's meeting was to set some goals for the Committee. He stated that if there's a strong feeling or if people feel that the review is a core piece of their focus on what the committee should be doing, then he would suggest doing it in conjunction with the Housing Partnership; KL feels that they should be reviewing projects, but they need a smaller presentation and how they are focusing on the FH part of their proposal. ES agreed with KL's approach.

- ES stated that she values JM's comments, but the criticism of the committee is extremely harsh. She stated that the role of the Committee is an important one. ES stated that they have done a lot of work over the years and understands that the Committee is not a high profile one, but they are really important. She said we would like to work towards getting better. JF stated that she likes the developers to come present. She stated that it is very valuable. JM stated that she is not criticizing the Committee but is she is focused on the value of work that the committee does with the community, administration, and the City Council.
- JM would like to bring someone who is experienced with FH law to come to speak to them. She does not want a lecture, but she needs to know what fits under fair housing. She would like to know how the Fair Housing law could be included into all of the various issues that are going on in the City. This will be her first suggestion.
- THM stated that he agrees with JM, and he stated that Henry Korman is a tremendous loss that he is not able to do this, but he is still in touch with him from time to time. THM asked if anybody else knows other attorneys either inside or outside Newton who are fair housing attorneys, to recruit them as members or to come to speak to the Committee.
- THM asked if the Committee should follow up with the Mayor's office about its concern with the DEI announcement that was made. Both the FHC and Commission on Disabilities were left out of the messaging and they strongly felt that both topics should be highlighted. These are very important topics that ~~was~~ were missing.
- JM stated that last October 2020 she offered a resolution to the Committee that it should ask developers, when their projects were complete, for a report on the tenant makeup of racial, ethnic characteristics of the final lease-up of the building. The report should be on the total performance, not just on local preference, but on the whole process. The planning department felt that to do it, that the Committee was asking them to do more than they had the time to do. She stated that the Planning Department suggested that it could be an annual report. JM stated that she would like to follow up.
- KL would like an update on the AI and the Consortium groups for FH testing and stated that she would like weekly updates to know what is happening and for accountability.
- JM discussed the American Rescue Plan (ARPA funds) and its uses. She stated it is in response to Covid-19 and will focus on people who are affected by the pandemic. She mentioned that in some community meetings she heard that the community would like to use funds that will be used for renovating First Baptist Church for an indoor theater. JM expressed concern about the priorities of the community. JM also mentioned using the funds for testing and explained what was going on in the

Consortium and stated that the consortium has been meeting and felt that it would be difficult to execute a plan that will address each individual community.

7. Next meeting Wednesday, October 6, 2021 (Subject to change)

*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