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Mayor

Barney Heath
Director of
Planning & Development

Malcolm Lucas
Housing Planner

Members

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: October 6, 2021

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Place: Virtual (Zoom)

Members Present: Theodore M. Hess Mahan, Chair

Kathy Laufer
Josephine McNeil
Esther Schlorholtz
Judy Korzenowski
Donna Rigg
Ellen Tanowitz
Alexandra Weiffenbach

Members Absent: Tatjana Meschede

Staff Present:

Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner
Jini Fairley, ADA/Sec. 504 Coordinator
Hattie N. Kerwin Derrick, Director of Community
Engagement & Inclusion
Barney Heath, Director of Planning and Development

Public Present: Lee Mondshein

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

1. Approval of July and September's meeting minutes

- ES motioned to approve the July 2021 JK second. All were in favor. Meeting minutes are approved for July 2021.
- ES motioned to approve the September 2021 JK second. 7 yes and 2 abstained. Meeting minutes are approved for September 2021.



2. Recent Events

- **Sheila Mondshein Fair Housing Award Ceremony**

- THM briefly talked about the ceremony and stated that the award was given to Lee Mondshein on behalf of his wife, and it was conducted on Zoom. THM stated that the ceremony was well-attended.

- **City Receives the Keys to the West Newton Armory**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BYcz3d5JO8>

- The City of Newton accepted the keys to the West Newton Amory. There were a number of speakers and it was broadcasted on YouTube and Newton TV. THM stated that it was a great event. THM mentioned that the Mayor mentioned in her speech that Mayor Theodore D. Mann worked with the state to open up the Amory as a temporary shelter for the chronically homeless from Boston, MA. He also mentioned that Newton has not been quite welcoming to this group so he thinks it's good that this will be a great project for affordable housing. THM spoke about the committee that was being appointed and asked about the review of bids that have come in. HKD stated that seven bids have come in and the process is starting by the end of this month. HKD stated once someone is chosen that the public will be notified. JM asked if this information is posted on the website and THM and HKD stated that purchasing posted it on their webpage and stated that it is pretty timely. JM stated okay.

3. Upcoming Events

- **Harvest Fair, Sunday 10/17/2021 in Newton Centre**

- THM stated that this event is coming up and he mentioned that people may have been there before, and he mentioned the booth and stated that it is in the Newton Center parking lot. THM stated that he was contacted by Brooke Wells from the Human Rights Committee and stated that they were going to set up a booth and have materials to hand out. THM stated that he wanted to discuss that today about what materials that they would hand out. He stated that he searched the FHC website and found the purpose of the Committee and the mission of the Committee. THM asked the Committee what other members interest would be for handouts and what to talk about at the fair.
- KL suggested that there be coordination with Human Rights Commission concerning their complaint process. She based this on HRC's recent meeting where they stated that there currently isn't a process for reviewing complaints. KL asked if FHC should take the lead with drafting something. KL suggested that the Planning Dept print out our Mission statement and other materials for the Harvest Fair but said she didn't think there would be much foot traffic. THM stated that he could also be there possibly all day if needed. THM thanked KL for attending the Human Rights Commission's meeting.
- THM stated that about 20 years ago he was a part of the Human Rights Commission and he stated that the process back then was that one of the members of the Commission was a personal mediator who would handle complaints and there was a police officer who collected complaints, and he asked what they do now. KL stated the staff who was assigned to the Commission is from the Health and Human Services Department.
- KL did state that the Human Rights Commission did discuss putting their process on their website once created. She stated that a member stated that a constituent came to receive services and felt like they were put off in filing a complaint. KL stated that she was raising this for maybe a future agenda item since the FHC does not have a Human Rights Commission member on the FHC anymore. KL stated that if the FHC could have something to distribute

about discrimination and housing they should, as well as being prepared to talk about it because the Human Rights Commission will not.

- JM stated the question is, will the FHC speak about it and she thinks that they should not. JM stated that from what she heard there is no longer a process and they do not take complaints anymore which is why the constituent was put off. KL stated the only process established is through the police for hate crimes.
- JM stated that someone could look on one of the fair housing websites, that there may be a brochure or something that could be copied and handed out to people. JM stated that the Committee does not have anything and should not pretend that they do. She stated that she would not even know what to discuss if she were there and agreed that the interest would limit the traffic at their table.
- KL stated that she will be willing to find a one pager to pass out from MCAD or another organization and share it with JM and THM and if it is reasonable ML can print copies and asked if 25 is a reasonable number. THM stated he did not think we will get any more than that. THM stated that he is troubled that they do not have anything and questioned if the FHC even had the legal authority to handle complaints and asked BH and ML if they know or someone in the legal department knew. THM did state that JF handled complaints and asked her the process. She stated that she and ML hand out resources but there is not an in-house process that processes complaints, and she stated that ML and she does see complaint forms and she attempt to help people on an individual basis, but most times there is a pretty substantial situation. JF did state that she has even contacted MCAD and found that they have a waitlist for their services.
- KL stated that she wanted to move along and stated that her intent was to discuss this item first to see if they have any volunteers for the Fair.
- Public: LM asked about the Suffolk University Testing Survey report regarding whether the materials could be shared at the table. He stated that it was very informative and readable. THM asked about the pages and LM responded that it is a fifteen-page executive summary, THM said that he could make copies for the fair. LM also asked if the Book, Color of Law, could be brought as well. THM stated that he will bring his copy. KL stated that she could do 10-Noon and will find a fact sheet. THM stated that he will do 10-5pm and asked if anyone else wanted to volunteer.

4. Discuss Changing Monthly Meeting Day and/or Time

- THM discussed the Doodle Poll that was done and stated that there was not a specific one day that worked for everybody. He stated that the time change was requested by TM because of her teaching schedule through the school year. THM asked the committee what a good time for everyone will be else. JM asked what days were on the poll and THM stated that the best days for most people was Tuesdays and Thursdays in the morning. Times were still unclear, so JM requested another Doodle Poll after having a discussion with TM. THM agreed and will send another Doodle Poll after the conversation with TM.

5. Draft Fair Housing Committee Letter to DHCD

- THM stated that the only edit/suggestion that he received was to add the names of the state legislators on it and the mayor's office and asked if there was anything else before he sends it out. KL stated no and that she would like it to go out. THM stated that he will send it out.

6. Setting Fair Housing Committee goals for 2021-2022

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

- There was no discussion on this item

- **Bring in a Fair Housing Attorney to talk to committee about purpose and goals**

- KL stated that the Committee has talked about bringing a fair housing attorney to talk with them and was wondering where the Committee is with this search. THM stated that he could probably get Henry Korman to come speak and then he asked if anyone in the Committee knew of an attorney that they could recommend. JM stated that she would recommend someone else. THM asked if JM had any suggestions. THM asked what the discussion would be from the attorney. JM stated that a tutorial on fair housing 101 would be a great idea. KL stated that when JM reaches out about the testing, she could ask about getting someone to present. JM stated that she would. Public: LM proposed to have someone come who has experience in raising community wide interest, knowledge, and support of fair housing initiatives, because based on his limited exposure and their circle friends there is a combination of ignorance and or lack of interest. LM wonders if there is someone who had experience and expertise in creating a program to raise awareness.

- KL stated that this may be a two-step thing. KL stated they should be educated first and the second step speaks to diversity equity and inclusion in the City. JM and THM agreed.

- **Updates on AI/Consortium Fair Housing Testing**

- There was not a discussion about this matter.

- **Resolution to request that developers report annually on minority rentals**

- There was not a discussion about this matter.

- **Use of ARPA Funds**

- KL stated that on Monday night the Mayor came out with items of how these funds are being spent. KL stated that a million dollars will go to housing, but the details were not there. KL is concerned that there are a number of capital improvement projects that are slated to receive ARPA funds and that these don't necessarily benefit those most impacted by COVID-19.

- THM stated that KL's statement was a good point and asked where to find this information. JM stated that there is a webpage on the City's website about ARPA. JM stated that she has two recommendations that are related to fair housing. 1. Establish a fund for people who are leasing up for a new development that may have credit issues or do not have a security deposit to enter these affordable units and the City will communicate with the developer assuring them that the people with these issues will pay their rent. (Lottery Lease Up Reserve) 2. Using ARPA funds for a fair housing testing program. JM stated that the funding should be used for this purpose and those directly related to the mission if ARPA.

- THM asked BH or HKD to speak about the program. HKD stated that she was still learning about the program and they actually just went over the program in the Mayor's office. She stated that the speech is posted on Newton TV and that people can find the speech on the email that went out from the Mayor's office. HKD stated that the funding is split into an (A) category and (C) category. Category C will be designated to the things that have been impacted by COVID-19. HKD stated what the Mayor looked at was all the feedback that was received when the public found out about the funding from listening sessions and email the message of receiving this information. HKD mentioned that KL touched on housing and explained the detail of what was going to be done in that category. It will be for emergency purposes: electricity, rent, mortgages

and this announcement was just made this week. Kl asked who was administering this. HKD stated that she can find out. THM stated that BH may know, and they may get the answer.

- HKD stated that the funds have to be used for things that are sustainable beyond the funding and the funds have to be spent and can't be used as a saving for a rainy-day fund, but actually have to be utilized. She stated that it is a six-year program and can't be used for a program that does not have a funding source already. A program can't be started and after the six years is over the program stops. Services have to be sustainable.
- JM stated the funds are not totally for emergencies and explained some examples about getting extra staff that had to be hired at the schools and ventilation. JM did state that the emergency help would not be a good use of the million dollars that is allocated for housing because there are state funding sources specifically for rental assistance and utilities. JM stated that the City should use these funds for helping people who have applied for and have not received assistance and to accelerate their efforts to make people aware of the state programming. JM stated that the City should use the funding to provide services to help people with work force development and financial literacy to help a person to have sustainability. HKD stated the City's program is a gap program for the state program for people who need immediate services because the state process takes longer and requires more work to get. BH agreed with HKD.
- BH stated that the Mayor's office received this information from the Health and Human Services Department. BH stated also if the Committee wanted to put in a request for their recommendations that they could and stated that other organizations have made requests for what they would like to do, and the list is pretty robust. THM told JM to prepare her request so it could be submitted. THM also stated that the paired testing piece is straight forward and talked about the cost. JM stated that she will contact Suffolk Law to get the cost for testing in Newton. KL stated that JM should propose \$5000 a household for her idea (Lottery Lease Up Reserve). JM agreed. KL moved to go with the two suggested recommendations JM made for the ARPA funds. DR seconded. THM made a roll call, and it was unanimous. All in favor.

7. Next meeting Wednesday, November 3, 2021 (Subject to change)

9:30 am - Meeting Adjourned

*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