



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  
Ellen Tanowitz

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## CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

### Fair Housing Committee

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## MEETING AGENDA

Date: January 6, 2021

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Place: Virtual (Zoom)

**Members Present:** Theodore M. Hess Mahan, Chair  
Kathy Laufer, Vice Chair  
Josephine McNeil  
Esther Schlorholtz  
Tatjana Meschede  
Judy Korzenowski  
Donna Rigg  
Ellen Tanowitz

**Members Absent:** Alexandra Weiffenbach  
Rosemary Larking

**Staff Present:** Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner  
Barney Heath, Planning and Development Director  
Jini Fairley, ADA/Sec. 504 Coordinator

**Public Present:** Councilor Pamela Wright  
Councilor Alicia Bowman  
Councilor Julia Malakie  
Hannah Cross, Newton Housing Authority  
Elise Selinger  
Henry Kormnan  
Rose White  
Sharon Brooks  
William Carroll  
Ned Crecelius  
Lucie Kimesova

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# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## Fair Housing Committee

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

### 1. Letters to pilot the rent-up survey – Follow up.

- THM asked ML and BH to give an update. ML stated that he forwarded Austin Street information to the Committee and also explained to the Committee that the transition from CAN-DO and NHA has stopped ML from getting the information. KL stated that the units are occupied so getting that information should be ~~okay~~ **easy** to get. ML agreed and asked if JM would know where to start. JM stated that there are only three family units and the other five units are in the group home. JM stated that two of the units are occupied by families of Hispanic descent and the other may be white or black. THM asked who did the lottery. JM stated Metro West. ML stated that he will reach back out to them and relay the information he receives to the Committee.
- JM stated that the information given was very telling and highlights the need for the Committee to probe deeper on the information it was given. She stated that it would be valuable if there was someone who had the expertise to look e disaggregate the information. To complete its analysis, the FHC needs the lottery information. Because it appeared that some people had dropped out prior to being offered a unit. She stated that there were around 34 people eligible for the 23 units that were available. She said the FHC needs to know why the people who were included in the local preference were selected Did they work in Newton or have children in the school system? She was concerned that 4 out of the 23 occupants had identified themselves as other. The lack of a racial identity impedes the ability to reach a conclusion. . She reported that 3 of the 23 inclusionary units were occupied by African Americans- two single persons and one is a single parent. JM asked, what are the next steps and asked could someone from the city disaggregate this information. She wanted to know if the subgroup could get additional information from the management company, what would be the next step. Barney stated that the information could be helpful in the department's analysis of the local preference which would be undertaken over the next few months, since there is a docketed item on this matter.
- Zoning and Planning is working on zoning redesign. They are looking at the housing trust and other things. THM is looking for a way to make this priority and not get lost. JM stated she is not willing to wait months for the political process with this situation. THM wants to ensure that the collection of the information will get done. BH stated that they could keep this item on the agenda and could be revisited next month.
- KL stated that the FHC may need to revise the document to reflect the concerns they have. And they can create a subgroup. Looking at the data the Planning department will

be collecting. KL stated that the FHC may have to go back and it is not enough data for what they have collected so far.

- JM stated the purpose of the data gathering is to see who was in the lottery and who the occupants of these units are. We need to ask property owners why the units were not rented to certain people. JM stated that the sub-committee should meet again and engage with property managers to seek answers and explanations. JF stated that when we say diversity people should include people with disabilities to be included. The minority group is people with server disability. Councilor Wright asked why we did not get information from the Avalon Properties. KL stated that with these properties will rented up so long ago that it would be difficult to collect that information. Hannah Cross stated that the Committee may want to look at a comparison of different properties. JM stated the group intended to get information from TRIO but it is still renting up its inclusionary units. THM stated that he will leave it up the subgroup to see what additional information they can obtain from the management company

## 2. Opus Presentation – Lizbeth Heyer

- Lizbeth Heyer Introduce everyone. LH stated that they value FHC input. Asked how long the committee has for this presentation and stated that it will be about 20 minutes a presentation. THM stated he would like to hear about both. LH started with Opus. Talked about 2life and their mission. Opus will be adjacent to the Coleman House.
- LH stated that this project will be 175 New apartments, 1- and 2-bedrooms and 243 new parking spaces. LH went over the FHC criteria and explained themselves through each section. 9 affordable IZ apartments available (5% compliance). The other units they will be creative to keep the other units affordable. Adaptability – All units are being designed to be adaptable to meet needs for the aging community to have everyone to remain in their apartment in addition to MAAB and ADA compliance. Proximity - Amenities are accessible and available for residents JCC and what will be offered on site. A grab and go market and shuttle bus will go to the market. Affordability – Opus will be affordable all around. 5% of apartments will be 80% AMI. Affirmative Marketing Plan will be robust, and 2 Life wants Opus to administer the lottery. They want to be welcoming to resident to a new community and will partner with 2 Life. LH stated that they have already started early marketing educating people about this project. They scored their development. (10 was their ranking)
- DR asked where the developers are getting their funding from. LH stated that there are two sections for funding received, one is for housing and the other is operations. LH stated that before OPUS the have received funds from multiple organizations. 90% of their affordability is Section 8 and PRAC and HUD 202 Program. As well as CDBG funds. She also stated that they raise funding. The organization is also funded through fees for development. ET asked for clarification about this development and will they be selling the IZ units and will it be between ownership and rental. LH stated yes and no, they are calling it a community share an entry fee with a residency contract equity investment and less like a condo owner. It is partially refundable.
- JM stated that there are only two or three black families at the Coleman House and raised the question as to whether 2Life has relationships with the organizations that they are marketing to. JM stated that affordability will be hard for the African American population. JM also stated that the property is in an isolated area of the city. She made the point that she as an African American would not feel comfortable living in a place with so few African Americans. She asked what they planned to do to make a person

feel comfortable. LH stated that they had a 6-10-year waitlist there would be no reason to market these units at this timer She pointed out that they had more success in attracting African Americans in their newer properties in Brighton. LH admitted that they are not racially diverse. Admits marketing should be better and relationships should be established and stated that they are working on it. LH stated that Newton is mostly white and has stated that one of her staff members that doesn't feel comfortable when visiting people at Coleman. Shannon Brooks stated that she has been in senior living and this category of housing is not generally diverse. She emphasized the need to establish relationships and education and outreach and believes that they will work very hard at this.

- Henry Korman stated that he has been engaged with 2 Life to find the opportunities to promote a diverse population. HK is 2life's general council and he was recruited for this issue and appreciate JM's comments. JM stated she will be really interested to hearing exactly how they are going to achieve diversity.
- KL has concerns and questions ~~are~~ having to do with integrating the new Opus community with Coleman House. KL stated that the building is beautiful but there will be a big difference ~~between~~ in socioeconomic backgrounds of the residents. And **she** questioned ~~on~~ how they are going to subsidize the meals. LH stated that there will be a food fee but no fees to the other programs and services.
- Hannah Cross asked about cost and income because this is not to be a low-income property and what will the cost be and what income level would be able to live there. She also asked what the interest is and need. Sharon Brooks stated that recent study states that 54% of the populations does not qualify for subsidized housing. SB also states that allowing the people to leverage their home equity for a low cost for people could create a monthly fee that will be very affordable. They are focusing on having this project to be as affordable as possible. It is brand new and there is a lot of education, explanation and outreach they must do. LH stated the concept of AMI is different for this population because most are on a fixed income. The question is wealth, even for tax credits the concept for AMI is not a fair measure hard because of assets.
- Coleman House - LH explained to the Committee that this project's residents' income is at or below 50% AMI and the median income is around \$12,000 a year. The median age is 82 years old and around 53% of the residents need some level of assistance. Springwell is helping in this area. They will be modernizing this project to preserve 146 units for ELI and VLI seniors and they are all Section 8 holders. All the units will be renovated to 100% adaptable and FHA and MAAB compliant. LH explained the Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing that they will do and if the Committee wanted more detail, she stated that she could schedule to return at a later date because of time constraints of the meeting to address the lack of diversity.. Their ranking of themselves was 13 on the FHC scale. Affordability – All apartments will be below market at 50% AMI and below. Accessibility – All meets MAAB requirements. 5% if units will meet Group 2 MAAB standards and will exceed Group 1 standards for adaptability. LH stated that they will go to the CPA next week.

### **3. 1149-1151 Walnut Street Letter**

- There was no discussion on this item

### **4. AI – FHC Comment Letter**

- There was no discussion on this item

## 5. Other Business

- There was no discussion on this item

## 6. Next meeting Wednesday, February 3, 2021

### Meeting Adjourned at 10:10 am

\*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](mailto: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