

DRAFT

Newton Housing Partnership Meeting  
Notes from May 18, 2021, Meeting  
Conference Call Meeting  
6:00-8:00 pm

**APPROVED 5-0 ON 7.20.21**

Partnership Members in Attendance: Mark Caggiano, Eliza Datta, Lizbeth Heyer, Kathi Marchi, Josephine McNeil, Marva Serotkin, Stephen Tise

Others in Attendance: Amanda Berman, Eamon Bencivengo, Barney Heath, Hatti Kerwin Derrick; members of the community and City Council

The April 20, 2021, meeting summary was unanimously approved.

Introduction and Welcome to Potential New NHP Members

Lizbeth Heyer announced the resignation of NHP member John Hennessey leaving an opening on the Partnership. Anyone interested in joining the NHP must attend two meetings prior to consideration by the mayor. Lizbeth Heyer introduced Albert Simmons who is a potential new member. Albert Simmons is a fifth generation Newtonian whose family was displaced by the building of the Mass Pike. He graduated from NN in 2007 and works as a paralegal for the Boston Housing Authority. He was welcomed by committee members. He explained the importance having a younger, minority voice when addressing the need for affordable housing in Newton.

Newton City Council Commendation Honoring the Newton Fair Housing Committee

The NHP considered for the second time whether it should respond critically to the action of several members of the City Council during a vote on a resolution to commend (meeting to respond or not to the City Council's vote to commend) the Fair Housing Committee for its work. The vote was not unanimous as several Councilors stood behind the rail. City Councilor Bowman spoke about the importance to include issues related to zoning in the commendation, which she wrote. Further, Councilor Bowman underscored that zoning was (is) listed as an impediment to fair housing in the consultant's Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing. Councilor Wright stated that she and other Councilors wanted to

understand the relationship between zoning and (additional education about impediments to) fair housing prior to voting. Eliza Datta stated that including zoning in the fair housing commendation is consistent with the principles voted on by the NHP.

VOTE: A motion was made and seconded for the NHP to make a statement indicating its disapproval of the actions taken by the Councilors who stepped behind the rail and to endorse the Resolution (Commendation) honoring the Newton Fair Housing Committee. Josephine questioned what was to be gained by criticizing the Councilors and stated that the time of the committee would be better spent on action to address the need for more affordable housing. The motion was approved with Josephine opposing.

Mark Caggiano volunteered to work with Lizbeth Heyer to write a statement to the mayor with the NHP endorsement of the Resolution. (Josephine McNeil stated that the need for affordable housing outweighed the time spent on the letter.)

### NHP Initiatives

1. ELI housing strategy. Barney Heath announced that the mayor's budget included funding for an economic self sufficiency initiative. Marva Serotkin recommended that the core of a needs assessment can be found in the group of residents who applied for COVID 19 Emergency Housing Relief Program funding.
2. Zoning Redesign. The focus is currently on village centers. There is a village kit available for residents to facilitate consideration of different visions for the villages. Josephine McNeil stated that she was pleased that the City had reached out to renters in the process.
3. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Judy Barrett will meet with the NHP in June to review her final report regarding local preference policy at which the NHP will consider a recommendation to the staff and Zoning and Planning Committee.

### Project Update

1.Armory. Comments on the RFP draft are due June 1. It is projected that the RFP will be released by mid-June with a close by mid-September and selection in November.

2.COVID 19 Emergency Housing Relief Program. The deadline for applications is June 30<sup>th</sup> with final pay out in October. To date, 247 households have received funding with 55% under 30% AMI. 700 individuals have been impacted by this funding of whom 52% are minority. \$3.3M has been allocated.

3.Affordable Housing Trust. The Council will consider in June.

4.Riverside. The amendment is before the Council.

5.Dunstan. The expansion is before the ZBA for an initial discussion.

New Business: Josephine McNeil requested an inventory of projects in the City which included IZ units.

NHP meetings will be held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month 6-8pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marva Serotkin