

DRAFT

Newton Housing Partnership Meeting
Notes from August 17, 2021, Meeting
Conference Call Meeting
6:00-8:00 pm

Approved subject to the change below

Partnership Members in Attendance: Eliza Datta, Chuck Eisenberg, Lizbeth Heyer, Josephine McNeil, Marva Serotkin, Albert Simmons, Stephen Tise

Others in Attendance: Amanda Berman, Eamon Bencivengo, Barney Heath, members of the community

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

Open Seats on Newton Housing Partnership

Lizbeth Heyer welcomed Albert Simmons as a new member of the Partnership. Ann Houston attended her second meeting. If interested the next step is an application to the Mayor. Lizbeth Heyer will reach out to Christine Dillon who expressed an interested in joining the Partnership.

Economic Self Sufficiency Proposal

Amanda Berman reported that the Mayor has engaged a consultant to conduct a community needs assessment survey under the direction of Health and Human Services Commissioner. The results of the survey are due by the end of year and will inform the use of ARPA funds that is coming to Newton. Since there were questions about the process for the survey, it was agreed to invite staff from HHS to the next Partnership meeting to discuss the survey and to present data about the current request for services and the services that were provided. A copy of the consultant's proposal will be sent to the Partnership prior to the meeting. Josephine McNeil identified the urgent need for services for very low income residents. It was agreed that Albert Simmons and Steve Tise would draft a letter to the Mayor advocating for addressing the immediate needs for low income Newton residents.

Local Preference Policy

Lizbeth Heyer reported on the recent ZAP meeting where local preference policy was discussed. ZAP expects to continue the discussion and sent back questions to the Partnership:

- What is the impact on people with disabilities with a change in LP?
- What are reasons for the gap in racial distribution between the lottery and acceptance?
- What income should be counted for the IZ units?
- What should be the % threshold for LP, which is included in the IZ Ordinance?

The Partnership debated the rationale for the %. Some expressed that 0% was unrealistic. A statement was made that the Partnership should not take politics into consideration when making a recommendation to ZAP. Lizbeth Heyer stated that since new buildings are accessible due to ADA requirements, the needs of those with physical and developmental disabilities will be addressed.

Lizbeth Heyer presented data about the current households in Newton: 24% households are <80% AMI (46% rentals and 16% homeowners). This group is rent burdened.

It was moved by Chuck Eisenberg to advocate for 0% local preference. Upon discussion reflecting on the data presented by Lizbeth Heyer, the motion was amended to 25% local preference adding legal input on the legality of local preference. The amended motion was seconded by Albert Simmons. 6 members voted in favor with one abstention.

Members requested that staff assist in presenting data from one project to better understand why Black and Brown lottery applicants are not getting into the units.

on the notes from the last session in August, i suggest the language be modified as follows: Under Local Preference Policy discussion, second to last paragraph:

.....add legal input "to determine if Newton's Local Preference policies violate Federal Fair Housing statutes based on the results of the Barrett Planning Group's report received in June of 2021".

I suggest it may not be a violation of civil rights law, but a violation of FFH.

Housing Trust

ZAP will discuss the Housing Trust at their September 27th meeting.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Marva Serotkin