

DRAFT

Newton Housing Partnership Meeting
Notes from September 21, 2021, Meeting
Conference Call Meeting
6:00-8:00 pm

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

Others in Attendance: Amanda Berman, Eamon Bencivengo, Hattie Kerwin Derrick, Barney Heath, members of the community, City Councilors Crossley and Wright

The August 17, 2021, meeting summary was unanimously approved with the following revision to the motion regarding local preference: as proposed by Steve Tise:

It was moved to advocate for 25% local preference and request 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 2021.

Recommendation to the Mayor re: ARPA Funds for Affordable Housing

Staff reported that the City will receive \$63m in ARPA funds that must be expended within 5 years. The status of this allocation is available on the City's website. HOME funds are not included in the ARPA allocation.

Lizbeth Heyer encouraged Partnership members to offer suggestions for the use of the funds. These recommendations are listed below. The Partnership will finalize the list at the October meeting. In the interim, Josephine McNeil volunteered to draft a letter to the Mayor to stress the immediate needs of our residents. Further research on how the money can be used will be pursued by staff.

- 2.5m to purchase land/buildings for use by families whose income is <50% AMI. This will allow for immediate response to opportunities.
- Seed housing trust
- Create an endowment. Question: must the funds be expended or allocated?
- Seed economic self sufficiency program

- Use funds for rent stabilization. State funds are available so should not need to use ARPA funds for this purpose.
- Funds to support Armory project
- Support deeply affordable housing
- Seed funding of first and last rental payments
- Fund support services

Presentation by Newton Health and Human Social Service Team

Meghan Kennedy and staff from the Social Service Team and Health and Human Services Department presented an overview of their functions. Staff work directly with individual residents and groups with the goal of large scale systemic change. Services provided include case management, mental health, funding, fuel assistance and many others. Staff work with many partners to assist residents and are always seeking new partners.

Meghan Kennedy presented an overview of the needs assessment project, which is slated to be completed by the end of the year. A consultant has been engaged to work with several local organizations who serve a diverse, low income population. Each organization will identify 10 individuals for the consultants to interview. The goal is to document the needs of these individuals/families so that that the City can be proactive in addressing the needs. Josephine McNeil requested that race be added to the intake form. The Partnership thanked the staff for the presentation and requested that they return with data regarding the number of referrals that concern housing.

Zoning Redesign

Councilor Crossley reported that she and her fellow Councilors are seeking ideas about Village Centers that will lead to policy decisions. She encouraged members to use the visioning kit. These decisions will then lead to zoning decisions. She appreciated that the NHP has attended ZAP meetings about this topic. Chuck Eisenberg presented a brief history of the villages that are more eclectic than in past decades and that the current zoning system does not reflect the need for housing, especially multifamily housing. He stated that overlay districts would address this issue. Eliza Datta asked about the use of available public land in the centers such as parking lots. Amanda Berman explained that real property reuse restrictions can be a barrier. Lynne Weisberg encouraged the perspective of including a 15 minute walking shed in the redesign process. Steve

Tise asked who in the City is responsible for the decisions regarding the village redesign. All agreed that transportation is an important consideration.

Councilor Crossley requested help from the NHP in thinking through the redesign decision process with the goal of keeping the economic health of the villages.

Chuck Eisenberg volunteered to represent the NHP at the October 25 meeting of the ZAP.

Affordable Housing Trust

Barney Heath reported that the CPC met and agreed to allocate 35% for affordable housing to the Trust. Josephine McNeil asked if the trust can be sued as a body and as individuals for alleged fair housing violations.

Project Updates

- Riverside—approved by full Council
- Dunstan—approved by Zoning Board of Appeal
- Opus—approved by full Council
- Armory—RFP deadline is September 30th

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Marva Serotkin