

Newton Housing Partnership Meeting  
Notes from October 19, 2021, Meeting  
Conference Call Meeting  
6:00-8:00 pm

Approved on 11/16/21

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

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

The September 21, 2021, meeting summary was unanimously approved.

Lizbeth Heyer welcomed Ann Houston as a member of the Newton Housing Partnership.

Recommendation to the Mayor re: ARPA Funds for Affordable Housing

Amanda Berman provided an overview of the newly inaugurated \$1m COVID 19 Emergency Housing and Utility Relief Program announced by Mayor Fuller. This is a new version of the original COVID Relief program. The City is working with MetroWest, which administered the original program, and the City's social work staff working in the Department of Health and Human Services. The program will provide 2 months housing assistance and \$700 for utilities with incomes less than 80% AMI. The social workers will continue to work with residents after the program ends. Question was raised whether staffing is sufficient to continue case management services. Josephine McNeil requested that the program collect data on income and race.

Questions were asked about the rules for the use of ARPA funds. The rules and being developed and not firm.

The Partnership reviewed the list of uses for the ARPA funds that were generated at the September meeting:

- \$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

Members of the Partnership suggested additional uses:

- Funds for legal services
- Job training
- Funds to find City owned property where affordable housing could be developed

Lizbeth Heyer asked the Partnership to list 3-4 priorities for the use of ARPA funds that will form the recommendation from the Partnership to the Mayor. The three priorities agreed to by the Partnership were

1. Funding a self-sufficiency program for 4 years (1 year planning and three years program pilot) \$500k
2. Credit enhancement for people impacted by COVID who are not approved in the lottery
3. Funding for subsidizing development of properties and acquisition of properties. Partnership members suggested varying amounts in this bucket with the priority for low and extremely low income.

VOTE: Moved by Chuck Eisenberg and seconded by Mark Caggiano to recommend \$20m with a priority for low and extremely low income. The vote was unanimous approval.

Josephine McNeil and Lizbeth Heyer will draft a letter to the Mayor for review at the November Partnership meeting.

### Zoning Redesign

Chuck Eisenberg explained that under current zoning regulations, multifamily housing is not allowed in the villages. Suggestions were offered for revising zoning to allow multifamily housing: overlays that have been used by

other cities and towns and 40R. The Partnership listed characteristics for permitting and incentivizing multifamily housing:

1. Ability to build higher by right
2. 15-minute walk shed to be included in the planning
3. Parking restrictions
4. FAR

Chuck Eisenberg is attending the ZAP on the 25<sup>th</sup> at which the village centers will be discussed. The Partnership will continue this discussion at the November meeting.

### Project Updates

Eamon Bencivengo presented a report on the status of the Armory. There were 7 proposals submitted that the Evaluation Committee will score and submit to the City's Procurement Officer who will then recommend to the Mayor. Eliza Datta has been appointed to the Committee by the Mayor representing the CPC and Partnership. Several members of the Partnership have a conflict of interest since they are involved with a proposal and did not participate in the discussion. The conclusion of the discussion was that the Partnership does not have a role as a body in the decision-making process, however, Partnership members as individuals are welcome to comment. The Partnership did have an opportunity to comment on the RFP. The Partnership will continue this discussion in November.

### Follow-Up Item

Steve Tise asked if the City has looked into a potential violation of local fair housing regulations based on the Barrett report. Ann Houston volunteered to work with Amanda Berman on this question.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Marva Serotkin