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Members

Ted Hess Mahan, Chair
Vacant, Vice-Chair
Kathy Laufer
Esther Schlorholtz
Josephine McNeil
Donna Rigg
Tatjana Meschede
Judy Korzenowski
Alexandra Weiffenbach
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CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Fair Housing Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Date: December 1, 2021

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Place: Virtual (Zoom)

Members Present: Theodore M. Hess Mahan, Chair

Kathy Laufer

Tatjana Meschede

Esther Schlorholtz

Judy Korzenowski

Donna Rigg

Alexandra Weiffenbach

Ellen Tanowitz

Members Absent: Josephine McNeil

Staff Present:

Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner

Jini Fairley, ADA/Sec. 504 Coordinator

Hattie N. Kerwin Derrick, Director of Community
Engagement & Inclusion

Public Present:

Councilor Pamela Wright

Councilor Alicia Bowman

Councilor Andreae Downs

Lee Mondshein

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

1. Approval of November 2021 meeting minutes

- THM discussed the approval of the November 2021 meeting minutes and asked if everyone had any comments. ES motioned to approve the November minutes. JF stated that she has a comment that she wanted to make about the minutes. JF stated that the spelling was wrong for disability and stated that she does not remember the Commission on



Disability had any comments. THM stated that the November Minutes will be tabled to correct the items JF commented on and he asked ML to send him the video ML stated that THM would have to have Dropbox because the file is too big. THM stated that he has Dropbox. November minutes will be reviewed in January 2022. After THM did a roll call.

2. Current Events

- **City Council Voted to Lower Local Preference from 75% to 25%**

- THM stated that 70% to 25% is the correct information and it was a typo in his behalf and stated the language that was adopted to the extent permitted by law such plan as the affirmative Fair Housing marketing plan must provide for a local preference for 25% of the inclusionary units in a project and at least one of the local preference units must be a fully accessible unit. THM asked if anyone had any comments. No one responded. THM thanked the councilors for approving this and moved on to the next topic.

3. Upcoming Events

- **League of Women Voters of Newton, “The League Presents: Newton’s Housing Boards & Committees”**

- THM stated that he did participate with Lisbeth Heyer from the Newton Housing Partnership and is waiting for a link of the production. They are editing the session they recorded. He stated that he will get it to the committee when he gets it.

- **AFHMP/Lottery Training: Chair’s Report and Upcoming Training**

- THM stated that he attended the meeting and listed of the people who attended the meeting and stated that he passed on the training material and a PowerPoint to the Committee for their review stated there were breakout sessions and they worked on mock lotteries. He stated that the training was informative and encouraged that the Committee sign up. THM asked ML when the next one is, and KL stated that she signed up for December 9th training and JK stated that she did also. KL stated that MHP’s zoom capacity caused the quick fill up for registering. THM stated that JM gave a suggestion that the Committee to have DHCD/MHP do a truncated presentation for the Committee members who they cannot participate in the three-hour training. THM stated that the mock lottery was eye opening. THM stated that the mock lottery was very helpful in helping to understand how first of all the local preference works. And secondly when you have units that are identified for folks who need accessibility. THM stated that he would work with the Planning Department to arrange a special focused meeting.
- TM stated that she would also like for someone to come in to give a training if possible because she was locked out of registration. TM stated that she would like to also understand what the Fair Housing Committee’s role is on this matter. THM stated they have to look at the outcomes of lease up and the monitoring of lotteries. THM also stated that he thought they should have ongoing monitoring to ensure compliance. ES stated that she agreed, and she would like would just want to see how the committee would be ensuring that the city staff who are engaged in the lottery process are also trained and familiar with the process to a degree that helps them to evaluate those outcomes or and to use the data that is collected. ML stated

that he has taken the course multiple times and stated that other staff has as well. ML asked what else is needed for the planning staff to meet the needs of the Committee. ES stated that she was pleased to hear that staff have taken this training, but she stated that the issues is collecting the data. The Committee has recommended to the Planning department many months ago and possibly longer. This data is needed for the Committee to review to get a better understanding why the outcomes are the way they are. Why are the results not showing that there really is an affirmative marketing plan going on? That there are people who can access this key and valuable affordable rental housing. ES also stated that she would like the staff to be able to use the expertise and training that they gained and hopefully the committee better as well, to be able to evaluate the outcomes and suggest interventions that are helpful. ES wanted to clarify with THM that the lottery agents had nothing to do with lease ups and it is up to the property manager to lease up units. THM stated that he thought her statements were correct because subsidizing agencies are supposed to ensure compliance. KL stated that AB has heard from the FHC and the Newton Housing Partnership to find funding to extend Judy Barrett's work on the recent lottery data study and take it to the next step. KL would like to suggest taking on one project and ask the entities to provide them with the information that shows the lottery numbers of all the people and whether the apartment was rented and if not, then why not. THM stated that this is a great idea and asked if anyone else had a comment. ES asked to make a vote for recommendation to have Judy Barret needs to be hired and KL stated that this was done already KL would like to ask the City and the regulatory agency for the lease up information at Trio. ES stated that she feels that targeting one project and think it should be more than just one because they are very idiosyncratic. KL stated that she understands what ES is stating. KL stated that she is not asking TRIO for this information. KL stated that she is actually asking the City and any other regulatory agency that is listed for their information. THM stated that the monitoring agent and DHCD are not collecting this type of data. He stated that DHCD and monitoring agents are making sure income eligible applicants are meeting the criteria and compliance with regulations but do think that collecting this data is a good idea. THM recommends asking for more funding to do another study and get the information KL is asking for as well.

- KL motioned to formally request the planning department to secure funds to hire a consultant to analyze why the lease ups are not providing the diversity that the Committee would hope the process would afford. ES seconded. JF if there is any money for this then accessibility should be added.
- Councilor Bowman stated that she wanted to add on to what JF talked about with accessibility is that there may be an opportunity to update the inclusionary zoning for developments to be more adaptable and accessible to make sure that we're that we're adding as many accessible units as possible. She stated that she knows that many counselors who are on Land Use, herself included, to try even when it's not required to identify and get during special permit processes to get more accessible units fully accessible units added. She stated that if the Committee think that there's an opportunity for Land Use to update the inclusionary zoning to require at least one unit be fully accessible. She would be happy to relay this message and talk more about it.

- Lee Mondshein stated that we go through this and find that low credit that he would like to have a further discussion in the near future. How to really get complete data if it is a bad credit rating. THM did a roll call, and all agreed. TM left because she has a class. Unanimous vote. THM stated that he will do a letter and ask the commit for suggestions. Councilor Wright made a comment and stated that she has four rentals and as a landlord, she thinks the problem is potential tenants' credit score. She stated that a solution to this may happen if the city would want to be the cosigner for these rents, because it would guarantee payment if the Committee finds that this is the case. KL suggested that certain people don't have the resources to find education and service. KL stated that these services are lacking. Councilor Wright stated that the Councilors will push with the Armory for finding an organization that will help with financial literacy and think that doing this will be a great opportunity in this area. Councilor Downs stated that there are organizations like the Allston Brighton Community Development Corporation that already do financial education. She stated that this is not something we need to invent here in Newton, we could probably adapt that directly. THM thanked the Councilors for their comments and presence and moved on the item #2 on the agenda.

4. Fair Housing Goals Project Review

- **Update on 50 Jackson/383 Boylston**

- THM spoke with Laurence Lee and he stated that they added some inclusionary units back to the project. He stated that he did not have the specifics and asked the Councilors who were present. THM stated that when you have public hearing on a special permit all the councilors will have to vote. This project will have to refile. Another public hearing will be possibly in 2022. ES asked if they could ask for the reviewing projects and share it before every meeting. She also stated that the form should be shared with the Committee before any Committee meeting when developers are presenting. THM asked if anyone had any specific updates.
- KL would like to have clarification for the lottery and lease up for any project in the City. What is the city's roll in the whole process? Who is responsible? What are the roles of the various agencies and cities? THM asked ML if he could ask Amanda Berman to come to the January meeting to explain the process. ML stated that he will ask.
- DR stated she and AW work on the recruitment and wanted to give an update regarding the subcommittee. DR stated that the subcommittee found out from HKD that when there's only two positions still open on the committee, and according to the mission statement, one member has to be someone from the Human Rights Commission, and someone has to be from the Commission on Disability. And they are going to work on identifying people. DR stated that is being worked on at this time. DR stated that she and AW have been reaching out to try to find a vice chair. DR stated that there are no takers yet, so the position is still open.

5. Fair Housing Committee goals for 2021-2022

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

- There was not any discussion on this matter
 - **Bring in a Fair Housing Attorney to talk to committee about purpose and goals**

- There was not any discussion on this matter
 - **Updates on AI/Consortium Fair Housing Testing**
- There was not any discussion on this matter
 - **Resolution to request that developers report annually on minority rentals**
- There was not any discussion on this matter
 - **Use of ARPA Funds**
- THM stated that he had received an email, and hoped everybody has as well, regarding the Newton community survey on ARPA. THM stated if the Committee hasn't already, for them to submit their comments.
 - **Collaborate with Human Rights Committee on Fair Housing Complaint Process and Form**
- There was not any discussion on this matter.
 - **Fair Housing Committee Literature**
- THM stated that he and ET will have to meet to have a discussion.

6. Next meeting Wednesday, January 5, 2022

*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 or (617) 796-1253. The city's TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1089. For the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), please dial 711