

Newton Housing Partnership Meeting

Notes from

December 20, 2022, Meeting

Conference Call Meeting

6:00-8:00 pm

Approved 1/17/23

Partnership Members in Attendance: Eliza Datta, Chuck Eisenberg, Lizbeth Heyer, Ann Houston, Josephine McNeil, David Rockwell, Marva Serotkin, Albert Simmons

Others in Attendance: Amanda Berman, Eamon Bencivengo, Barney Heath, Councilors Malakie and Wright and members of the community

It was moved by Chuck Eisenberg and seconded by David Rockwell to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2022, meeting. The minutes were approved with Albert Simmons abstaining.

Elder Housing with Services IZ Section

Eamon Bencivengo presented the assumptions that lead to the Elder Housing with Services IZ Section: 5% of beds at 80% AMI with housing costs for IL at 15% and for Assisted Living 30%. To date two projects have opted to provide units for lower income residents—one of the Sunrise projects and OPUS. Other projects have opted for the payment in lieu of providing units for lower income residents. Review of the assumptions raised several questions. Marva Serotkin and Josephine McNeil expressed concern that the Ordinance does not address lower income individuals, many of whom are employees of Newton businesses. In response to the question about The Trust spending money on services, Amanda Berman stated that City Lawyers opined that because the funds are connected to the CPA statute that the Trust could not be used for services. Trust Chair Ann Houston responded that she will consider options. Lizbeth Heyer concluded that the Partnership will continue to review the ordinance and its impact.

Village Center Zoning

Barney Heath presented the Village Center Zoning Maps PowerPoint that has been presented at 7 village meetings. Staff are compiling comments from

these meetings and ZAP will hear from invited organized groups, including the Partnership, on January 9th and 23rd. It is anticipated that Version 2.0 of the maps will be available February-March with public hearings in the Spring and a final meeting with City Council. In answer to the question by Chuck Eisenberg whether the maps comply with the MBTA Communities Requirement, Barney Health responded that they probably do not, however, they are part way there. Josephine McNeil spoke for the members in stating that the process for the development of the maps has been very positive.

There are three distinct maps that align with height, density, additional attributes. The overall goal is to promote active/vibrant environments in the village centers. All of the maps use the current IZ ordinance and accessibility is a priority. These are overlay zones.

Lizbeth Heyer asked the membership for recommendations for the Partnership testimony before ZAP in January. Eliza Datta recommended that the Partnership support the direction of the plan.

- Lynn Weissberg encouraged the Partnership to comment on the maps related to development near the MBTA such as in Waban and Newton Center.
- Ann Houston recommended a bonus for lower parking requirement for affordable units
- Josephine McNeil raised concern about the depth of affordability. David Rockwell echoed concern about the affordability question and offered that an Affordable Housing Overlay can address affordability by adding an additional floor.
- Albert Simmons recommended supporting the maps and further that the Partnership should comment about the village maps.

It was agreed that Elizabeth Heyer should present at the January ZAP on behalf of the Partnership. She will 1.) seek input from Chuck Eisenberg, David Rockwell and Eliza Datta with a focus on establishing a bonus for a deeper level of affordability and 2.) develop a statement about the maps as relates to affordability. Assuming the Partnership presents at the January 23 ZAP meeting, the next meeting of the Partnership will discuss and review the testimony.

New Items

- As Chair of the Trust, Ann Houston stated that she would be leading a discussion to establish benchmarks for diversity of development teams
- Amanda Berman requested an agenda item to discuss how to create affordable housing in this cost escalating environment

Project/Program Updates

- a. Dudley Road Estate Expression of Interest. Committee is evaluating the EOs.
- b. Eamon Bencivengo reported that ZBA hearing for the Armory is scheduled for January 11th. Members were encouraged to attend as timing is critical.
- c. Economic Mobility Initiative decision will be announced by the Mayor early in January.

Upcoming Meetings

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Marva Serotkin