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Members

Esther Schlorholtz, Chair
Donna Rigg, Vice-Chair
Josephine McNeil
Tatjana Meschede
Judy Korzenowski
Alexandra Weiffenbach
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CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Fair Housing Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Date: December 6, 2022

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Place: Virtual (Zoom)

Members Present: Esther Schlorholtz, Chair

Donna Rigg, Vice Chair

Alexandra Weiffenbach

Tatjana Meschede

Ellen Tanowitz

Judy Korzenowski

Members Absent: Josephine McNeil

Staff Present:

Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner

Jini Fairley, ADA/Sec. 504 Coordinator

Amanda Berman, Director of Housing & Community
Development

Public Present:

Lizbeth Heyer, Vice President, 2Life

Ithzel Polanco, Project Manager, 2Life

Jill Ouellette, Director of Compliance, 2Life

Henry Korman, Attorney, 2Life

Pam Wright, Council

Alicia Bowman, Council

Sharyn Roberts

Cheryl Salvucci

Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner served as recorder, Donna Rigg, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

1. Approval of November 2022 minutes

- Upon a motion by DR, ET seconded the motion. The minutes for November 2022 were approved 6-0-0.



2. Golda Meir Extension's Marketing and Tenant Selection Plans and Results

- DR said that because ES volunteers on a committee with 2Life Communities, she has recused herself from this discussion and has left the meeting.
- Lizbeth Heyer, Vice President, 2Life Communities introduced herself and her team that will be presenting including Henry Korman, 2Life Counsel. An overview was given about the project, and she talked about the goals of the meeting and what 2Life's goals were when marketing this project. LH talked about the engagement that 2Life has had with other communities to get the word out about this project's opportunities with communities of color. She then discussed the goal of increasing the diversity population in Golda Meir and discussed the applicant pool that they have now. The applicant pool will increase by 5% with the Hispanic population, 12% with the Asian population and 9% with the black population. Lastly, she discussed the goal of increasing the Hispanic and Black occupancy by:
 - Racially and linguistically representative marketing staff
 - Not rejecting for credit
 - Personalized phone calls- invitations to visit/participate in
 - Community events
 - Personal follow up to those who decline
- Ithzel Polanco, Project Manager, 2Life Communities discussed the rents and income qualification for the project and summarized their outreach activities which included online listings, dropping off applications and flyers to local businesses, mailings, email, social media, newspaper advertisements and having informational meetings. IP continued discussing the outreach area which covers South Middlesex and Suffolk County. IP discussed in detail where the project's apartments are listed. The project is currently listed with Boston Housing Authority, MetroList, City of Newton's website, Housing Navigator, MassAccess and Metro Housing Boston. IP then listed out newspapers where the project was advertised and went into their methods of marketing more deeply.

3. 2023 Committee Schedule Plan

- ES joined the meeting. She asked the committee about the proposed schedule she sent out for review. The proposed schedule as follows. January- August (1st Wednesday morning at 8am) and September – December (1st Tuesday morning at 8am). The Committee agreed minus one.

4. Affordable Homeownership Resales Report

- ML stated that there are approximately 80 deed-restricted units in Newton's affordable ownership portfolio. The majority of these units were converted from market-rate to affordable units through the use of the City's CPA, CDBG, and HOME funds. These funds were utilized to reduce the price of the market-rate units to an affordable level for households at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). This program ran from 2001 through 2012. Additional units in the portfolio were created through new construction projects subject to affordability requirements either imposed by the City's Inclusionary Zoning ordinance or by a Chapter 40B comprehensive permit. The affordability of the units in this ownership portfolio is secured through a deed restriction that survives the sale or foreclosure of the property. Over 60 of these units are listed on the state's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI).

- ML spoke about the recent sales that happened over the past few years and listed out the five units that were sold accompanied with the sales prices, bedrooms sizes, racial demographics of the winners and their household size and where they were financially on the area median income scale. ML spoke about the number of applicants who applied. 2020-2022 there were 98 applicants who applied for the five resales that happened in this time period. There were 14% of Newton applicants and 86% of non-Newton applicants who applied. ML explained that racial and ethnic background was not collected to report on but explained that there were other demographics the planning department captured. TM stated that it would be beneficial to have this type of data in the future and ES agreed. ML stated it would not be a problem to add these questions in future applications.
- ML spoke about the marketing and the lottery process on these resales and compared Newton to other municipality on how they follow the resale process. Newton holds a marketing period for 30 days and holds a lottery while other municipalities market for 10 days and utilize waitlist or select applicant by first come first serve.
- ES asked if the planning department can look into sending out homebuyer trainings to their list serve so potential people can be prepared. ML explained that an applicant will need this training as a part of the application. ES stated that she understood that but felt there would not be enough time for applicants to do the homebuyer trainings when units come available. ML explained that there are no constraints to this part of the application process and stated that an applicant could provide their certificate once its complete and does not have to be handed in at the time of application.
- ES asked about the number of units on the SHI and wondered why there were not more out of the whole portfolio. AB explained the SHI process and stated that the unit has to be DHCD certified. The deed restriction must meet DHCD's standards and some of the deed restricted units' restrictions are not appropriate for DHCD. AB stated that with each resale the city assesses the restriction with their consultant to put the proper documents to create more SHI units.
- JF asked about the terms of the deed restrictions. AB explained that the restrictions are in perpetuity even though in some instances a lottery winner does not qualify by income. Once the unit comes up for resale, the affordability and other terms of the deed restriction continue.

5. Committee Membership Update

- One potential applicant was recommended by TM. DR stated that she will follow up with him. DR also stated that she has communicated with the Human Rights Commission to fulfill the "Statement of Mission and Organizational Structure – Newton Fair Housing Committee" with having a member from this commission to be on the FHC. DR and ES had a Zoom call with HRC Chair Rabbi Stern about coordinating efforts and sharing information.

6. HRC Complaint Process Update

- ES discussed the meeting that took place with the HRC chair and talked about the complaint process. ES stated that Newton's legal department has recommended that volunteers such as from HRC, and the Fair Housing Committee, should not be directly engaged in the Fair Housing complaint process because of liability concerns. Health and Human Services is the city's lead agency on managing the complaint process and following up with complainants. ES explained that the city does not handle complaints and complaints are referred to MCAD.

ES stated that to her understanding that MCAD is generally overwhelmed and under resourced. ES stated that HHS would be available to meet if the FHC would like to discuss their process and how they are responsive to complainants. ES stated that she would like to have them come and speak.

7. Coordination with Housing Partnership and Housing Trust

- There was not a discussion on this matter.

8. Subcommittee Updates

• Lottery Results & Lease-ups Sub-Committee

- ES thanked TM and JM for preparing a presentation for January 2023's meeting and asked TM if she had any updates. TM stated that they are still waiting for some data from a property and that their next subcommittee meeting is this upcoming Monday at 8am. ES encouraged everyone to read the meeting minutes from the subcommittee in preparation to the presentation in January.

• Membership & Nominating Sub-Committee

• Fair Housing Award Sub-Committee

- ES stated that she had touched base with Theodore Hess-Mahan and Kathy Laufer, and they were both honored to be the award recipients. ES also contacted Lee Mondshein and he was happy with the nominations. ES thanked JF for suggesting nominating them both.

• Fair Housing Literature Sub-Committee

9. Fair Housing Committee Priorities Discussion

- **Promote housing choice for diverse populations to advance Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH), with focus on race/ethnicity, public subsidy and disability**
- **Identify and work to overcome barriers to successful tenancies and to improve processes/practices for tenant selection in lottery and market rate multi-family rental housing**
- **Promote improved practices for real estate professionals to achieve more housing choice for diverse populations**
- **Promote effective processes/practices for new affordable homeownership and resales**
- **Promote data collection on multi-family rental and new homeownership occupancy**
- **Promote FH training for real estate professionals, public and committee members**
- **Enhance Project Review of Housing Developments to advance AFFH**
- **Support AI/Consortium Fair Housing Testing and FH testing in Newton**
- **Collaborate with Related Newton Commissions and Committees to increase affordable housing for households of various sizes and lower incomes and to encourage increased funding for affordable housing**
- **Promote affordable housing production in coordination with other City commissions and committees**
- **Support federal, state and city initiatives that promote AFFH**

- **Collaborate with Human Rights Committee on Fair Housing Complaint Process**
- **Contribute to Newton's FH-related plans**
- **Enhance FH literature and website information and access for the public**
- **Address committee membership appointments with representation from Human Rights Commission and legal counsel with FH specialty**
- **Promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging in Newton**

10. Next meeting Wednesday, January 4, 2023

*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