



Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

Barney Heath  
Director of  
Planning & Development

Malcolm Lucas  
Housing Planner

*Members*

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Donna Rigg, Vice-Chair  
Josephine McNeil  
Tatjana Meschede  
Judy Korzenowski  
Alexandra Weiffenbach  
Ellen Tanowitz

1000 Commonwealth Ave.  
Newton, MA 02459  
T 617/796-1120  
F 617/796-1142

[www.newtonma.gov](http://www.newtonma.gov)

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## CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

### Fair Housing Committee

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## MEETING MINUTES

Date: January 4, 2023

Time: 8:00 a.m.

Place: Virtual (Zoom)

**Members Present:** Esther Schlorholtz, Chair

Donna Rigg, Vice Chair

Judy Korzenowski

Josephine McNeil

Tatjana Meschede

Ellen Tanowitz

Alexandra Weiffenbach

**Members Absent:**

**Staff Present:** Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner

Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director

**Public Present:** Deb Crossley, Council

Pam Wright, Council

Alicia Bowman, Council

Sharyn Roberts

David Hedison

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

### 1. Approval of December 2022 minutes

- Upon a motion by DR, ET seconded the motion. The minutes for December 2022 were approved 7-0-0.

### 2. Lottery Results and Lease Up Subcommittee Presentation

- TM explained the function of the subcommittee, described the work that the committee was doing and then explained their goals to focus on tenancy of affordable units and market units. TM explained that they are trying to better understand the lease-up process and to focus just on the lottery units at this current time. The subcommittee is reviewing Marketing Plans, Application Process and Data.
- TM explained the process of Tenant Selection when it comes to leasing up an affordable unit. 1. Lottery application 2. Rental application and 3. Eligibility certification, which consist of criminal history, rental history, and income ratios. The subcommittee learned that the tenant’s monthly income has to be about 2.5 times the income of the monthly rent and credit scores are checked. Then TM began to explain data challenges. TM stated that she used one of the challenges from Dr. Kathrine Einstein’s presentation that the State government is not tracking lottery outcomes including racial demographics in Chapter 40B and tax credit projects. Lastly TM talked about the data they received from their own research. TM stated that there is an algorithm used with most tenant screening processes and stated that this is a disadvantage for people of color and there is plenty of evidence that this method happens.
  - Austin Street - The subcommittee received information for 10 unit out of 33, Most of the denials were because of incomplete information (115 out of 132, 87%). The subcommittee is going to follow up to get some clarification.
  - Trio – TM showed data that the subcommittee received about the race/ethnicity and persons with a disability of household member that were offered a unit and who leased a unit. See page 9 of [presentation](#) slide for details.
- ES opened the floor to member of the public David Hedison, Chelmsford Housing Authority (Newton Resident) to speak about the lottery and leasing process for affordable housing because he has a background and experience in affordable housing. He stated that “there are a number of parties involved with the review of how/when lotteries occur, and under what circumstances, but the part that gets very gray is once the lottery is completed, and the units start to turn over. After some time, there tends to be a lack of oversight at the individual developments. And that is where we found a lot of issues where property managers turnover quite frequently at the sites. They don't remember and the institutional knowledge isn't there.” JM thanked Mr. Hedison and stated that it would be great to have his expertise on the committee.

### 3. Zoning Redesign Overview

- ES introduced Councilor Deb Crossley; she serves as the chair of ZAP. Councilor Crossley thanked ES and began to talk about the Zoning Redesign project that came before Zoning and Planning. Councilor Crossley stated that during the beginning of 2021 the Zoning and Planning Committee and The City of Newton’s Planning Department had discussions on focusing on smaller pieces of the zoning ordinance because they could not focus on the entire ordinance at once. They spent the first year on an extensive community engagement process. This brought around 2000 people who commented and submitted documents that turned into a comprehensive plan that was created in 2015 and implemented in 2017. Councilor Crossley referred to Amy Dain, Policy Research Consultant, Commonwealth Magazine [article](#), [What the MBTA Communities law means for your town, Understanding the new concept of zoning capacity](#). She stated that this article is about zoning to allow a certain number of housing units by right. She stated that this

underlies what they and the Planning Department wanted to review when they started their zoning reform efforts. She stated that this concept was approved in June 2021 and by September 2022 a presentation was created with another round of community engagement that was housed at the Newton Free Library. The display presentations are maps for each of the 11 village centers that helps you understand what the low, medium, and higher density, zoning districts are. Councilor Crossley stated that she does not know all of the technical questions, so she introduced Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director to speak on those matters. ES asked Jennifer Caira if she can comment on an affordable housing overlay policy at the city that would be city wide, not limited to a district or site and would offer enhanced relief for affordable housing developments and reduced parking. ES stated that from her reading, this was an interesting and important proposal considering the issues of affordable housing. JM recommended, if possible, to include models of what could be built to give people an understanding of what Newton could look like in the future with changes and to talk also about the history of who lived in the City of Newton, its make up, and the economic status of that time. She said this would provide is a better understanding to learn from. Councilor Crossley stated that those are good points, but it is very complex. She talked about the lack of multi-family housing stock and the high cost of subsidizing high subsidy units, along with what the community wants, which creates barriers. More resources are needed.

- Jennifer Caira stated that they have talked about exploring city owned resources and how it can be leveraged like surface parking lots and the reuse process. They are working towards that and stated that at this time a city-wide overlay is more of a future step to work into the village center zoning. She stated that Planning removed the special permit option to get an additional story of height in the zoning districts with the idea that we're going to hold that back and work on creating some sort of affordable housing incentive that you can get more height with more or deeper levels of affordability. She stated that they are hoping to work this into the second draft that they will release in about two months with the affordable housing incentives.
- David Hedison (public) stated that he has worked on some overlay districts and the intentions were to provide additional housing, using small and medium scale developments. And then, when the developers came forward that were not the usual affordable housing developers, there were issues. The need for these developers creating one, two or three affordable units that come with an Affirmative Fair Housing marketing plan, annual reporting, understanding what the requirements are, became an impediment to actually see these units developed and managed.
- ES stated the FHC has been collaborating with the Newton Housing Partnership and Housing Trust. ES then asked if a committee member would be willing to go to the upcoming ZAP meeting on January 9<sup>th</sup> to represent the FHC with her support. No member responded and ES stated that they will discuss in further detail and thanked Councilor Crossley and the involved parties.

#### **4. Fair Housing Training January 19**

- ES stated that she will send the final version of the invitation and thanked JK for her outreach. ES listed the contacts of where it is going to, including Councilors, CHAPA, Newton Commissions and Committees, West Metro Home Consortium, etc. ES asked if others could help with outreach and asked members to sign up if they have not done so already.

## 5. Subcommittee Updates

- **Lottery Results & Lease-ups Sub-Committee**
- **Membership & Nominating Sub-Committee**
  - David Hedison introduced himself and discussed his interest in joining the FHC. ES welcomed his interest and stated that DR is the person to work with to follow the process. ML asked his background and he responded that he is the Director of Chelmsford Housing Authority and gave a background of his history and passion for affordable housing.
- **Fair Housing Award Sub-Committee**
- **Fair Housing Literature Sub-Committee**

## 6. 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**
  - TM stated that she attended the Human Rights Commission because they had fair housing as an agenda item. The discussion was how to better communicate with each other, and the outcome was that the committees share agendas and minutes since there are not any member who serve on both committees so they thought this would be the best solution at this time.
- **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**

## **7. Next meeting Wednesday, February 1, 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](mailto: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