

NEWTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Newton Housing & Community Development Program
492 Waltham St., West Newton, MA 02465. Phone 617-796-1156. TDD/TTY 617-796-7089

JUNE 2006 MEETING MINUTES

Date: June 14, 2006
Time: 7:45 a.m.
Location: City Hall, Room 202

Members Present: Phil Herr, Josephine McNeil, David Stein, Deb Crossley, John Wilson, Maritzie Rudden, Andrew Franklin, Henry Korman, Dan Violi, Jeanne Strickland

Members Absent: Nancy Andersen, Chris Dame, Kay Khan, Carol Ann Shea, Lynne Sweet, Bart Lloyd, Ellen Feingold, Liz Kirsch, Jeff D'Agostino, Steve MacDowell, and Adam Shyevitch

Staff: Steve Gartrell, Trisha Kenyon Guditz and Margaret Siciliano

Minutes prepared for the Housing Partnership by Margaret Siciliano, AICP, Housing Development Planner.

1. Approval of minutes from the May 10, 2006 Housing Partnership meeting. Deb Crossley made a motion to approve the minutes as revised. Dan Violi seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as revised by a unanimous vote. Members Jeff D'Agostino, Steve MacDowell, and Adam Shyevitch were not listed in the May minutes as being absent and have now been added.
2. Update on the Partnership role and organization
Phil Herr started the discussion by explaining the background of the memo dated June 13, 2006 from Trisha Guditz, Josephine McNeil, and Phil Herr to the Newton Housing Partnership. He explained that Trisha Guditz looked at the four documents that outlined the Partnership's rules and responsibilities and connected them into one document. The membership changes came out of the rules and regulations from the 1998 document. The number of members was defined in an older document but was not carried over into the 2004 document. One key change in the membership section is taking out the statement that members, "should be drawn from among Newton residents." Some of the current members are not Newton residents but are important appointments that shouldn't be lost. The city ordinance says committee members have to be Newton residents unless the board is advisory, which the Housing Partnership is.

Josephine McNeil added there are concerns from the group that the Partnership is not just a group of housing people. We want to include Newton residents as well as people interested in promoting the Partnership's mission. We also need to encourage participation so if people are

on the Partnership they need to attend meetings. In order to make decisions the Partnership needs a quorum as defined by city ordinance.

Phil Herr offered to bring the attendance chart he created to the next meeting so illustrate who consistently shows to meetings and who does not.

Josephine McNeil suggested that the Partnership make its nomination process more apparent by establishing a nominating committee. Partnership members agreed with Josephine McNeil and decided it would be wise to establish a nominating committee.

Deb Crossley suggested that the Partnership write an annual report that gets submitted to the Mayor.

David Stein added that maybe the Partnership could invite the mayor to come to an annual meeting so we can update him on what the Partnership does and has been doing as well as submit an annual report to the mayor that summarizes the last 12 months of work. This could be submitted at the beginning of the city's fiscal year in July. The other Partnership members liked these ideas.

Deb Crossley suggested that members be approved by the Board of Aldermen, like with the Energy Commission where three members get approved by the Board of Aldermen. Other members of the Partnership thought this might make the group too political when controversial projects come forward.

There was some discussion on what constitutes a quorum, who is eligible to vote, and what happens when a member has a conflict of interest. The Partnership agreed that all present members count towards a quorum and when there is a member with a conflict of interest that member must abstain from voting but still counts towards making a quorum. No changes to the memo were suggested.

The Partnership discussed adding a nominating committee to make a total of three committees, all of which should be voluntary.

The memo will be amended and presented at the next Partnership meeting for further discussion.

3. Project Review Committee update on project considerations and submittals

Dan Violi presented on behalf of Bart Lloyd the memo dated June 5, 2006 from Bart Lloyd on the Project Review Committee Meeting. He explained that the Project Review Committee discussed what kind of information the Partnership wants to ask applicants to submit. There are two main types of projects: (1) projects asking for zoning relief or comprehensive permit and (2) projects seeking city subsidies. The purpose of the Project Review Subcommittee is the vet the project before it comes to the full Partnership and do some of the up front work.

Phil Herr commented that he has trouble making the distinction between projects seeking regulatory relief verses subsidies. We need to look at the numbers on both types of projects. Giving up restrictions verses giving up money are similar things.

Deb Crossley agreed with Phil that there shouldn't be a distinction between types of projects.

Phil Herr commented that the Partnership's primary focus is housing, other groups are more interested and have more leverage in issues such as energy than the Partnership.

John Wilson wanted to know who in the city sees the project, what do they look at, and when do they look at it. The neighborhood is something we should consider but it should not be our primary concern.

Henry Korman commented that when the applicant is requesting zoning relief or comprehensive permit he would like to know what zoning relief the applicant is seeking. To be a good advocate we need to know what the applicant needs to make the project work.

David Stein added that he noticed that the old bylaws said the Partnership needs to advocate and meet with the neighborhood. This didn't get carried over to the new version.

Deb Crossley felt that the Partnership needs to express its concerns and goals by describing what amenities we would like to see in a project.

Henry Korman commented there were two things that were different with the Covenant House proposal. Lisle Baker was ushering the project through the process and the consultants were calling members of the Partnership, urging us to attend the ZBA hearing.

Phil Herr added that the Partnership needs to make sure its concerns get in the Planning Department's memo.

Josephine McNeil suggested a meeting with the land use staff (Nancy Radzevich) and Mike Kruse to find out how the Partnership's comments can be incorporated into the department's memo.

Trisha Guditz added that the land use staff and Mike Kruse need to buy into the fact that the Partnership wants more of a role and influence on the planning report memo.

Phil Herr commented there is so much more information on these projects than we know about and the Partnership needs to think if it really wants to be involved in the details of a project.

Steve Gartrell suggested that maybe a good place to start would be to identify the documents the Partnership produces when it reviews a project (i.e. site approval letter, etc).

Josephine McNeil commented that we don't want this to pose a greater burden to applicants, especially non profits. It would be a good idea to provide a list of expectations to the applicant.

Steve Gartrell stated the city is finishing its first Inclusionary Zoning project and we have learned a lot from the process. It is clear the guidelines need to be revised and perhaps the Program and Policy Review Committee can meet to discuss this. It was agreed that the Program and Policy Review Committee would review the IZO guidelines before the next Partnership meeting.

Meeting adjourned.