

# NEWTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Newton Housing & Community Development Program  
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## September 2006 MEETING MINUTES

Date: September 13, 2006  
Time: 7:45 a.m.  
Location: City Hall, Room 202

Members Present: Phil Herr, Josephine McNeil, John Wilson, Maritzie Rudden, Dan Violi, Jeanne Strickland, Bart Lloyd, Liz Kirsch, Bart Lloyd, Kay Khan, David Stein, Carol Ann Shea, Lynne Sweet, Ellen Feingold, Andrew Franklin

Members Absent: Nancy Andersen, Deb Crossley, Henry Korman, Steve MacDowell

Staff: Steve Gartrell, Trisha Kenyon Guditz and Margaret Siciliano

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

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1. Minutes from the August 9, 2006 Housing Partnership meeting were approved.
2. Update on 528 Derby Street project: Steve Buchbinder

Steve Buchbinder provided the Housing Partnership with an update on the Derby Street project prior to their application to the Zoning Board of Appeals. A neighborhood meeting was held at the end of June. Roughly 40 neighborhood residents attended the meeting. The development team has met with city engineers about the drainage and water concerns of the neighborhood. The drainage problems in the neighborhood stem from the area's high water table. Some residents identified traffic as a potential problem and the neighborhood was mixed on whether they liked the development or not. There will be another neighborhood meeting at the end of September or early October. The development team would like to go to the Zoning Board in October or November.

Changes to the plan the Partnership previously reviewed include an additional two guest parking spaces, attached garages, and sprinkling the rear building. They are receiving conflicting comments on the site design. Alderman Ted Hess-Mahan would like to see fewer building whereas the Planning Department staff is resistant to this. The unit mix is the same. The affordable units include 1 two-bedroom and 1 three-bedroom unit. The housing market has depressed which is now making the project financials tight. Floor plans and landscape plans are still being developed. The parents of the developer own the adjacent site. At the moment the property isn't included in the plan but the parents are possibly interested in living in the development.

Carol Ann Shea mentioned a proposed zoning change being proposed by Anatole Zuckerman. The Partnership agreed that they couldn't make an informed decision by September 21<sup>st</sup> but that in the future they should know about any rezonings.

### 3. Report on 9/7/06 Project Review Committee meeting: Bart Lloyd

Bart Lloyd explained that the Project Review Committee is developing guidance to provide to developers and staff on affordable housing projects and outlining the review process.

Helen Rivard, from Advocates, Inc., provided a background to Advocates' request for funding. Advocates, headquartered in Framingham, provides residential treatment for people with disabilities. Advocates is looking to acquire three condos to provide housing for people who no longer need transitional housing and are able to live independently. These clients still receive supportive services from Advocates. The budget was originally calling for 2/3rds Housing Development funds and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> FCF/CEDAC funds. After the Project Review Committee meeting, Advocates revised their budget to be an equal 50/50 split between the two funding sources. DMH is in support of the project. There is a two year wait for FCF funds so Advocates would need a bridge loan in order to make the project viable.

Bart Lloyd clarified that Advocates is responding to concerns brought up by the Project Review Committee because of our concerns about putting the majority of our available funding into one project. The new budget proposes a lesser amount of housing development funds going towards the project.

Josephine McNeil asked, "Where are our priorities? I believe there is a greater priority for family housing. We should have a discussion about priorities and where we are putting our funds."

Lynne Sweet commented that the Advocates response is what the Project Review Committee was looking for. It is not using the entire amount of funding. This type of housing is difficult to develop and it is supported by DMH.

Dan Violi asked if Advocates have applied to CEDAC and where their bridge loan will be from.

Helen Rivard responded that they have submitted a pre-application to CEDAC and the bridge loan will go to a local bank. She added that the problem was the interest cost but with this new budget it shouldn't be a problem.

Dan Violi stated, "In my experience these clients are extremely low income and have very limited opportunities for independent living."

Liz Kirsch added that Advocates is a big part of the Continuum of Care and Helen's work is important to the Continuum.

Andrew Franklin asked, "Do you ever have permanent debt for projects?"

Dan Violi explained that non profits typically don't have the carrying capacity to take on permanent debt.

Andrew Franklin asked if the units would need renovation.

Helen Rivard explained that \$30,000 is included in the proforma for this and only minor renovations would be needed. She added that Advocates is actively pursuing Section Eight vouchers for its clients and the program carries the clients until they get the subsidy.

Bart Lloyd stated, "I think this is a good project. I think Josephine has a good point but it shouldn't hold up this project."

Dan Violi moved to recommend approval to support the project subject to staff approval of the final budget numbers for the One Stop Application.

Bart Lloyd seconded the motion.

The Newton Housing Partnership approved to support using Housing Development funds for the Advocates' proposal subject to staff approval of the final budget numbers for the One Stop Application.

4. Policy and Programs Committee update: Josephine McNeil

The Policy and Programs Committee hasn't met. The next meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday.

Phil Herr suggested that the issue of priority of projects be discussed at the Program and Policy Committee.

5. Other business.

- The Project Review Committee will meet on Tue Sept 19<sup>th</sup> to discuss project materials. The PRC needs to meet to discuss the suggested changes to the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance.
- The Fair Housing Task Force needs to discuss local preference issues at its next scheduled meeting.
- CAN-DO will be holding a lottery for the affordable homeownership units at Linden Green and Millhouse Commons. The deadline for application is September 30, 2006 and the lottery is being held on Oct 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Josephine McNeil will be receiving an award from the Newton Community Service Center (NCSC) on September 30, 2006 at their "Night of a Thousand Stars" event.

Meeting adjourned.