

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

MEETING MINUTES
April 12, 2006
Newton City Hall, Room 209
7:45 a.m.

Attendance: Josephine McNeil, Phil Herr, Jeanne Strickland, David Stein, Dan Violi, Bart Lloyd, Deb Crossley, Nancy Andersen, Andrew Franklin, Lynne Sweet, and Henry Korman

Visitors: Steve Buchbinder, Schlesinger and Buchbinder, LLP with Paul Apkarian and Russ Tanner

Staff: Steve Gartrell, Trisha Kenyon Guditz and Margaret Siciliano

The Newton Housing Partnership began the meeting by approving the minutes from the Partnership's March meeting.

1. Derby Street Condominium project follow-up:

Steve Buchbinder, Schlesinger and Buchbinder, LLP with Paul Apkarian and Russ Tanner

The City received a letter from MassHousing dated March 14 requesting comments on the Derby Street project by April 13. The City will be requesting an extension from MassHousing to April 28. A letter from the Newton Housing Partnership, commenting on the proposed project, will be included in the City's submission.

The developer is proposing to construct eight for sale units on a 33,774 square foot site at 254-262 Derby Street in West Newton. The site is currently two parcels. All units will have two parking spaces including an enclosed garage space and an outside space. The project will require a comprehensive permit. Two units will be affordable homeownership units between 1,800-2,200 square feet (one 3-bedroom unit and one 2-bedroom unit). The parcels are located in a single-family zoning district so the proposed development needs relief to develop eight units. The proposal meets all setbacks and open space requirements. Initial feedback from City planning staff is that the project is too dense but the developers explained that they need at least eight units to make the project feasible.

The Newton Housing Partnership reviewed the project for site eligibility and was in concurrence that the site at 254-262 Derby Street, is suitable for mixed-income housing, including affordable units, if developed through small-scale structures such as proposed in the preliminary design drawings. A number of questions remain to be resolved regarding the most appropriate mix of units by bedroom number and level of affordability, and regarding the design of both the site plan and the individual units, but the Partnership finds that the location, site qualities, type of structures, servicing infrastructure, density, and nearby and abutting development all are suitably related.

After the applicant files for comprehensive permit and the project goes to the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Partnership will review the proposal a second time and discuss site specific issues.

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Newton Housing Partnership

At the March 2006 meeting Phil Herr was nominated by two individuals to assume the position of Chair. Josephine McNeil nominated Phil Herr, saying he brings the credibility, experience, and knowledge the Partnership needs. Dan Violi seconded the nomination. Dan then nominated Bart Lloyd for Vice Chair and Jeanne Strickland seconded the nomination.

Elections for Chair and Vice Chair of the Newton Housing Partnership were held at the April 2006 meeting where members of the Partnership unanimously voted Phil Herr for Chairman and Bart Lloyd for Vice Chairman.

3. Fair Housing Task Force update: Henry Korman

The Fair Housing Task Force has accomplished several major things in the last month. The Fair Housing Task Force has released the results of the audit at the April 10th Fair Housing Month Celebration. On April 3rd the Board of Aldermen voted to amend the Human Right's Commission ordinance. The Task Force has since engaged with representatives of the real estate community. A fair housing training seminar for realtors will be held on June 2nd by the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston.

4. Condominium fee methodology (see Phil Herr's memo to the Partnership titled "Partnership views on Condo Fees" and dated April 11, 2006)

The Partnership received Phil Herr's memo and discussed the six alternatives relative to developing a condo fee policy. The members agreed on the following language: "Unless there are extenuating circumstances, condominium fees for affordable and market rate units in mixed-income for-sale developments shall be calculated based on the value of the units taking into account the square footage and the amenities provided. Furthermore, the price of the affordable units will be calculated so that the homebuyer's housing-related costs, including the condominium fee, do not exceed the allowable percentage of a theoretically qualifying household's income." The Partnership agreed on Alternatives Set 1c which allows the Partnership to review the appropriateness of the condominium fee methodology on a case by case basis, considering each development's unique characteristics.

5. Kessler Woods update: Steve Gartrell

Steve Gartrell requested the Partnership submit any comments they may have on the Kessler Woods project to him. The next working session is in two weeks.

6. Other Business:

- Steve Gartrell announced that the first two inclusionary zoning units at Oxford House are being sold. A lottery is being held on May 16, 2006.
- Phil Herr discussed the need to go over the Housing Partnership's mission statement, rules, structure, and procedures. He recommended that the Partnership review this and have it as a discussion item at the May meeting. Deb Crossley and Henry Korman volunteered to help with the review.