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**NEWTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP**

Newton Housing & Community Development Program

492 Waltham St., West Newton, MA 02465. Phone 617-796-1156. TDD/TTY 617-796-7089

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**October 10, 2007 MEETING MINUTES**

Date: October 10, 2007  
Time: 7:45 a.m.  
Location: City Hall, Room 202

Members Present: Phil Herr, Josephine McNeil, John Wilson, Andrew Franklin, Dan Violi, Peter Macero, Deb Crossley, Jeanne Strickland, Bart Lloyd, Lynne Sweet and Nancy Andersen

Visitors: Lisle Baker, President, Board of Alderman; Kevin McCormick, Accessory Apartment Incentive Program Manager; and neighbors Julio Damore, Donna Nathan and Michael Lepie

Staff: Trisha Guditz, Steve Gartrell and Margaret Siciliano

Minutes prepared for the Housing Partnership by Trisha Guditz, Housing Development Coordinator

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**1. September 12, 2007 meeting minutes:** The minutes from the September Housing Partnership meeting were approved.

**2. Continued discussion on 29 Coyne Road proposal by CAN-DO, Inc.:** Phil Herr, Chairman, opened the discussion by explaining that the Housing Partnership was unable to vote on CAN-DO's funding request at the September meeting due to a lack of a quorum. He asked if there were any remaining questions or concerns. Josephine McNeil representing CAN-DO, Inc. clarified that her role in the discussion would be for informational purposes only since it would be a conflict for her to engage in the conversation as both Housing Partnership member and an applicant seeking funds.

Lynn Sweet asked if it was feasible for CAN-DO to make the market rate unit affordable.

Josephine responded that making the unit affordable would require more public subsidy and there was already a concern about the amount of proposed subsidy.

Dan Violi asked if the massing of the building (two-family modular units) could be broken up.

At this point in the conversation, Josephine referred to the building elevations and showed the members the drop in elevation due to the site's two-foot slope. This drop functions as a break in massing.

Josephine explained that the Fire Department requires an 18-foot driveway but two feet of the 18 feet can be pavers and not asphalt.

Lynn asked if there were mature trees on the site and Josephine responded “yes”.

Michael Lepie characterized the CAN-Do project as a “slam dunk.” He reported that Coyne Road was a very quiet street. He also questioned CAN-DO’s ability to carry debt on the project and stated that he does not understand CAN-DO’s business model. He also distributed copies of a letter objecting to the project to the Housing Partnership.

Brenda Demore said that she was concerned that the property would generate water run-off affecting her property. She also stated that she was a landlord and in her estimation, CAN-DO will not receive the rents that have been projected. She stated that CAN-DO is asking for funds that as a taxpayer, she is not eligible to receive.

Phil Herr explained that the storm water issue had been discussed at the September meeting. Josephine also distributed copies of a letter from the architect addressing the issues, including storm water run-off, raised by the Housing Partnership and the Community Preservation Committee.

John Wilson made a recommendation that the Housing Partnership vote to approve CAN-DO’s funding request. Bart Lloyd seconded the motion. All voted in favor except for Josephine and Jeanne Strickland who recused themselves.

**3. Accessory Apartment Incentive Program (AAIP):** Phil Herr introduced Kevin McCormick, the AAIP Program Manager, who described the proposed revisions to the AAIP which is scheduled to expire at the end of the year. Community Living Network, Inc. plans to submit an updated proposal to the Community Preservation Committee and is asking for the support of the Housing Partnership. The proposed changes are summarized below:

Current program policy	Proposed change
Two financial products (grants and loans) available with different affordability restrictions	One financial option available: 0% interest, forgivable loan. Affordability concurrent with term of the loan.
Loan option stipulates that if a house is sold prior to end of 30-year term all principal and interest is due in full. (If the loan is held for 30-year term, only the principal needs to be repaid.)	Loan amount is forgiven 1/30 each year. If property is sold prior to end of 30-year term, homeowners only pay the amount of principal that has not been forgiven. The affordability restriction is removed when the loan is paid off.
Homeowners’ income restricted to 125% AMI. (This requirement was for the first year of the program only.)	No restriction on homeowners’ income.

Dan Violi asked what the proposed funding source was and Kevin responded that it was Community Preservation Funds.

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Lynn Sweet asked why there were restrictions on family members and employees. Alderman Baker clarified that there isn't a restriction on family members but the Aldermen did not want employees, such as live-in nannies, to be indirect recipients of the funding assistance.

Alderman Baker raised the following concerns:

The program represents a deep subsidy for a limited outcome;

The amount of public assistance to private property owners is too high considering the limited result; and

The minimum five-year term of affordability is insufficient.

He also stated that he would not support the changes as currently proposed.

Lynn suggested that \$90,000 per unit subsidy was not unreasonable considering the City would have an additional affordable unit. She also added that a lot of programs are designed with declining loan amounts.

Bart Lloyd said that the Housing Partnership always struggles with how expensive it is to create affordable units in Newton. He added that the AAIP is restricting the assets of a private home.

Josephine said that the City needs to give the program sufficient time to work. She observed that the AAIP creates an affordable rental opportunity for a tenant without a Section 8 voucher. "Operationally, every other development would require that a tenant have a Section 8," she stated.

Phil clarified that Community Living Network is seeking a one-year extension.

Deb Crossley said that the AAIP can create new community housing. She stated that the zoning ordinances are cumbersome and difficult to navigate and that the AAIP can help homeowners access the ordinances. She also explained that the AAIP is a tool to help upgrade and maintain existing housing stock as well as enable homeowners to age-in-place if they desire.

Relative to the amount of public funding assisting the project, Dan observed that the homeowner is also forgoing market rental income. He also asked Kevin if most of the eligible homeowners wanted AAIP funding to work within their existing building footprint.

Kevin responded "yes" and that that was the primary intent of the program. He also said that some homeowners were interested in constructing adjacent wings.

Phil explained that Kevin needed a letter from the Housing Partnership to the Community Preservation Committee.

Lynn recommended that the Housing Partnership write a letter to the Community Preservation Committee in support of amending the AAIP. All the members voted to support the proposed changes to the program.

**4. Fair Housing Task Force Resident Selection Policy:** The proposed policy was discussed at a previous meeting but no action could be taken due to a lack of a quorum. Dan made a motion to recommend adoption of the guidelines and Andrew Franklin seconded. The Resident Selection Policy was unanimously approved.

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**5. Inclusionary zoning amendments:** Phil explained that the amendments were docketed but would not be considered until sometime in 2008. Nancy Andersen made a motion to approve the proposed amendments and Deb seconded. The inclusionary zoning amendments were unanimously approved.

**6. Quorum:** Phil explained the difficulty that results when the Housing Partnership doesn't have a quorum to conduct business. He explained that the definition of a quorum is from a City ordinance. He suggested that the Housing Partnership consider developing policies that would help the group achieve more attendance. He recommended, and the members agreed, to ask the Policy and Programs Committee to review the following:

- Time of meetings

- Composition of the Housing Partnership

- Different categories of membership (e.g. honorary members?)

**7. Updates:** Phil updated the members on the status of the draft Comprehensive Plan (no substantive issues with the housing element) and Chestnut Hill Square (text amendment).

**Adjourn**