

NEWTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP
Newton Housing & Community Development Program
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August 13, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

Date: August 13, 2008
Time: 7:45 a.m.
Location: City Hall, Room 202

Members present: David Stein, Phil Herr, John Wilson, Dan Violi, Peter Macero, Lynne Sweet, Deb Crossley, Henry Korman and Myra Tattenbaum

Staff: Trisha Kenyon Guditz

Draft minutes prepared for the Housing Partnership by Trisha Kenyon Guditz, Housing Programs Manager

1. **June 11 meeting minutes:** The minutes from the June 11, 2008 meeting were not distributed in advance so the members will need to vote on the draft June minutes (attached) at their September meeting.
2. **NHP membership:** The Newton Law Department needs to provide feedback on whether the structure of the membership can be changed to allow a category of membership considered “advisory.” Steve Gartrell and Phil Herr will follow up with Dan Funk. In addition, Myra Tattenbaum said that she will attend NHP meetings but will follow up with Trisha Guditz and let her know who from the League of Women Voters will be asked to be an official appointee to the Housing Partnership.
3. **Fair Housing Action Plan:** Henry Korman, Chairman, Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF), summarized the efforts of the FHTF in developing the Fair Housing Action Plan (FHAP) over the course of the last two years. He began his overview by reviewing the purpose of the Fair Housing Action Plan and stated that he is requesting the Housing Partnership endorsement of the plan.

As part of summarizing the elements of the plan, Henry described the genesis of the FHTF relative to the City updating its HUD-required Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. He explained that the FHTF was formed, in part, to enable the City to examine impediments to fair housing in Newton beyond issues related to housing affordability. As part of their work, the FHTF has initiated two fair housing audits and examined how well housing programs in the City are performing relative to fair housing (including architectural access). He stated “The result of the Fair Housing Task Force is the Fair Housing Action Plan.”

Henry then described the FHAP's five key principles which in turn are the bases for 12 action steps or strategies:

1. We need to do better than just meeting the minimum local, state and federal requirements for fair housing.
2. Education and outreach is critical.
3. Fair housing requires accountability, enforcement and compliance
4. Fair housing activities need to be based on partnerships and collaborations
5. The City needs to make a commitment of resources to continue its fair housing efforts

He then highlighted several of the 12 strategies including the following: the FHTF, currently an ad hoc entity, needs to be formalized into a permanent body; the FHTF needs sufficient City staff to support the work and recommendations of a permanent fair housing entity; the City needs to continue its education and outreach efforts; the City needs to use the fair housing checklist to ensure civil rights compliance in City programs and enforcement efforts; the City needs to ensure compliance with architectural access ("This system is utterly broken" and is an interdepartmental problem.); and the need to be aware of changes in the fair housing environment so that audits continue on an as needed basis.

Henry then stated the FHTF's top three "asks": the Mayor's commitment to make a fair housing entity permanent; a continuation of the City's commitment of staff resources; and the City's resolve to address the architectural access compliance and enforcement problems in the community.

He concluded by saying "We are looking for an endorsement from the Newton Housing Partnership, the Human Rights Commission and the Mayor's Committee for people with Disabilities (meeting to vote in September).

The local preference attachment to the draft plan (Appendix C) was revised to be consistent with DHCD's guidelines. (The FHRF deleted the *families with a family member already living in Newton* as a preference since it could have the effect of reinforcing existing racial patterns.)

NOTE to staff: typo on the bottom of the first page and the plan needs to use the August 12, 2008 local preference policy for Appendix C.

Lynne Sweet: How does this interact with Newton Housing Authority preferences?

Henry: The policy is not supposed to be in conflict with other applicable state or federal requirements. This policy is designed to speak to programs where there is more flexibility. We are trying to target small programs where there are existing program regulations.

Dan Violi: Do most developers use third party consultants?

Henry: New 40B changes require this.

David Stein: What is the value added to the NHP? What is the role of the NHP relative to this?

Henry: The NHP could ask and require more fair housing activities when reviewing development proposals. The NHP could help operationalize or make routine some of these requirements.

David asked for a diagram showing the various City entities and their relationship (NHP, the Community Preservation Committee, FHTF, etc.) Phil said that he will send out a diagram.

Henry stated that there are enormous difficulties below the mayoral level regarding architectural access. "We need to push this topic."

Dan: Is there any direction on developing affordable fair housing marketing plans?

Henry: Yes. See #6 on local resident selection requirements. Also, refer to the City programs checklist (another appendix in plan).

Peter Macero: Are there any parts of this that are more onerous than requirements for other programs?

Henry: Most of this is built on other requirements. For example, the resident selection requirements are based on 40B and HUD requirements.

Phil Herr: We don't have a quorum so we can't vote but there appears to be group consensus that we approve the draft plan.

Dan: I recommend our full and robust endorsement of the plan to the Mayor.

Deb Crossley: Second.

The draft revisions to the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance (distributed in advance of the meeting) were all endorsed.

Phil then updated the NHP on the latest activities of the Housing Affordability Programs Initiative (HAPI) by informing the members of an October 30 "roll out" event at the Scandinavian Living Center in West Newton.

Meeting adjourned.