

# NEWTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Newton Housing & Community Development Program  
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## **January 13, 2010 Meeting Minutes**

Members present: Phil Herr (Chairman), Nancy Anderson, Bart Lloyd, Josephine McNeil, David Stein, Jeanne Strickland, Lynne Sweet, and John Wilson

Visitors: Alderman Crossley, Alderman Gentile, Alderman Sangiolo, Myra Tennebaum

Presenters: Alderman Hess-Mahan

Staff: Trisha Guditiz, Candace Havens, Robert Muollo, Jr., Amy Yuhasz

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The meeting came to order at 7:45 a.m.

### **1. Presentation from Alderman Hess–Mahan on Proposed amendments to Accessory Apartment Ordinance**

Alderman Hess-Mahan presented on the proposed amendments to the Accessory Apartment Ordinance, which will be docketed sometime in February. The presentation included background on the original ordinance and an explanation that regulatory obstacles in the ordinance prevented interested homeowners from creating accessory apartments and utilizing the Accessory Apartments Incentive Program (AAIP), which provided loans or grants and technical assistance to homeowners who wanted to create these units in their houses in exchange for an affordability restriction on the unit.

Alderman Hess-Mahan stated that there are five provisions in the proposed ordinance change, with the sixth, “lot size and building size,” being examined further by the Planning Department and a task force.

The connection between affordable housing and accessory apartments is their ability to expand affordable housing opportunities for currently underserved niches such as young couples and age-in-place elders.

### **2. Housing Strategies for the new decade**

Josephine started the conversation by summarizing the purpose of the draft and its context in relation to members of U-CHAN meeting with the Mayor. The draft “Housing Strategies for the new decade” was given to members prior to the meeting. Phil

explained that the NHP should be included in this short paper that includes broad housing objectives and strategies to give to the Mayor. Phil asked for any suggestions and revisions to the draft.

David asked what the hope and outcome of meeting with the Mayor is. Phil stated that it the goal is to gain the Mayor's support of the objectives and strategies outlined in the document and Josephine added that the Mayor should play an active role in housing.

The Partnership then discussed potential strategies, including the lack of an official housing production plan, which may serve to address a possible disconnection between the Consolidated Plan and the Comprehensive Plan, along with a proactive planning strategy and general system and framework to handle current and future Planned Mixed Business Developments in Newton. Questions regarding minimum housing and affordability thresholds for PMBD's were also raised.

The Partnership also discussed the needs to correctly identify the housing needs of all income brackets in the community and the importance of creating a strategy to be able to attract and utilize State funding, especially as the State is targeting suburban smaller-scale rental developments.

It was also noted by Lynne that Chapter 40R, while it may be a successful strategy in theory, it has yet to prove its practicality in communities that utilize it.

Lynne specifically noted that smaller-scale infill developments are not included in an overall strategy and should be included in a new strategy.

Under objectives, Trisha suggested that "protect social and economic diversity... in Newton" should be changed to "expand" or "broaden social and economic diversity...in Newton." It was agreed to incorporate this change into the draft.

Under the Second bullet of objectives, the Partnership agreed that the word "housing" or "housing – related" before "needs of people having special circumstances..."

David suggested and the Partnership agreed that within the first bullet of the strategies section, it should be noted that keeping alive initiatives such as the goals and efforts of Newton Centre Task Force should be included. David also suggested that the U-CHAN housing white paper for Mayoral Candidates also is given to the Mayor again, which Phil stated it would be.

Lynne noted that there is no mention of preserving affordable housing as a strategy. The Partnership agreed to include preservation of affordable housing in the second bullet under strategies. The Partnership also agreed with Bart's suggestion to express the theme of increasing flexibility to encourage affordability (e.g. City-imposed costs on developers need more flexibility regarding building permit fees, Fire Department requirements). This change will also be incorporated into the second bullet under strategies.

### **3. Review and approval of December minutes**

The December Minutes were approved with no changes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.