

NEWTON FAIR HOUSING COMMITTEE

Newton Housing & Community Development Program
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, MA 02459. Phone 617-796-1156. TDD/TTY 617-796-7089

July 7, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Fair Housing Committee members in attendance: Sheila Mondshein (Chair), Phil Herr, Josephine McNeil, Esther Schlorholtz

Fair Housing Committee members absent: Nadine Cohen, Henry Korman, Susan Paley, Doug Sweet

Staff: Kathleen Cahill, Robert Muollo, Jr.

Materials Distributed to Members:

- July Agenda
 - Draft June Minutes
 - "Talking points FY11 work plan and Fair Housing Initiative Program activities" memo
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The meeting began at 7:30 a.m.

1) Public comments on FY11-15 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice

No comments were made (no member from the public attended the meeting).

2) Review and approval of June minutes

Robert will add members not in attendance to future meeting minutes. Sheila requested that the following language be added in the eighth paragraph of page two: "...because of the constitutional right of free expression." The minutes were approved as amended.

3) Status reports: architectural access consultant; FHC membership; Section 8 landlord program; discussion of local residency selection preference and other matters

Regarding the architectural access consultant proposal, Robert said the consultant start date has been moved back to July 15th to schedule more opportunity for public input toward the end of the consultant's process. The consultant will hold a public meeting in

both the beginning and toward the end of the process. Sheila explained that the review would in part address the accessibility of public buildings as part of the process review being undertaken. Josephine suggested that the consultant meet with the NHA Board.

Regarding FHC membership, Phil asked if a quorum is obtained if at least half of current members are in attendance. Sheila confirmed this. Robert announced that a memo was sent to the Executive Office recommending Girard Plante for appointment. The FHC agreed that if no progress has been made, a letter will be sent to the Executive Office explaining their concerns for the need for additional members.

Regarding local residency selection preference, Sheila indicated that the question has been raised as to whether Appendix C of the Fair Housing Action Plan is intended as a requirement. Josephine said it was never meant to be required; local residency preference is ultimately a political decision. Phil said a decision needs to be made on Appendix C in general and that small changes could be made to make it more functional. The FHC agreed that housing staff should outline all the issues and questions raised regarding Appendix C, make recommendations if desired following a special meeting with Phil, Henry and Josephine, and circulate the document to all members prior to the September meeting.

4) Brainstorming on next year's FHC work plan and FHIP grant application

The FHC members discussed potential topics and strategies for next year's work plan. Josephine said that fair housing violations and potential instances of discrimination need to be better identified, reported and recorded by housing service providers. Josephine also suggested that more enforcement is needed. The group also discussed the support structure for Section 8 landlords and the importance of having real estate agents trained on Section 8 fair housing requirements. Robert will provide the final report results of the 2007 FHIP grant, as requested by Josephine, and will work with Sheila to revise the talking points for the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:36 a.m.