

NEWTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Newton Housing & Community Development Program
Newton City Hall, 1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, MA 02459.
Phone 617-796-1156. TDD/TTY 617-796-1089

February 10, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Members present: Phil Herr (Chairman), Bart Lloyd, Peter Macero, David Stein, Jeanne Strickland, Lynne Sweet, Dan Violi, and John Wilson

Guests: Alderman Leslie Baker, Mr. Michael Lepie (resident)

Presenters: Jen Molinsky, Zoning and Planning Coordinator, Planning and Development Department

Staff: Trisha Guditz, Robert Muollo, Jr., Amy Yuhasz

The meeting came to order at 8:11 a.m.

1. Review and approval of January Minutes

After a motion, which was seconded, the January meeting minutes were approved. A quorum was reached just prior to the vote taken on the minutes.

2. Accessory Apartment amendment docket item (action item)

Phil discussed the background of Newton's accessory apartment ordinance including the current provisions and relevance of the proposed changes to the Housing Partnership. Alderman Baker elaborated on the background of the original ordinance and the challenge of creating accessory apartments versus producing new, large additions to units.

Phil recognized Jen Molinsky, the Zoning and Planning Coordinator for the Planning and Development Department. Ms. Molinsky informed the Partnership that the item will be docketed at the Zoning and Planning Committee's meeting on February, 22 2010. The changes had five distinct provisions. Ms. Molinsky presented the five proposed provisions compared to the current provisions.

At the suggestion of Phil, the Partnership decided their position of support or opposition on each separate proposed change. Ms. Molinsky then provided further context on each of the five proposed changes, explaining the differences and similarities within each. Regarding proposed change number 3, the look-back provision, the Partnership were in concurrence of supporting the change, but recommended that this change be revisited by them at a later date since some felt that removal, not just revision, would be appropriate.

After discussion on each of the proposed changes was completed, the Partnership concluded that they were supportive of each of the five proposed changes separately and supportive of the concept and intent of the changes in general, but were not addressing the specific language in the draft that they received.

3. Update on FY11 Annual Action Plan from Program and Policy Subcommittee

As member of the Program and Policy Subcommittee, Phil gave an update on the FY11 Annual Action Plan, which details how the City of Newton will allocate federal funds for the period of July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011. The City of Newton is required to submit this planning document to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to remain eligible for CDBG, ESG, and HOME funding.

Phil stated that the subcommittee expressed concerns regarding the scope of the actions identified in the plan, and some of which have since been incorporated. Lynne raised the point that individuals with special needs and the elderly are mostly below 50% of area median income and also raised the question to the Partnership if expediting larger projects should be considered and how the NHP can play a role in developing such strategies. On request, staff will send Partnership members data and demographic statistics compiled in the Consolidated Plan.

4. Debriefing from U-CHAN meeting with Mayor Warren

Phil expressed that he was encouraged that the Mayor is supportive of U-CHAN's efforts. Items discussed at the meeting included asking the Mayor to review the proposed Austin Street parking lot development and the issuance of an RFI at an appropriate time; creation of a group to provide further modifications of the City's Comprehensive Plan, keeping it a living document; conducting outreach to demonstrate commitment to housing in the City; and subsequent meetings with the Mayor and U-CHAN. Lynne expressed that affordable housing should have been more explicitly mentioned in the follow-up email sent by U-CHAN to the Mayor.

5. Revisit "Strategies and Actions for the Decade" document, as revised

Lynne expressed that the document does not address the possible repeal of Chapter 40B and asked for other clarifications of wording within the document. The Partnership agreed to include language in the document regarding the importance of keeping Chapter 40b intact. Lynne asked what the document's overall purpose was. Dan believed it would promote a more proactive approach. Trisha said that the document should not take the place of other documents, but it may be an addition to the operational documents that the City already produces. The document can serve as a vehicle to help U-CHAN, the Partnership, and Housing staff to be on common ground. Bart noted that the document should be more explicit in regards to affordable housing and that organizational roles be established to help clarify the document. Phil will revise the document after the input received from the Partnership.

6. Update on development at Riverside MBTA

Phil stated that a group will be formed to analyze mixed-use and planned mixed-use business development citywide. Phil said that the City would like to take the lead in developing the PMBD process. As part of the group's work, a meeting process and breakout session with the community will be held.

7. Update from Streamlining Affordable Housing Funding Subcommittee

Tabled for discussion due to time constraints.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.