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CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Fair Housing Committee

MEETING AGENDA

Date: May 3, 2023
Time: 8:00 a.m.
Place: Virtual (Zoom)

Zoom Online Meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83981277692

The Fair Housing Committee will hold this meeting as a virtual meeting on Wednesday, May 3, 2023, at 8:00 am. No in-person meeting will take place at City Hall. To view and participate in this virtual meeting on your smartphone, download the "ZOOM Cloud Meetings" app in any app store or visit www.zoom.us. At the above date and time, click on **"Join a Meeting"** and enter the following: **Meeting ID: 839 8127 7692.**

You may also join the meeting from your smartphone by dialing 1(646) 558-8656 and entering 83981277692# For audio only, call 1(646) 558-8656 and enter **Meeting ID: 839 8127 7692.**

To view and participate in this virtual meeting on your computer, at the above date and time, either copy the attached link into your browser or visit www.zoom.us, click "Join a Meeting" and enter the following **Meeting ID: 839 8127 7692.**

1. **Approval of April 2023 minutes**
2. **Housing Navigator Presentation**
3. **Fair Housing Training for Landlords and Tenants**
4. **Subcommittee Updates**
   - **Lottery Results & Lease-ups Sub-Committee**
   - **Membership & Nominating Sub-Committee**
   - **Fair Housing Award Sub-Committee**
   - **Fair Housing Literature Sub-Committee**
5. **Fair Housing Committee Priorities Discussion**

Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Barney Heath
Director of
Planning & Development

Malcolm Lucas
Housing Planner

Members
Esther Schlorholtz, Chair
Donna Rigg, Vice-Chair
David Hedison
Judy Korzenowski
Josephine McNeil
Tatjana Meschede
Alexandra Weiffenbach
Steve West

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- **Promote housing choice for diverse populations to advance Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH), with focus on race/ethnicity, public subsidy and disability**
- **Identify and work to overcome barriers to successful tenancies and to improve processes/practices for tenant selection in lottery and market rate multi-family rental housing**
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- **Contribute to Newton's FH-related plans**
- **Enhance FH literature and website information and access for the public**
- **Address committee membership appointments with representation from Human Rights Commission and legal counsel with FH specialty**
- **Promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging in Newton**

6. Next meeting Wednesday, June 7, 2023

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CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Fair Housing Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Date: April 5, 2023
Time: 8:00 a.m.
Place: Virtual (Zoom)

Members Present: Esther Schlorholtz, Chair
Donna Rigg, Vice Chair
David Hedison
Judy Korzenowski
Josephine McNeil
Tatjana Meschede
Alexandra Weiffenbach
Steve West

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner
Jini Fairley, ADA/Sec. 504 Coordinator

Public Present: Alicia Bowman, Council
Julia Malakie, Council
Sharyn Roberts, League of Women Voters Newton
Nancy Kritzman, Commision on Disability

Malcolm Lucas, Housing Planner served as recorder, Esther Schlorholtz, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

1. Approval of March 2023 minutes

- Upon a motion by DH, AW seconded the motion. The minutes for March 2023 were approved 5-2-0.

2. Lottery Application Voucher Notice for Alee on the Charles

- JM stated that she had concerns about the advertisement for the Alee on the Charles does not include a statement that voucher holders could apply.

- JM said that the City had agreed, based on past Committee review of affordable lottery marketing plans for the Austin Street project, that the City would ensure that there would be specific language in the marketing ads managed by lottery agents that specify rental voucher applicants are eligible to apply. She said that this language was not included in the ads for this development. JM stated she contacted the developer of this project and Amanda Berman to inform them. The developer and the lottery agent subsequently agreed to include the language. The lottery agent expressed concern that they had heard from some voucher holders who felt it was misleading to encourage voucher holders to apply since in some cases rents exceeded levels that voucher administrators could accept. The lottery agent suggested compromise language that would address concerns of voucher holders and voucher administrators. This was acceptable to committee members and will be implemented going forward.

3. Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing HUD Comment Letter

- ES stated that the deadline for commenting is April 10th. ES asked the FHC if there are any concerns or changes that need to happen with the letter that was drafted and forwarded to the committee. ES stated that she will be issuing the letter in the next couple of days, and she thanked the committee for their input. There were no changes to the letter as proposed.

4. Fair Housing Training for Landlords and Tenants

- ES thanked DH for recommending that the Committee carry out fair housing training for landlords and tenants in addition to training for real estate professionals, as was completed on January 19. She stated that they would need to get an entity that could provide a training, but they would have to find a way to organize it without funding. DH stated that housing authorities, as part of their responsibilities can provide these trainings. These training are for anyone, market landlords, landlords of a section 8 participant, voucher holders and non-voucher holders. DH mentioned asking the Newton Housing Authority to consider sponsoring a training opportunity that could be publicized.

- AW stated that she could speak with NHA's director and the board and stated that this topic would be an interest of theirs. She stated that she will get back to the committee with their response.

5. Housing Navigator Discussion

- Jennifer Gilbert, Executive Director, and Founder of the Housing Navigator (HN) will be joining May's meeting to give a presentation. ES discussed the importance of HN to improving Fair Housing outcomes for tenants seeking to find affordable and accessible/affordable housing in Newton. She said that JG and Amanda Berman have agreed to work together to establish a partnership between Newton and HN to improve accuracy and completeness of advertising lotteries and affordable rental units, like what is being done in other cities. She asked that members review the HN website before the next meeting to familiarize themselves with this important way to ensure that Newton properties are advertised, available and verified.

- DH wanted to point out that there is an issue on smaller scale projects regarding them being posted on the Housing Navigator. DH stated that these smaller organizations/developers don't have the capacity or the funding to get the smaller projects in. DH stated that when a person navigates the Housing Navigator website, they may not see some of the smaller or medium-sized projects posted. DH recommended that the efforts should be a local commitment

(municipality) to enter this data. DH stated that his housing authority/nonprofit did all the data entry of all the sites and the information for his municipality

6. FHC Membership Discussion

- DR welcomed Steve West in being a member. She introduced Nancy Kritzman, Commission on Disability, and asked, where is she in her application process. NK stated that she has not started it yet and this is her first time attending a Fair Housing Committee. DR thanked her for her interest and stated that representation on the FHC is meant for a Commission on Disability member. The cap of members on the FHC is 11 members. There are currently 8 members. DR stated that they are working on filling another position that is designated for a Human Rights Commission member.

- ES reviewed the years-long challenges that the committee has had finding someone with a fair housing legal background and experience, and again commissioned the committee to help with recruiting. The second challenge is that the committee is required to have members from the Newton Housing Partnership, Human Rights Commission and Commission on Disability. JM is on the Newton Housing Partnership, and once Nancy Kritzman becomes a member, the Committee also will have a member from the Commission on Disability. She noted that the name of the COD needs to be updated in the documents too. ES recommended to update the language of the ordinance/mission statement and feels that by expanding the list to the NHA (AW is a member that works for the NHA), Community Preservation Committee and Newton Affordable Housing Trust, this will help the Committee to comply with its membership requirements.

- ES stated for the next meeting she will draft a recommendation and will have a further discussion on the language and the changes that she has spoken about. DR did not see the need for change but stated that the committee should keep the language flexible so that they do not have to change it on a constant basis.

7. Subcommittee Updates

- **Lottery Results & Lease-ups Sub-Committee**

  - TM gave an update and wanted to celebrate a project that she toured recently. The project she toured is the 2Life Communities Golda Meir Housing project, related to the Engine 6 HUD consent agreement with Newton from 2015. Nine of the units are for the chronically homeless or formerly chronically homeless individuals. Councilor Bowman asked if these tenants have supports, and whether they need furniture and any other supports. TM stated that they have been meeting for about a year and gave an overview of what they have done so far. Several non-profit agencies have collaborated and there was a long list of supports that were discussed to help these individuals.

  - TM then discussed the purpose of the sub-committee and then she invited committee members to join if they were interested. DH and SW stated that they will join the subcommittee. TM reviewed data collection on tenancy outcomes and stated that the data and information reporting is with the developers. The subcommittee is figuring out in which part of the process to ask for data points and when to document the process. TM stated the next meeting is in two weeks. Counselor Bowman offered a suggestion for TM to figure out what the subcommittee is trying to receive because City Council works with Planning and on projects that go through the special permitting process, and they could require developers to report back on certain data

points on these projects. She gave an example of parking counts and traffic studies. So, she does not see a reason why they can't collect the lease up data that the subcommittee is looking for. Councilor Bowman feels that this data should be a standard for projects and that she could be a part of the beginning of that if the Planning Department agrees.

  - ES suggested to TM that they should follow up with this and discuss it at the next subcommittee meeting and make a recommendation to put this idea into practice.

- **Membership & Nominating Sub-Committee**
  - See above topic #6 FHC Membership Discussion
- **Fair Housing Award Sub-Committee**
  - The Fair Housing Committee will have the award ceremony on May 4 and it will be a hybrid ceremony. It will be in-person and on zoom. The FHC will be honoring Ted Hess-Mahan and Kathy Laufer and it will take place at City Hall in the War Memorial. ES stated to be on the look out for the invitation.
- **Fair Housing Literature Sub-Committee**
  - ES noted that with the departure of Ellen Tanowitz from the Committee this subcommittee is on hold

8. Fair Housing Committee Priorities Discussion

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