



COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Councilor Marianne LaBarge, Chair
Councilor William H. Dwight
Councilor Eugene Tacy

MINUTES

Monday, May 20, 2013

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

City Council Chambers, 212 Main Street

Wallace J. Puchalski Municipal Building, Northampton, MA

1. **Members present: Councilor Marianne LaBarge, Council President Bill Dwight. Absent - Councilor Gene Tacy**
2. **Meeting Called to Order: 5:00 pm**
3. **Announcement of Audio/Video Recording of Meeting: Councilor Marianne LaBarge. Ruth McGrath is videotaping the meeting for Adam Cohen, Winning Writers**
4. **Approval of Minutes of April 8, 2013. Approved: Council President Bill Dwight and Councilor Marianne LaBarge. Vote was Unanimous**
5. **5:05 p.m. – Lynn Wallace, Chair of the Housing Partnership, City of Northampton
Audrey Easter, Vice Chair of the Housing Partnership, City of Northampton**

Lynn and Audrey gave an up-date on the Northampton Housing needs Assessment and Strategic Plan. Lynn pulled out some highlights from their Executive Summary to discuss. A Housing Needs Assessment was done with some funding from CBC. It looked at the needs and gaps for housing around the City of Northampton. The population in Northampton has stayed relatively stable over the last few years but the number of households has increased and household size is decreasing. The population is also aging. You also need to look at what type of housing is available. Northampton is about one half owner occupied. There is also still an affordability gap in Northampton.

Audrey discussed the need for safe and affordable housing, especially for senior citizens, but also for a wide range of people. People who bought homes 20 years ago couldn't afford to buy a home now. Rental costs of a two bedroom apartment are beyond the area of affordability for the average worker in the city. There is a mandate of 10% affordable housing. We have 11.3%. We are holding a Developer's Forum in the hopes that getting as many people together as possible, including developers, real-estate people and others, will "shake something loose." We are working on how to go about this forum. Everyone is invited to come to the Forum.

6. **5:45 p.m. – Marianne Winters, Executive Director of Safe Passage**

Marianne gave an overview of Safe Passage, their Vision and Approach and Domestic Violence Prevention and their new initiative. There is a match between the work that needs to happen with relation to domestic violence in this City, the City's generosity and forward thinking, and Safe Passage. Our work has the ability to really thrive and grow in this area. The Board of Directors for Safe Passage has grown from 5 members to 10 now and they are recruiting 3 or 4 more. They have incorporated more advanced training among the staff. Safe Passage has a goal from the personnel perspective that if you want to work on domestic violence and violence against women you need to work at Safe Passage for a while. We have about 25 people right now. Nine are full time.

Marianne presented Safe Passage's Executive Summary. The Summary provided a description of how Safe Passage is organized, what the key areas are that they are working on developing, and what their guiding principles are. They are trying to be an organization that, rather than being against domestic violence, is for a community that is free of domestic violence. Rather than being about providing services, Safe Passage is really trying to be about being observant. Now they are trying to think in a more forward thinking way. This has really opened a volume of ways Safe Passage can be of service.

7. **Public Comment: No Public Comment**
8. **City Councilor Marianne LaBarge, Chair, talked about the agenda for the Month of June 2013**
9. **NEW BUSINESS: There was no new business**
10. **ADJOURN: 6:42 pm. Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Marianne LaBarge and seconded by Council President Bill Dwight. Vote was Unanimous.**

The next meeting is scheduled for June 17, 2013 at 5:00 pm.