

NORTHAMPTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Minutes

March 4, 2019

Members Present: Chair Todd Weir, Vice-Chair Patrick Boughan, Kyla Prior, Becky Lockwood, Gordon Shaw, Alex Jarret, Julio Alves, Jim Reis and Peg Keller, staff.

Call To Order: Chair Weir called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. Minutes from the February meeting were approved as submitted. Mr. Reis asked a question about CHD's commitment to assisting with finding funding for the CHSSP. Update to be provided later in the meeting.

Fair Housing Sub-Committee Update

Peg reported on the progress of the Analysis of Impediments. She and PVPC staff will meet with Safe Passage staff on March 19th. PVPC did meet with a group at the Northampton Recovery Center. Pioneer Valley Workers Center has agreed to get surveys but can't assemble a focus group. Members suggested these locations as well for survey distribution: the people on the Housing Authority waiting lists, paper copies at the Library, ARISE for Social Justice in Springfield, Wayfinders, Northampton Survival Center, Craig's Door in Amherst. Additional outreach is needed to hear from more people of color; majority of responses to date have been from White people. Peg will forward these ideas to PVPC.

Policy Sub-Committee Update

Patrick, Alex, Jim and Edgar attended the meeting with Planning Board Chair Tess Poe. Highlights of the exchange included: Planning Board is more reactive (responds to permit applications, vs. pro-active). The NHP can be helpful at Tech Review sessions to communicate the City's desire for affordable new unit production; people expressing NIMBY comments at public hearings tend to focus on "neighborhood character" criteria which are subjective – having the NHP weighing in at those times to balance the comments is critical, and having a policy description addressing that point on our website, would help them even if no one was physically present to make the case.

Having a Planning Board member sit on the Housing Partnership was discussed. We have had that in the past, but it is difficult for someone to attend that many monthly meetings. (PB meets twice a month to balance project review vs. other tasks, such as zoning revisions). Working with VCDC on an affordable condo model was discussed. In summary, Ms. Poe was very open to collaboration. Patrick will write up the minutes. Peg thanked them all for pursuing that discussion.

CPC Bonding Capacity Research

Patrick reported that during the meeting he and Chair Weir attended with the CPC, the State CPC Coalition Executive Director, Stuart Saginor was present. When the issue of not being able to bond for housing projects was raised, he noted that it is in fact possible, and other communities have done it. Local staff had thought it could only be done for City owned projects, but evidently it has been done, and close by, such as in Amherst. Patrick said he has done additional research and if this is indeed possible, it could preclude the need for housing developers having to come to the CPC for multiple funding round requests. Patrick will draft a memo summarizing his findings.

Peg mentioned that the Mayor intends to use the tax revenue from Air B and B's (over a certain size and use threshold) recently approved by the Commonwealth, for affordable housing. Peg is not sure where those funds will be directed, but she will find out more. Members suggested the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the CPC and the Community Housing Support Services Project.

Membership Drive

There are two candidates in the appointment process pipeline now, which leaves two remaining slots for recruitment. Members stated their priorities for inviting people of color, women, residents of assisted public housing and tenants in private property. Members will think about how to identify and do outreach to possible candidates and how to get the word out about this effort. Becky noted that transportation and child care could be barriers to membership/attendance. Kyla offered to do child care!

Community Housing Support Services Update

Peg reported on a meeting she had earlier in the day with CHSSP staff, Jose Cruz, and his supervisor at CHD Luis Martinez, at the Community Legal Aid Offices. Jen Dieringer and Mandy Winalski, CLA attorneys who work most closely with Jose agreed to meet to insure Jose was understanding the purpose of the project and had all the information about community resources that he needs. Future funding for the project was not discussed, but at another meeting Peg had with the CHD Homeless Services Program Director, Theresa Nicholson, that topic was discussed. Theresa is new to the position but not new to the work. She offered CHD's Grants Manager to assist with securing additional funds. She said they could produce a brochure with a program

description to utilize for outreach to potential funders. She agreed to focus on this moving forward. Peg will be proactive in formulating a work plan with deadlines. Members agreed to invite CHD to a NHP meeting in a few months to check in and reiterate the desire to see this project continue.

Op-Eds

Kyla announced she may be leaving the Partnership to pursue homeownership in Holyoke!!

Members congratulated her and bemoaned the fact that she could not find anything she could afford in Northampton (ah, the irony). Her draft for an op ed was revisited. Members agreed the current topics should be: the need for unit production, #'s of applications to the new developments, #'s on the wait lists, the Fair Housing project and public session and the need for people to engage and attend public hearings for new projects (and to speak in favor !). The other topic considered earlier was housing stabilization, featuring the CHSSP, The Tenancy Preservation Project, Community Legal Aid's Homelessness Prevention Project, and the SRO Outreach Project. Jim, Julio and Gordon agreed to work on getting the next one out, using Kyla's draft as a base. She was thanked for her efforts and thinks April may be her last meeting.

Members agreed that doing a public outreach blast for the May 22nd "Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing" Public session, should be done closer to the date.

Office of Planning and Sustainability Tech Review

Patrick reported on the Tech Review meeting he attended, where various City Departments meet with developers prior to actual permit request submissions, to review projects and identify potential issues. There were two market rate housing projects of 3 units each reviewed. The one project will house smaller units, less than 1,000 sq. ft. so the hope is they will be market rate affordable (Dani Kahn). Patrick will continue to attend and represent the Partnership, as his availability allows. Thank you Patrick! (meetings are at 7 or 7:30 a.m. !)

Announcement/ Chair Weir noted he will be on sabbatical from his Church for May, June and July, so Vice Chair Boughan will cover NHP meetings if he is out of town.

Adjourn/ The meeting concluded at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Peg Keller