

# Planning & Sustainability • City of Northampton

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## Housing Partnership 5:30 PM, Monday May 2, 2022

Due to the COVID-19 emergency, this was a virtual (zoom) meeting

### MEMBERS

Carmen Junno, Chair X	Edgardo Cancel X	Hannah Shaffer X
Gordon Shaw, Vice Chair X	Sara Howard X	
Richard Abuza X	<del>Jennifer Dieringer</del>	
<del>Julio Alves</del>	Ace Tayloe X	Staff: Keith Benoit

1. Carmen Junno gave notice that the meeting is being recorded.
2. There was no public comment.
3. The Housing Partnership approved the April 4, 2022 Minutes with motion by Gordon Shaw and seconded by Edgard Cancel. Approved unanimously.
4. Edgard Cancel gave an update on the work with Northampton Housing Authority. Edgardo said that it has been difficult to get things put on the agenda and discuss things that are of interest of community members. There is a gap between organization and the tenants. Edgardo Cancel hears a lot of things from the community and it has been frustrating when those issues have not been put on the agenda. Edgardo said that the Board of Directors does not get involved with daily operations. There seems to be a culture of dismissal of concerns. Gordon Shaw asked what agenda items are typically at the meetings. Edgardo said they look at different Executive Director initiative. There is not enough time to review documents that are given at the last minute, and there is a lot of documents. Gordon Shaw also asked if there were public comments and there is. There is quite a few residents that attend. Carmen Junno asked if there is a way that the Housing Partnership can help them. Edgardo says that the NHA is very responsive to the Housing Partnership. Richard Abuza gave Edgardo respect for being on the board and the Partnership.
5. Edgardo Cancel said that NHA had asked for a waiver for an exception to the Small Area FMR (tied to Springfield). There were many Cities across the state that were concerned with the new HUD formulations and that Northampton was approved for 120% of the



Small Area FMR for all three zip codes. (It was noted in the following meeting that the Northampton Housing Authority recently took over another housing authority and that the number of zip codes that NHA has could be up to 15, not three). The newly acquired housing authority will have its 8 vouchers managed by NHA.

6. Gordon Shaw, Vice-Chair gave an update on the Brokers Fees legislation. Gordon said that the result with positive with a positive recommendation from the Community Resources . Gordon said that several people from the Housing Partnership spoke and that there was overwhelming public support in favor. Richard Abuza said there was some vilification of landlords and that did not service anybody well. The Housing Partnership came out of a time of polarization between renters and landlords and the tenor of the current conversation is concerning. Ace Tayloe said the comment regarding if people cannot afford Northampton was also disturbing. Gwen Nabad said that the comment regarding the threat of raising rents if this passes was concerning. Hannah Shaffer said that the brokers said that they are the only protection from some illegal activity. Richard Abuza said that landlords in Massachusetts should know the law. Carmen Junno said that the Housing Partnership does educate landlords, having done a workshop in the last year. Gordon Shaw asked what the next step are: reach out to the sponsors at City Council? Carmen Junno said that an op-ed would be helpful, along with other housing related issues that are in the news.
7. Ace Tayloe gave a brief summary of the Real Estate Transaction Fees said there are several options for the City to do. It may be harder to get something done on the City level with an open Home Rule Petition, if the state is also doing that. It would be helpful to get the sales data from the Assessor's office, which Ace is in the process of doing. There are other Cities that are working on having first time homebuyer being exempt, or low-income seniors. The process is moving forward.
8. Carmen Junno introduced the topic of the Affordable Housing Trust fund. Shelly Goering from Boston would be willing to come to next meeting. One question that has come up, how much money for affordable housing is coming from CPA or short-term rental fees. The Partnership should create a sub-committee to go deeper on the issue. Ace Tayloe said that subcommittee is a great idea and that the transfer fee situation could go to CPA, but the % of transfer fee funds could go to non-housing. Richard Abuza wanted to go on record that Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning & Sustainability is not seeing the big picture regarding the affordable housing trust fund. Richard Abuza said that the Housing Partnership could double as members of the Affordable Housing Trust. Gordon Shaw would also like to have a sub-committee.
9. Carmen Junno brought up the idea of writing an op-ed for brokers fees. Ace Tayloe said

that a sub-committee would write it and brought back to the Housing Partnership, but that City Council meeting would happen before the Partnership could meeting again.

10. For next meeting:

A. Possible Op-Ed

B. Ace Tayloe will reach out to City Council sponsors

C. Shelly Goering for Affordable Housing Trust Fund

11. The Partnership adjourned at 6:29 PM motion by Ace Tayloe, seconded by Hannah Schaffer.