

Fair Housing Minutes
November 19, 2015

Mimi Hollister, Scribe and Interim Chair

Present: Don Davies, Ann Cohen, Raquel Moscarelli, Janet Robinson, Mimi Hollister, Ben Day, and visitors Lou Meyi, Don Gardner, Mark Podgur

Introductions were made. Mark Podgur is a potential new member. He reported that he has lived in Marblehead for 17 years, has 2 children, is a real estate appraiser, knows about affordable housing red-tape and permitting. He wants more involvement with the town now and was influenced by Paul Crosby to join this committee. He will send his letter to the Selectmen soon.

Wendy Webber has resigned due to too many commitments. **Lou Meyi will contact Sagan Realty for other possible members. Mimi will ask Wendy to continue the web-site work that she had offered to help with.**

Minutes were approved.

Web-site up-date. Alex was unable to be with us. Don Davies has paid for another year of the private Connections web-site and asked if we want to continue it and keep it up-to-date. Inconclusive. It was agreed that **Don will talk with Alex about this** and about moving ahead with the town site and how to maintain updates and content changes. **Mark offered to help.**

Survey results: very limited returns of the survey. Out of about 27 returns, there were 6 that expressed an interest in living in Marblehead but couldn't afford it. Mimi reported that Becky Cutting said another email would go out with paychecks to remind about the survey. Almost no teachers have responded. **Ann will follow up with the Teacher's Union.**

Discussion followed of the Study Committee set up by the Selectmen around 40R potentials in town. Most of the information came from Kurt James. To review: An inclusionary-zoning by-law was not passed in town. But an "incentive by-law" was passed years ago that suggests if a developer builds 10 units or more, if 10% of these are affordable, the town will relax density requirements. This was elective, so not inclusionary. An Affordable Housing Trust was created to receive 40B and 40R funds. The mistake with Marblehead Highlands was that the town never set a deadline for reporting profits along the way so there is no money in the Trust and no way to insist on an accounting with Ted Moore.

We've tried many times to create affordable units through the incentive but we compete with private sellers and developers. The Study Committee looked at 5 potential 40R projects with a paid consultant. One left open is the one near Vinnin Square, which is yet to be developed. The Green St. property is possible but the developer has not moved on it. There has been a suggestion that John Muldoun, the owner, might be happy to have this taken over. A possibility is to ask Habitat for Humanity if they would partner with us, take it over, and we could

contribute Home Funds and other possible grants. **Kurt James will meet with John Muldoun on this and also Bill Brauner, the Habitat director who lives in Lynn.**

The Beacon St. property is still pending meeting with Kurt James, Tom McGinn, Becky Cutting, and Jim Vipperman.

Since the Affordable Housing Trust is in place, it is reasonable to ask the town for allocations so that we can have funds to purchase and rehab individual places as they become available. One of these is the large multi-apartment building on Pleasant St. near Don Davies. **Don will keep tabs on any developments such as plans to sell.** It is legitimate to ask the Selectmen for an annual budget line-item in the same way the Conservation Commission has done.

Lou Meyi commented during discussion of potential sites that we, the committee as a whole, might approach National Grand Bank for dialogue about eventual re-use of their parking lot since that was one of the potential 40R sites. This needs further discussion.

Another potential is the big-building owners such as the Rocketts and Bob Green to see if they might designate some affordable units with potential tax incentives. They may already have Section 8 tenants, but our request would be different. **We agreed to ask Jim Vipperman to look into this since he has family connections with the Rocketts.**

Discussion about The Mariner project ensued. It was agreed that Lou Meyi would draft a letter to the Zoning Board of Appeals encouraging them to include affordable units and, after review, Raquel will run it by Kurt, all to be done before the next hearing on November 24. **(Very good letter sent before these minutes were written.)**

Collaboration with other town committees was recommended. **Ben will be our voice at Council on Aging. Racquel will approach the School Committee. Ann, the Teacher's Union and Kathy Leonardson as head of the School Committee. Don Gardner, though not a FHC member will be our voice on Historic Commission.** Conservation Commission is open.

The next meeting is December 19, 7:00 pm at the Community Center.

Addendum: Someone needs to be the link with the Housing Authority. Our best potential, according to Kurt James, is the one or two units at a time that get bought and re-habed as rental units and turned over to the Housing Authority to manage. This would be the goal we would work towards with the Housing Authority.

Kurt James is willing to do a “tutorial” with us, especially for new members, on fair and affordable housing issues in Marblehead. This could be at a regular meeting. Date?