

Fair Housing Minutes for January 18, 2018  
Mimi Hollister, Scribe

Present: Ann Cohen, Karl Renney, Debra Larkin, Kurt James, Mark Podgur  
Guests: Don Gardner, Lou Meyi, Shelly Gehring from Mass Housing Partnerships, Town Planner Rebecca Cutting

Report on the party for affordable housing residents and the community: no RSVP responses so far. We will go ahead anyway, assuming some will come. **It is Thursday, January 25, 7- 8:15 pm in the Parish House at Old North Church.**

Karl officiated for the planning part:

First introductions all around.

Then Mimi gave a quick history of this committee.

Then initial ideas were put forth and recorded on a flip chart sheet:

- Housing needs analysis
- Down payment assistance – consider rental voucher program funding also (Kurt)
- Pursue funding options/resources
- Consider intern
- Potential partnership with Harborlight and other non-profits.
- Raise visibility of affordable housing needs and this committee
- Educational campaign
- Is there a Selectman who is our liaison? Becky will ask.

Then challenges were noted:

- Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen not willing to use operating funds for affordable housing
- No CPA
- No paid staff supporting the committee

Then possibilities were identified

- Obsolete trust funds being redirected to us
- Use surplus school land for affordable housing
- Educational campaign – needs and solutions
- Research and establish “green” standards for 40B developments – would lessen condo fees to have lower energy costs.
- Having a plan is key for Selectmen to endorse anything – otherwise considered a “slush” fund.

Near-term happenings and ideas:

The MAPC housing analysis is key. Becky is pursuing that with more recent input. She will call Lori Ehrlich about reaching out to MAPC on our behalf. That analysis covers renters and

owners. Kurt noted that non-profit developers prefer rental housing and for profit developers prefer owner condos.

**Kurt and Mimi will make a date with John McGinn** to talk about trust fund money into the Affordable Housing Trust. Shelly will also email about how trusts get funded for further ideas. Non-HUD money down-payment assistance and rental vouchers is what Harborlight is developing. **Kurt will look into that further.**

Educational campaign is best done when the needs analysis happens

**Next Meeting – February 15, 7 pm at Community Center**