

Fair Housing Committee Minutes

November 19, 2020

**Present:** Debby Larkin, Chair; Frank Evans, Mimi Hollister, Scribe  
Karl Rennie, Katie Farrell, Teri McDonough, Joe Whipple, Kurt James  
Guests: Lou Meyi, Judy Gates, Ed Nilsson

**Minutes approved.**

**Discussion of Open Seat:** Dirk Isbrandtsen was approved with gratitude by the Selectmen on November 18 to become a member of the Fair Housing Committee.

Karl Renney announced that he will finish his term in 2020 and then resign from the committee as he is newly elected Rear Commodore of the Corinthian Yacht Club which meets on the same schedule as our meetings. He said he will continue to support this important work especially since its new traction with the HPP Implementation Committee in place.

Frank Evans spoke of his health issues that may require him to curtail his activities, but he will continue as he is able.

**FHC interface with the HPP Implementation Committee:**

Teri noted that she represents the Housing Authority on the HPP Committee. Lou Meyi represents the community. Kurt James is already on the Committee. We will have one more person from this committee to be selected, so we will be well represented.

Teri has been attending training sessions in Salem that are very helpful with action and organizational ideas.

(Question about eviction problems here. Teri said there are many local resources. Only a couple of landlords in Marblehead are being opportunistic with evictions. Karl noted banks have resources to help. Kurt said there is work going on for an eviction moratorium.)

**Harborlight:**

Kurt gave some history: started many years ago by the First Baptist Church in Beverly. Has accomplished incredible things with a budget under \$10 mil. Andrew DeFranza is gifted director. There are now 6 projects in the pipeline on the North Shore of 50 to 100 units of affordable housing - some mixed housing but much deeper than 40B and mostly affordable. They manage the Sewall Building for us, done well but at a small loss. They would love to have more projects in Marblehead. They are the most natural partner for us.

Size of projects here are relevant – 10 to 15 units won't raise too much NIMBY (not in my backyard) in town. Example: the land across from the Community Store on West Shore Drive/Norman St. Assessment of that property has been done in the past by Harborlight. We could therefore perhaps proceed with this soon. Harborlight can easily determine the cost per unit and square footage and figure out financing.

Discussion of other school properties – **agreed that we should talk with Jason about that.**

Recognition that small-scale projects – 3-family in a building, for example – are do-able without much trouble.

Discussion of community awareness, which is key to making anything go forward. Kurt suggested 3 levels:

- 1) Meet with Jason and Becky to field our ideas about properties and best way to proceed and how to best engage the Selectmen
- 2) Community level – new HPP committee key in this and Selectmen for town buy-in.
- 3) Harborlight's involvement with us.

**Kurt and Frank will talk with Selectman Moses Grader** to feel him out as possible ally and link to the Selectmen. Press the Selectmen to proceed with activating the HPP Implementation Committee.

**Frank** will pursue a series of meetings with brokers such as Dick McKinley, Jack Attridge, Steve White to determine interest level and possible strategies.

**Discussion of funds available to FHC:** Affordable Housing Trust Fund should now have about \$20,000 a year from Home Funds (federal) that expire if not used in 2 years. Several foreclosed on houses should have contributed. Also Gerry School sale contributed. Trustees of the Fund are the Selectmen and a couple of others. **Selectmen should be asked to give us a quarterly report on funds in the Trust.**

**Debby will ask Becky Cutting about status of Ted Moore's 40B over-profit funds.**

We need to propose a project for use of Trust funds. **One idea to pursue:** upgrade current low-income housing to be energy efficient, partnering with the Municipal Light Dept. and Sustainable Marblehead, subsidizing such upgrades with Trust Fund monies and perhaps Sustainable Marblehead funds to enhance the small rebates by MMLD. **Mimi will talk with Lynn Bryant, SM Director, about this possibility. Kurt will talk with Lisa Wolf on the Light Board.** Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation would also accept grant proposals for this kind of specific project for low-income folks. There is an easy on-line portal for such applications and should include Karl Renney as reference.

**Other possibilities:** revisit 40R and changing zoning laws to allow multi-units on single home lots. Currently not allowed. Conversation with Becky Cutting and Ed Nilsson needed on this.

Meeting Adjourned. **Next meeting on Thursday, December 17, 7 pm.**