

Fair Housing Committee Minutes, June 17, 2021
Mimi Hollister, Scribe

Present: Debra Larkin and Dirk Isbrandtsen, Co-chairs; Mimi Hollister, Scribe; Frank Evans; Katie Farrell Guests: Lou Meyi, Ed Nilssen

Minutes of the May meeting were approved.

Re-cap of the prior 6 months: much of it has been awaiting directives from the town Housing Production Plan Implementation Committee as to how we can support/assist their work. Lou pointed out that we have spent time educating ourselves on where to focus on the HPP recommendations. We now have 4 representatives on that committee that are connected with this committee. A grant application has been submitted by Becky to MAPC for a feasibility study of the Coffin School site when it becomes available for possible affordable housing. We asked that it be widened to other town sites. Need to find out if that has happened, especially taking into account new state rules on affordable housing.

Discussion about Intrepid Circle and re-sale of affordable units there. Becky is informed of any that come up. We used to keep in touch with Avi, the realtor who handles such units and conducts the lottery, via former member, Mark Podgur. We need to re-connect with Avi and get more involved with turnover.

Ed has been educating us on incentive zoning by-law changes that could increase density possibilities. He brought copies of 200-39. Special Permit for Incentive Zoning which was adopted at Town Meeting 33 years ago and could be a place to make changes. (More on this later.)

Work going forward:

Dirk's comments: How can we be relevant in driving affordable housing? Work closely with Jason Silva, Town Administrator? Becky Cutting, Town Planner? The HPP Committee? We are well represented on the HPP Committee, but they haven't met for awhile. They did do a survey to prioritize but nothing has been published about that. So far there is no chair or secretary – Jason and Becky do both tasks. *With 4 out of 10 on the committee that are linked to Fair Housing, we could drive the conversation, it was noted.*

Dirk: we need to get a clear set of priorities. "Fair" and "affordable" are different. We have focused on affordable and left fair to others (Disabilities Commission, for example), but we should drive both. We need to determine if Jason and Becky WANT our support. They are so very busy that it would be good to hear from them on all of this. *Debby will reach out to them in this regard.*

Tasks ahead: 1) Study the Incentive Zoning By-laws to create a Town Warrant that could be put forth by this committee, or a group of citizens, or the Planning Board that could carry the endorsements of any of these. The focus would be to change the allowable units per acre and the affordable percentage requirements in Marblehead. Included in the work of this would be to get the feel of the town, an issue that is included in the HPP study.

- 2) All of us go through the HPP and identify places to focus – the biggest impact in moving the town forward – 2 or 3 of the most impactful strategies. We are to email our individual list to Debby to put together a first cut. When we have a clear focus, Dirk felt we should go to professionals for help with implementation. Basic rules: pre-empt the negatives (such as NIMBY) and deal with the aesthetics of any project.
- 3) Identify the key stakeholders in town and cultivate a relationship with them. Ex.: Moses Grader is our Selectman. Barton Hyte is the Planning Board liaison to HPP. Also reach out to Becky and Jason regularly for updates.
- 4) Connect with Avi Glazer again to follow turnover of affordable units.

Over the summer, meetings will be called if there is a need. The State has extended Zoom meetings until September, making it easier for us to call a meeting.

Meeting adjourned.