

Fair Housing Committee Minutes
Meeting of 2/27/2023
Mimi Hollister, Scribe

Meeting began at 4:04 pm.

Roll Call: Present were Thatcher Kezer, Chair; Erin Noonan, Rebecca Cutting, Debby Larkin, Teri McDonough, Katie Farrell, Dirk Isbrandtsen, John Whipple, and Mimi Hollister

Minutes of the January meeting were not sent to all, so approval will be postponed to March when the last three sets of minutes will be sent to all to review.

Discussion of priorities for 2023:

Becky noted that the Housing Production Plan Implementation Committee will meet on March 14. They will be re-visiting the visioning work to identify places for possible affordable housing. They will then submit an RFI (Request for Information) to developers, a warrant will be created for Town Meeting, and our educational and public relations work will then be needed. Thus their work will have a bearing on our next steps to be considered.

Updating the FHC website is an immediate priority.

Assignment: It was agreed that Erin, Becky and Teri will review what some other towns have done and recommend the good ones to the whole committee. We will benchmark and compare what others are doing and compare this with our current website to make it more useful and up-to-date.

Noted that housing lotteries are coming up all over the north shore. Agreed that posting “affordable housing on the North Shore” should go on the website now with a more complete focus later.

Housing counseling in all aspects of such a search is available now and should be fleshed out on the website.

Home Consortium funds need explaining and exploring to see what other communities are doing.

The Mission Statement presented by Dirk based on the focus and work of the previous Fair Housing Committee will be considered in detail at the next meeting. It is an attachment to be reviewed by all, discussed and voted on in March.

Update of Housing Projects

The 40R rental housing project at Vinnin Square, of which 11 will be affordable at 80% of median income, has been approved by the Planning Board. The 40B project at Sailmaker Place will have 12 units of affordable condos for purchase. It is still under construction.

There is already a warrant article from the Planning Board about allowing ADU's (Accessory Dwelling Units) by right on the next Town Meeting. We should begin to advocate for it soon. Since we are a designated MBTA Town by the State, meaning we are required to create multi-family housing by right of which 30% must be affordable, a consultant has been granted, to help us better analyze and understand this complicated requirement. Our interpretive and educational task for the town will be very important and should start now for the ADU Town Warrant. Discussion about educational possibilities using local media and James Maroney for visual aids and public forums going forward.

Monthly Meeting Dates and time

We will try for the 4th Monday at 1:00 pm – March 27 and April 24 – at the Select Board room at Abbot Hall and on Zoom. Then re-assess.

Adjourn