

## **NORTHAMPTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP**

Minutes

October 1, 2018

**Members Present:** Chair Todd Weir, Kyla Prior, Becky Lockwood, Gordon Shaw, Julio Alves, Richard Abuza, Edgar Cancel. Also present, 3 Meadowbrook tenants, Michael Sciabek Property Manager, Alex Jarrett, interested citizen, Peg Keller, staff.

**Call To Order:** Chair Weir called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. All present introduced themselves. The meeting was held at the Meadowbrook Apartments.

### **Meadowbrook Presentation**

Mr. Sciabek reported that he has been on the job for two months. The complex contains 252 units composed of households with mixed incomes in 28 different buildings. There are one, two, three and four bedroom units, with most being two bedrooms. Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) purchased the property in 2005. Half of the tenants have mobile Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers. 24 of the units are market rate. There are 125 children in the development. There is a Community Impact Coordinator (Resident Services Coordinator) that organizes many events and offerings for tenants, such as the Summer Lunch Program. Many capital improvements have been made over the last two years, such as roof and boiler replacements, as well as unit upgrades. POAH supports resident services and community partnerships.

Mr. Sciabek then departed the meeting and the residents spoke. Resident Rebecca Martin said there was a positive shift when Violet Matos became the CICOordinator. Health care and education became a focus and many activities were held that supported tenant growth and empowerment. Kids programming included arts, dance and music and she herself has tried to write grants for such activities. Cooley Dickinson Hospital sponsored their Art Show, Hampshire Healthy Connect and Grow Smart Northampton promoted healthy eating and now comes to the site with produce, the residents are having meetings to start a community garden, and there is community connectivity. Rebecca has been there 8 years and has tried to form a tenants association. She said there have been many staff changes in management and many many unit inspections.

Mr. Alves asked why it has been difficult to form the association. The reply was that staff is not trauma informed, meetings had too much venting and too little positive action. People wanted a safe place to talk and that got in the way of organization. She

hopes there can be a way to bridge the communication gap and get a better flow of information. All were thanked for their presence and candor. Gordon offered to look into the report that many people's rents were going up in the near future. They were invited to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

### **Fair Housing Analysis Update**

Peg reported on the progress of the effort. The first meeting with PVPC has been held. The consultant will submit a draft survey and engagement plan soon, to launch the effort.

### **Op-Ed**

Kyla said she is working on a draft. Members said it could include an update on unit production, the Analysis of Impediments and stabilization programs.

**November Meeting/** invitations will be extended to Wayne and Carolyn to attend to give planning and zoning updates. Mr. Alves asked about the 12 unit project on South Street. Members decided the review process, to ascertain if there was any discussion about including affordable units in that project, would be good to pose to the Planning Dept. staff. Peg noted that the Tech review meetings to review projects are often too late to impact that decision.

### **Policy Committee**

Kyla distributed information the Committee has compiled on voting procedures, open meeting law requirements and a glossary. She asked that the materials be reviewed prior to the next meeting.

**Misc./** Chair Weir reported that he had attended the Blessing of the Site, on Glendale Road where Habitat is building 4 affordable homes. He said it was a moving event and was glad he was able to represent the Partnership for the dedication.

**Adjourn/** The meeting concluded at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Peg Keller