

## **NORTHAMPTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP**

Minutes

February 4, 2019

**Members Present:** Chair Todd Weir, Kyla Prior, Becky Lockwood, Gordon Shaw, Edgar Cancel, Jim Reis, Julio Alves, Alex Jarrett. Also present, Dan Krassner, potential member and Peg Keller, staff.

**Call To Order:** Chair Weir called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. All present introduced themselves to Mr. Krassner, a potential new member. The minutes were approved as submitted. The vote in favor was unanimous, with Mr. Alves abstaining.

### **Fair Housing Sub-Committee Update**

Peg reviewed the list of stakeholders that attended the two sessions held to date (10 sessions held on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and January 30<sup>th</sup>). Groups included social service providers, housing search workers, property managers, housing authority representatives, disabled community advocates, local officials from surrounding towns, housing developers, realtors and local government officials including the Mayor, the Planning Director, the Human Rights Commission, the Senior Center and the public school system. A great deal of valuable material was gathered. This process will be followed up by 6 focus group sessions, scheduled for late February, early March. The Mayor issued a Press Release on the project last week, the survey is being finalized and the public session to present the draft plan is May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Senior Center. Allison Curtis, the PVPC Planner sent Peg a draft of the data collection phase of the project and it is extensive. Peg is excited about how the project is progressing and thanked Jim, Gordon and Todd for attending some of the sessions.

### **Policy Sub-Committee Update**

Kyla reminded members of the 2/21 meeting scheduled with Tess Poe, Planning Board Chair. This is a follow up to last month's meeting with the Planning Director and Permits Planner to discuss goals and how the Partnership can be helpful. She then distributed the latest draft of the Partnership Member guide. It was reviewed and members agreed that with some final edits, was ready to be posted on the City's Website. Kyla was thanked for her work!

### **Community Housing Support Services Project**

Peg met with the CHSSP Coordinator, Jose Cruz, his supervisor Luis Martinez from the Center for Human Development and Jen Dieringer and Mandy Winalski of Community Legal Aid earlier today. Peg wanted to insure Mr. Cruz was getting sufficiently oriented

to the resources of the community. The session went well and the goals of the program were reiterated and clarified. There was no discussion of continued funding efforts at this meeting. NHP members agreed that a small sub-committee would work on developing a fact sheet on the program, describing its successes and a formal funding request package would be prepared. Local requests for funding would be made to Meadowbrook Apartments and the Northampton Housing Authority. The Committee will assemble, identify tasks and a timeline, as March will begin the final year of funding. Mr. Shaw and Mr. Cancel agreed to work on this. CHD Program reps will be invited to attend a Partnership meeting in the near future as well.

### **Community Preservation Committee/NHP Joint Meeting Update**

Chair Weir reported that Patrick had presented the bulk of the information to the CPC on January 16<sup>th</sup>. One of the issues discussed was the ability to bond for housing projects. CPC staff and members have said in the past that it is not possible to do that for projects that are not City sponsored projects. The CPC lobbying advocate for the statewide network was in the audience and said that was not the case. Patrick has since done some research that he will present at the next monthly meeting to that effect. CPC members addressed the disparity in percentages of housing awards compared to the other categories. They said the discrepancy was created in earlier rounds and that will be difficult to remedy now that the dollars available to award are so much less. With regard to the added time and costs required when housing developers have to come in for multiple funding rounds to achieve the local match they seek, CPC members said they are not comfortable with approving phased requests into the future. They did agree, however, to see if subsequent application requirements could be streamlined.

The myth that larger housing projects can just get increased dollars from State funding sources if they don't get them at the local level was also discussed. Laura Baker was in the audience for another reason, and was able to speak to this. There is also the "practice" that CPC members look for the biggest bang for their CPA buck, and if they can (more) fully fund a smaller project, as opposed to being a small piece on a much larger project, those smaller projects are prioritized. This is not helpful for affordable housing projects, so more discussion will need to be held around this aspect. Chair Weir said the dialogue was collaborative and CPC members understand the issues and do want to fund housing projects whenever possible and to the extent possible. It was noted that they have funded every housing project that has come before them, just not for the amount requested in all cases.

Chair Weir noted that the Mayor had said at the stakeholder sessions that he will devote the Air B and B tax yield to affordable housing. Vice-Chair Boughan will present

his research on the bonding issue and discussion will continue. The Chair and Vice-Chair were thanked for their attendance and presentation at the CPC meeting.

**Landlord Workshop**

Mr. Shaw asked if there were plans this year to do the Landlord Workshop. Peg said she was too busy to take that on right now, but thought it would be possible at another time. He noted that there had been a request at last year’s session to hear information about building and sanitary codes so perhaps we could have those City personnel present. Mr. Cancel asked about a tenant rights workshop and Mr. Shaw noted the difficulty in getting people to attend until they themselves are confronting a housing emergency. It was noted and Mr. Cancel agreed that there are gatherings of tenants at other events (i.e. Healthy Hampshire food distribution, Community Garden meetings) where people could be present to answer questions about tenant rights. All present agreed that this was a great idea to be pursued (piggyback on other events).

Past sessions of landlord workshops have yielded 20-35 participants, so it would be good to continue having an annual event and not lose that momentum. A tenant workshop could also be tried, as it hasn’t been in many years. Food and child care should be provided. Peg suggested perhaps a sub-committee could form to plan and hold both a landlord and a tenant workshop later this year.

**Membership Drive/ Op Ed Submission** These items will be held until the next meeting.

**Adjourn/** The meeting concluded at 7:10 p.m.      Respectfully submitted, Peg Keller

Follow Up Tasks	Person Responsible	Deadline
Attend Meeting with Tess Poe 2/21 @ 7 at the Police Station	Policy Committee/ all welcome. Alex, Patrick, Peg	2/21
Review Member Guide & add NHP goal & accomplishment info. Post on City web-site	Kyla, Peg	2/22
Schedule AI Focus Groups & finalize Survey	FH Committee members and Peg	2/8
Gather info. on CPC bonding ability for housing projects	Patrick, Policy Committee  Present to CPC	March 29, 2019

Form CHSSP Committee & Create Program info./ develop fundraising goals/timeline	Gordon, Edgar, Peg	March 29, 2019
Invite CHD to a NHP meeting	Todd, Patrick	April?
Ad hoc Committee to Plan Fall Workshops/ Tenant and Landlord Rights	?	July 31, 2019
Apply for funding for Hampshire Heights Playground	Patrick, Edgar, Peg, NHA	Next CPC round/ CDBG funding?