

Fair Housing Committee Minutes

August 8, 2023

Mimi Hollister, Scribe

Present: Thatcher Kezer, Chair; Becky Cutting, Debby Larkin (on Zoom), Dirk Isbrandtsen, John Whipple and Mimi Hollister, Scribe

Meeting was chaired at first by Becky until Thatcher Kezer arrived from a Salem meeting. Meeting began at 3:35pm.

Web-site update was discussed. The current one was created many years ago. Areas of revision include accomplishments, organizational links, current activities including the Housing Production Plan work that has been done in recent years, links to the Housing Production Plan Implementation Committee work, affordable housing inventory update and links to helpful organizations.

Included should be current goals and activities such as the prospects in the future for affordable housing at Sailmaker Place and Vinnin Square. Also suggested was defining the distinction between what is fair housing and what is affordable housing. There should also be a link to environmental justice issues and to the Housing Trust Fund.

Websites of other towns such as Brookline, Arlington and Somerville can be researched for helpful ideas.

It was agreed that Becky, Erin, and Debby will meet to do the revision work and create a test site for the next meeting on September 12.

MBTA Zoning Update. Becky reported that a grant was obtained and completed to do the required analysis and community plan with an engineering consultant. We now need a consultant to help with the public process. There will be a kick-off meeting with the Planning Board in September to create a draft for the public. A test draft will go to the November meetings and a final draft in January for a Town Meeting warrant.

From the current work done, Becky reported that it does not seem overly onerous. She suggested that we first need to do a workshop for the public that gets people thinking about the possibilities and the advantages to the community in terms of growth and therefore increased income to the town. This first workshop should happen at the end of September

with a public hearing and more public meetings as the process progresses towards the Town Meeting Warrant.

Dirk reported on his very helpful contact with Winchester in their MBTA town process. They have not built in a required affordable component. But this does not preclude adding some version of that with developers in time. The theory is that just adding more housing units in a town causes prices to stabilize or go down.

Public Comment: There were no public comments.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15.