

Fair Housing Committee Minutes

Meeting of 5/8/2023

Mimi Hollister, Scribe

Members present in person: Thatcher Kezer, Becky Cutting, Erin Noonan, Debra Larkin, Mimi Hollister; Teri McDonough on-line. This meeting was not recorded.

Meeting started at 1:05pm.

Chair, Thatcher Kezer called the meeting to order with approval of the minutes of November 21, 2022; January 26, 2023, and February 27, 2023.

Discussion of Mission Statement: Dirk Isbrandtsen, who was unable to be present, had sent a “list of principals” in a document for the Committee to consider in relation to “Fair Housing Development”. To begin, Erin read to us the current mission statement of this committee as it appears on the website. After discussion it was determined that the current mission statement says it well and should stand. Dirk’s important points will be re-visited at the next meeting when it is hoped he can be present. His document led right into the next agenda item because it raises many detail questions about the current picture of how to steer people looking for affordable housing and the many resources available.

Website Update: (many suggestions) Need for initial quick links to get started, including HUD (Housing and Urban Development) guidelines for determining eligibility for affordable housing. Perhaps a Q and A for people to see where their needs fit. After that, more detailed information for walking through the process, highlighting the resources available for help, including the Marblehead Housing Authority, the Council on Aging, Marblehead Counseling Center, CHAPA (Citizens Housing and Planning Assoc.), Mass. Housing Partners, etc.

Some initial editing suggestions: “Why worry...” should move to a more prominent place;

“Our strategy to meet the need...” should be deleted because the Mission Statement is basically it.

In summary, we are guides to a process; we help to find opportunities related to qualifying and financing and provide links to resources.

It was agreed that any available listings should be posted on the front page of the town website. An additional statement needed relates to discrimination complaint, so the Selectboard needs to designate an officer and Becky will research how other towns handle such.

Mimi noted that the School Board will take up the dispensation of the Coffin School property after elections in June, making sure it is on their Summer Retreat agenda.

Becky will do a press release on what's happening now, highlighting the HPP work, the Glover project at Vinnin Square, and the zoning change to allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) by permit on single family home properties.

For the next meeting, we each review the website and send suggested edits to Debby Larkin to organize. The goal to keep in mind is to give enough information to help people who qualify to understand the process and to apply.

A new scribe needs to be chosen.

With the resignation of Katie Farrell and Teri McDonough, we will have two vacancies that need filling by the Disabilities Commission and the Housing Authority.

Next meeting: June 12, 1:00 pm, Abbot Hall and on Zoom

Meeting adjourned at 2:12pm.