

## COMMISSION ON DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS (CDICR)

### Minutes of Fair Housing Committee Meeting on March 2, 2016

Present: Wes Chin, Alex Coleman, Kea van der Ziel, Sandy Batchelder, Lloyd Gellineau

Guests: Virginia Bullock, Bobby Knable

A major impediment to housing diversity is the lack of low income housing in Brookline. The existing low income housing is scattered throughout the town and consists mainly of 2-3 unit buildings. Larger units would have to be developed if Brookline were to substantially increase its low income housing. The cost would be prohibitive for the town to do this on its own and it would have to rely on developers.

Virginia believed that a major role for the Commission would be to educate the public about fair housing issues and procedures. We should consider using all types of media, including CATV, posters, displays, forums. Participate in Fair Housing Month in April. Steer brokers, landlords and tenants to training at the Fair Housing Center. Arrange for a showing of a movie on red lining produced by PBS? Query whether the small budget of the Commission will support these activities? Brokers pay for their own training.

Northeastern Univ. has a lot of materials on tenant rights. Virginia's office also has some but concentrates on affordable housing.

Fair housing publicity has been hampered by lack of materials in foreign languages and translators.

Surveys have concluded that the major reasons for discrimination against prospective tenants are (1) reluctance to rent to families with children, (2) the need to remove lead paint, and (3) reluctance to rent to disabled persons.

Query whether Brookline should arrange for testing of discrimination in purchases, financing and rental of housing? The testing is done by the Boston Fair Housing Office and costs around \$25K. Or should we seek other ways to uncover data without testing?

Another goal of the Committee and Commission is to recommend revisions to the Town's existing fair housing bylaw, particularly the complaint process, which is inconsistent with the proposed complaint procedures for other matters involving the Commission.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held at 6:30PM on Monday March 21 in the small conference room in the basement of the Public Health Building. The agenda will be to continue discussion of fair housing issues in Brookline, to prioritize the issues to be addressed, and to prepare goals for the Committee.

Minutes prepared by Sandy Batchelder

