

FINAL

COMMISSION ON DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Minutes of Fair Housing Committee Meeting on March 14, 2019

Present: Bob Lepson, Jessica Chicco, Sandy Batchelder, Lloyd Gellineau

Absent: Dwain Tyndal

Guests: Roger Blood, Virginia Bullock, Joan Lancourt.

Review and approval of minutes of prior meetings of the committee was postponed in order to maximize the time available for discussion with Roger Blood, Chair of the Housing Advisory Board (HAB) in Brookline.

Roger has been chair of the HAB for 30 years and has also served as a consultant to the World Bank. The HAB concentrates on affordable housing policy. It has 7 members and also manages the Housing a Trust Fund which funds the creation and preservation of affordable housing in Brookline.. The Trust Fund is capitalized by payments from developers of smaller projects (6-15 units) subject to the Town's Inclusionary Zoning by-law Since its inception, the trust fund has financed 180 affordable units and raised over 12 million dollars.. Ch40B also produces many affordable units; there are approximately 300 affordable units in developments on the town's 40B docket. We were referred to the town's Housing Production Plan. The affordability housing gap in Brookline has been growing rapidly and is now about \$400K.

The town is considering a proposal to convert the Kent Street parking lot in Brookline Village into affordable housing with underground parking.

Although there is no fee applicable to developments of more than 15 units Z(where on-site units are required), the town has been able to negotiate fees for some developments in order to augment the Housing Trust Fund. The HAB is exploring an increase to projects subject to the fee going from 6-15 units to 4-20. It has found that augmenting the Housing Trust Fund can leverage state and federal sources of funds to produces more affordable housing than eliminating the waiver provision entirely for more than 6 units and requiring these developers to include 20% affordable housing. The HAB will also explore increases in the percentage of the fees . The HAB has hired a consultant to investigate the financial aspects of the proposed changes in the fee and determine the inflection point where developers would be discouraged from working in Brookline.

Affirmative marketing of all of the Town's affordable housing has allowed a high proportion of these units to go to persons of color. Although the application process can be complicated, the town provides assistance to applicants. There is a need to improve assistance for persons whose English is limited..

The HAB would like to see permission for accessory apartments in Brookline and has a zoning bylaw amendment ready to go whenever the voting requirement for housing bylaw changes is reduced to 51%. It was noted that the Governor's latest proposed housing bill would mandate this change rather than leave it up to cities and towns to opt in by a 2/3 vote.

In response to the question of what our committee or the commission could do to help the HAB with increasing affordable housing in Brookline, Roger said that outreach and education would be very useful. Outreach could include a collaboration similar to the Livable Newton campaign. We could also consult further with Andre Leroux whose work focused on building coalitions on

fair housing matters. Joan would see if he was available for our next meeting to be scheduled on Tuesday April 23 at 6:30PM.

Minutes prepared by Sandy Batchelder