

Michael McCusker, *Chair*
Joan Courtney Murray
Joe Previtera
Louis Rizoli
Chris Pfaff, *Planning Board Liaison*
Kathleen Wynne, *Planning Board Liaison, Alt.*

TOWN OF WESTWOOD
Commonwealth of Massachusetts



**HOUSING PARTNERSHIP
FAIR HOUSING COMMITTEE**

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APPROVED

On Meeting Date: 7/15/24

October 12, 2023 @ 6 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Housing Partnership members Michael McCusker, Joan Courtney Murray, Joe Previtera, and Chris Pfaff and Town of Westwood staff Amanda Wolfe, Housing and Land Use Planner Amanda Wolfe, Town Planner Elijah Romulus, and Director of Community and Economic Development Nora Loughnane were present.

The meeting began at 6 p.m.

1. Introductions

- Mr. McCusker introduced new members

2. Response to Growing Housing Crisis/MA State of Emergency

- Ms. Wolfe explained the increasing number of calls received by the Town from people experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness. Multiple departments are meeting to understand how various departments/divisions are interfacing with this issue on October 30, 2023. This meeting was planned prior to the declaration of the State of Emergency.
- 80% AMI is increasingly unaffordable because Westwood is in the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, where the median income is very high.
- Ms. Wolfe explained that 80% AMI is the limit set in our Zoning Bylaw because that's the required limit for units to qualify for the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). But the Planning Board has the ability to require a lower AMI on Special Permit projects.
- Mrs. Loughnane mentioned that the Budget Inn was used as a shelter several years ago. The state is supposed to notify the Town when they intend to establish a shelter in the municipality. The Town has not heard anything yet.

3. LIP Ownership Units Resale, Refinance, & Maintenance

- There is ongoing litigation involving three properties due to an illegal resale to a child, a home in disrepair, and an unapproved mortgage.
- Mrs. Murray asked what the rules were on deed-restricted affordable homes and why. Mrs. Loughnane explained that the program is designed to create opportunities for income-restricted households to buy a home in perpetuity.
- Mrs. Loughnane suggested running workshops for affordable owners on their deed rider.
- Mr. Previtera asked if other municipalities have this issue.
- Mr. Pfaff recommended the Town send an FAQ to owners.
- Several suggested using Blue Hills Regional Technical High School to perform repairs. Mr. Previtera asked about incentives for contractors to help.

4. LAU Application Process Update

- Ms. Wolfe explained that Local Action Unit (LAU) applications are taking longer due to the growing popularity of the program statewide and seemingly limited capacity of the state to process them.
- WAHA's School Street Regulatory Agreement was finally approved.

5. Desired Meeting Frequency

- Mr. McCusker prefers meeting as needed.
- Mrs. Murray feels passionate about addressing housing issues and thinks we should do all that we can.
- 6 p.m. is an ideal time for many.

6. Updates

- Westwood has achieved Interim Compliance with the MBTA Communities Law (Section 3A). The Housing Partnership will have to make a recommendation to the Planning Board on which additional parcels to zone as Mixed Use Multi Family Residential Overlay District (MUMFROD). Westwood is ahead of many municipalities by already having rezoned 16 of the 50 required acres.
- WAHA intended to purchase one of the affordable ownership condos at Westwood Place, but withdrew. Mr. McCusker stated that the Housing Partnership has to look at the big picture and will adhere to the 2019 Housing Production Plan, which doesn't support switching affordable ownership opportunities to affordable rentals.
- The next meeting will be a discussion of the ideas the Housing Partnership wants in the Climate Action, Resiliency, and Sustainability Plan (CRS Plan) in development with the Planning Division.
 - Mr. Previterra asked if Ms. Wolfe could provide templates/examples.
- Upcoming affordable housing projects include 436 Washington Street, the Regulatory Agreement for which was just started, that's been approved by the Planning Board and 22 Everett Street that is still before the Planning Board.

7. Miscellaneous

- Boston Globe published an article stating the majority of affordable housing in Westwood is age-restricted, but disregarded that only 2 of the 100 subsidized units approved in the last 10 years were age-restricted.

Everyone agreed to meet again November 30, 2023.

The meeting concluded at 7:10