



## OBSERVER REPORT

**FAIR HOUSING COMMITTEE (FHC)** – October 17, 2022 at the Jacobi Community Center and via Zoom      LWVM Observer – Bonnie Grenier

Members Present -Chair Debby Larkin, Mimi Hollister, Teri McDonough, Deacon Joseph Whipple, Katie Farrell, Frank Evans, and Bob Neuss.

Guests: Select Board members Moses Grader and Erin Noonan

The main topic of the meeting was the possible reconfiguration of the Fair Housing Committee and the Housing Production Plan Implementation Committee (HPPIC). The goals are to strengthen the FHC by broadening their mandate, empowering them to put initiatives into action, and enhancing communications and interactions with other town boards/committees. The idea for this came up this past summer during discussion of the Affordable Housing Trust Board and its role as related to the FHC and the HPPIC. Discussion is in the very early stages and a variety of ideas and concerns were put forward:

- Moses suggested that the committee would be reconfigured to include Thatcher Keizer, Town Administrator as chairperson; Becky Cutting, Town Planner; Moses Grader and Erin Noon from the Select Board; a representative from the schools, disabilities commission, housing authority and possibly some members of the current FHC. A committee comprised of nine members is the target.
- Membership on the board requires a considerable time commitment outside of meetings. This should be factored in when choosing board members.
- The Housing Production Plan Implementation Committee would continue but their role would be redefined. What that role would be is not clear at this time.
- The FHC has been in existence for many years and several are long-serving members. There is much institutional knowledge and expertise that would be lost in the new configuration.
- There was concern that this reorganization would affect progress that has already been made
- Tasks of the FHC have included community education, building coalitions, funding, advocacy and dealing with “nimby” (not in my back yard) issues
- The reconfigured FHC would have greater roles in advocacy and fund raising.
- How would the new board work with the MAPC (Metropolitan Area Planning Council)?

A joint meeting of the FHC and HPPIC to discuss this matter was suggested as was the importance of attending the SB meeting when this reconfiguration plan is on the agenda. The exact date of that meeting was not known but Debby will advise the committee when she finds out.

Erin noted concerns of the committee and suggested members reach out to her with other concerns prior to the meeting with the SB.