



OBSERVER REPORT

FAIR HOUSING COMMITTEE – October 21, 2021 at the Jacobi Community Center
LWVM Observer – Bonnie Grenier

Members Present -Debra Larkin, Dirk Isbrandsten, Mimi Hollister, Teri McDonough, Deacon Joseph Whipple, Frank Evans. Members Absent: Kurt James, Katie Farrell

Future meetings are being scheduled for the third Thursday of each month at the Judy and Gene Jacobi Community Center. Ms. Larkin will reach out to the staff to try to arrange technology so meetings can be held in-person and via Zoom for all meetings.

It is anticipated that Bob Neuss who works for Well Fargo will submit a letter of interest to the Board of Selectmen for the open seat on the Fair Housing Committee. His interview will be held within the next several weeks.

Members of the committee had been tasked with reaching out to eight comparable community referenced in the Housing Production Plan (HPP) for information about how they are addressing the issue of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU). That information was compiled by Ms. Larkin and sent to Town Administrator Jason Silva and Becky Curran. ADUs are generally restricted to family members and do not allow for new construction of unattached units on single family properties.

Committee members have now been tasked with reaching out to those same eight HPP communities to inquire as to whether or not they have an Affordable Housing Trust Fund. If they do, is the fund active and what is the source of these funds. Does money from the sale of houses go into their trust fund? Guidance is being sought from the Mass. Housing Authority (MHA) for guidelines for the use of these funds.

Committee members Dirk Isbrandsten, Debra Larkin, Kurt James met with Jason Silva and Becky Curran to discuss coordinating efforts between the town and the FHC in the implementation of the HPP recommendations. It is important that moving forward the approach be thoughtful and pragmatic to include the following:

- Emma Battaglia from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) has been assigned to be the Project Manager for the multi-year project.
- Focus groups made up of town boards and officials, abutters, real estate agents and developers will meet throughout the process
- The importance of keeping citizens informed about the on-going work of implementing the HPP, with the possibility of a public meeting the first week in December. Social media including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram will also be used to keep the public informed
- Ed Nilsson will work with the FHC to address changes to town by-laws to create options for ADUs to promote more affordable housing in Marblehead.