

Greater Newburyport Housing Choice Coalition

Thursday, December 14th- 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm

YWCA Greater Newburyport (Hybrid)

6-6:15 pm Refreshments

1. Welcome and Introductions- CHAPA

a. attendance – >30 people in rm. (about 1/2 seem to be from Nbpt.), 15 online; 3-Newbury, 1 from Sal., a few from Amesbury, no one yet from W. Newbury; Judy presented on housing challenges discussed in last mtg.-- cost, availability & # of options to choose from.

b. Meeting ground rules -- respect, step up/step back, listen, no side conversations, speak slowly & loudly, what everyone has to say is important, don't interrupt, honesty & transparency; think about how to use your voice in your communities – speaking with others, letters, town & city mtgs.

c. Why are we here?

-Regional approach

-Seek to have an impact on availability and affordability of housing

2. Debriefs of recent local meetings

a. Local Community Updates – **Salisbury, Amesbury Newbury, Newburyport, & West Newbury**

b. Coalition meeting on Oct. 25th- Judy spoke of what people loved about the Greater Newburyport area and some of the barriers to safe & affordable housing. Lack of deeply affordable housing was confirmed by some in the audience.

c. Newburyport HPP Meeting- Judy– spoke of the mtg. with Merr. Valley Planning Commission & the Nbpt. Affordable Housing Trust on 11/16/23, that worked on updating the Housing Production Plan.

d. Newbury HPP Meeting-Kristen Grubbs (Asst. Planning Dir.) & Martha Taylor (Planning Dir.) were both in the meeting. Newbury is working on the MBTA zoning initiative, bringing an amendment to the Town Mtg. in the spring. It will include By Right multi-family housing; tutorials are available on the Newbury/Planning Dept. town website.

They are also updating their Housing Production Plan + Master Plan – Mon., 1/29 in Byfield Town Hall – there will be a mtg. with the Merr. Valley Planning Commission providing assistance.

<https://www.townofnewbury.org/planning-board>

3. Discussion on short- and long-term goals of the coalition –

- Whitney & people attending – how do we articulate tangible support for affordable housing, short & long-term goals
- Jamie Blackburn (Amesbury) spoke of the need to build coalitions to move projects forward, ex., use state support for new initiatives, new bond bills, Affordable Housing Act, inclusionary zoning – this might have to do with expecting more affordable units, easing restrictions on things like density/parking, have **different levels** of affordable housing
- Pam from Newbury spoke of the need for logistical support for community housing goals (space, leaders, calling mtgs., etc.)
- smaller towns feel more isolated because there are so few voices & ideas for this
- ? hold mtgs. in different towns each mo., do more outreach to missing people;
- what public land is available (may be available in the newly written Housing Production Plans), will cities & towns invest in them; common obstacles (which are also opportunities) – land, zoning;
- messaging & education in the community, don't simply dismiss resistance, how will we work with it
- concern about perceived conflict with water supply & quality (need to consider water neutral & net zero growth development)
- issues don't have to be pitted **against** one another, we can do both
- important to keep a regional approach for things like water & development, since different cities/towns often share these resources
- low income housing needs more education & support in communities
- change the current design (which was done by intention for particular races & classes) of zoning & development for higher income levels
- is zoning a tool that can possibly control the escalating costs of housing?
- how can we use tax policy to discourage luxury development &/or get more contributions to things like non-profit developers and Affordable Housing Trusts (who encourage development of 30-80% of area median income)
- multiple people suggested doing a Housing 101 (what does all the ling mean -- AMI, affordable housing, CPA, etc.
- which towns have Community Preservation Acts now, how can it help on affordable housing development
- Accessory Dwelling Units, lots for Habitat for Humanity (land or bequeathed properties), Sal. & Ames. have been helpful for Habitat to access land

- cities & towns are each in the process of updating Housing Prod. Plans (we need to look at them, & what progress we've made since last one)
- ed.is needed for communities & elected officials
- need transit-oriented development
- important to work on community attitudes, building relationships
- minority & neg. voices can be the loudest, so we need to counter them, name attitudes more explicitly
- how do we engage area businesses, so workers can afford to live here, + people with discretionary funds to give more \$ & property to affordable housing development projects
- how can we lift up those ideas more, + housing as a public health need
- how do we convert Air B&Bs to long-term & affordable rentals
- can someone help set up a webpage (Jamie Blackburn has resources to support this). See <https://equitable-arlington.org/> as an example
- Possible sub-grps.-community outreach, messaging, etc. **we'll send a survey out about what individuals can offer to this project**; ex., doing neighborhood outreach, business outreach, chair a subgroup
 - a. How do we accomplish these goals? What is missing?
 - b. Who do we want to speak with?
 - c. Who is still missing in the room? What prevents them from coming to meetings?

4. Next Steps

This Coalition will be meeting on the 3rd Th. of every month at 6

you're welcome to join the Steering Comm. at the wkly mtgs. (8 am Th., zoom)

we need to do a Forum on Housing 101 (CHAPA, AnnMary from Amesbury/Bread & Roses); also make it available offline & have open discussions