

ANNOTATED AGENDA

Greater Newburyport Housing Choice Coalition Launch Meeting

Wednesday, October 25th, 2023, 7:00-8:30 PM

Greater Newburyport YWCA

1. Welcome and Introductions – 22 people on zoom, about 40 in room

a. Reason for Convening- Judy Tymon & John Feehan

Interest in creating access to housing for all levels of affordability, and to become a group that will decide upon and focus on action steps.

Who is the steering committee leading this effort? Why are we having this meeting? –

Marianne Vesey
Jaclyn Meers
Danielle Holmes
Meg Alfoni
Judy Tymon
Sue McKittrick
Jamie Blackburn
John Feehan
Nancy Frick
Sarah Holden
Nancy Caswell
Annmmary Connor
Pam Wool
Kristen Grubbs

b. Whitney – What is Initiative? CHAPA is is to encourage the housing that is moderate-income foster diverse and planning and

CHAPA’s Municipal Engagement over 50 yrs. Old, whose mission production and preservation of affordable to low and families and individuals. We also sustainable communities through community development.

The Municipal Engagement Initiative is about 6 yrs. old. We believe that housing is at the center of the hub of work needed to create healthy, equitable, affordable, and vibrant communities. MEI works with residents on the ground to change the conversation and support existing local efforts in favor of more affordable housing. MEI brings together diverse coalitions, provides education and resources, helps residents build consensus, bridges any gaps between a general lack of understanding about affordable housing and potential solutions, and changes local conversations about affordable housing to be more positive.

Examples of work done in other communities – lots of coalition building among diverse stakeholders, such as

- Housing for All Acton – articles before town meeting, got 89% of the vote & got new housing built
- Amherst Aff. Hsg. Coalition – built visibility, buttons, lots of fear encountered about homeless shelter/supported housing development
- Housing Medford – passed inclusionary zoning, held community conversations,. & got more rental assistance out to residents
- Lynn Housing Coalition
- Newton – referendum vote for a new development that included 150 affordable units, got a yes vote on that
- Equitable Arlington – looked at restrictive covenants & advocated for change there
- Revere Housing Coal. – worked on inclusionary zoning

Comments – Participation from the audience –

- person who lives in Sullivan Building (Nbpt.) feels we don't need more affordable housing;
- there were 400 applications for the 42 affordable units in Salisbury at the Residences at Salisbury Square;
- woman who has been living in her car x 10 yrs. & works saving marine wildlife-thinks we need a Homeless Advocate in each city & town; person on Social Security with limited & fixed income who can't find housing;
- important to focus on needs/roadblocks/solutions; people with money who prevent developments in private spaces, but act like they have compassion; can't manage property taxes & the cost of housing

c. Who is in the room and why? – residents from various city & towns, politicians running for office, former politicians, people representing churches & social service agencies, those who see housing as an urgent issue. There was a recent Daily News article about someone leaving their city due to inability to find housing in the same community they lived in for so long when they sold their home.

2. What is Greater Newburyport's Housing Story?

a. Data sharing- Monica – population is declining, as it is in state, partly due to costs; age range – has become less evenly distributed, there are fewer young people, many of whom are migrating; school enrollment has stayed steady; predominantly white, as is much of MA; rental units have decreased over time; overwhelming white population, few people of color; single fam. detached homes is predominant housing, not a lot density; housing units built by year – amount of housing has decreased yr. by yr., again reflective of state; most homes are over \$700,000; homeowners are making higher incomes; more people are cost-burdened (paying more than 30% of income on housing), more renters are paying a higher percentage on housing; we are the 2nd or 3rd most expensive state to rent or own; many older homes are being torn down & being replaced with far more expensive homes; \$2000/mo. for 1 BR

Comments –

- we need all levels of housing that's affordable – workforce + low income housing;
 - people can get utility & rental assistance, especially seniors;
 - advocate for lower taxes for elders;
 - make sure people know about resources; Revere is a good ex. – they have a circuit breaker for elders, use Community Preservation Committee \$;
 - need to find out how much developable land is in the area – identify parcels, industrial sites that might be used;
 - can Mayor stop businesses from doing things like having automatic sprinklers (no matter the weather);
 - higher density in Nbpt. & Amesbury; conversation in some towns just gets shut down when wetlands are an issue, along with school space;
 - we need to change the conversation - when the focus becomes more parking for new units, it's exclusionary talk; Nbpt. is walkable & bikeable, Parking is NOT a housing problem; you see lots of traffic coming in to work here everyday – in child care, schools, restaurants, hospitals, businesses, etc.
 - where might we have the most success – zoning changes, affordable developments, advocacy work, going after vacant sites,...
- 3. What is keeping housing and affordable housing from getting built in Greater Newburyport?

a. Key barriers – housing production, water/sewer capacity, etc.

b. What are the concerns you hear about housing production in your conversations with others

4. Next Steps

a. Ongoing meeting – will be monthly, 1st. or 2nd. Wk. of Dec. will be next one – ? discuss zoning issues, getting behind a developer, education, meet with select people, etc.

b. Communication among groups

Merr. Valley Planning Comm. will be doing community meetings to talk about Housing Prod. Plan – it will be held on 11/16 for Nbpt. at the Sr. Ctr., 6 pm; other town meeting with MVPC will also be planned & will be communicated; John – spoke about Y's mission – eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. This is done by supporting affordable housing, providing childcare and wellness activities.