



Newark Rental Housing Workgroup

Subcommittee #3 – Affordable and Non-Student Rental Housing

Meeting Notes

June 13, 2019

Subcommittee Members in Attendance

Marguerite Ashley, Workgroup Chair
Meghan George
Carla Grygiel
Mike Fortner
Justin Murray
Ryan Straub
Dr. Freeman Williams, Subcommittee Chair
Mary Ellen Gray, City of Newark

In addition, four stakeholders from the public were also in attendance. They were:

Glenn Schmalhofen – landlord
Stephanie Petersen – Newark Code Enforcement Manager
Opal Palmer – landlord
Marene Jordan – Executive Director, Newark Housing Authority

Facilitators:

Allysha Lorber
Sarah Diehl

Discussion Summary

JMT provided a brief review of the May 16th meeting to catch the members of the public up to date of subcommittee goals and progress. The discussion also included an overview of tools that could be used to achieve subcommittee goals.

Zoning Modifications

- Parking requirements need to be added or expanded upon and better communicated as it pertains to zoning.
- There is a lack of affordable housing requirements in the City's current zoning code – this must be addressed.
- Discussion of building heights throughout Newark:
 - Height is a touchy subject with the City
 - Taller buildings would not be wanted along the Main Street corridor but would be seen as less of a problem along the perimeter of the City
 - Look to loosen height restrictions in certain areas to increase density
- Mary Ellen Gray provided an overview of Comprehensive Plan changes that are in discussion for four different areas of Newark:
 - New London Ave & the W Main Street community
 - Cleveland Ave to Prospect Street

- Center Street
- Chapel Street/Haines Street redevelopment area
- A proposed text amendment to the Comprehensive Plan would allow for increased density for student housing, particularly in areas with an older housing stock but are more walkable to the university.
 - This will hopefully fulfill student housing needs while taking pressure off neighborhoods
 - A text amendment is being made rather than a map amendment to keep particulars from being bogged down. In the future, there would be hopeful less resistance to a map change.
 - Higher density would allow for 11 stories or above
 - Adding a new zoning classification would encourage smaller units
 - Smaller units will help with affordability and transferability
- Inclusionary Zoning - Discussion of best practice from State College, PA
 - 10% of units must be affordable
 - These units must be available at the same time as market units, or pay fee in lieu/donate land
 - Units can be built elsewhere
 - Can Newark adopt a similar model?
 - Housing developments for non-students can be obtained and built through fee in lieu paid or by land donated
- Creating Choices for Newark residents:
 - The needs of all must be met- those who need the financial support with housing and those that do not
 - Families can rent in “student housing” if really want, and vice versa
 - Landlord/tenant code must be followed: everyone must be treated equally in rental process in that it only comes down to financial eligibility in the rental process.
 - Fair housing: it is not fair to section off parts of particular areas as affordable, market rate, etc. What if someone outside of the affordable housing realm wants to live in the geographic area that has been deemed as affordable.
 - **Consider fee in lieu/inclusionary zoning model for Newark**
 - Fees could Supplement rent to own models
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU): currently not permitted in Newark zoning code
 - Referencing examples from New Castle County, City of Wilmington, City of Dover, Kent County and Cecil County.
 - Considerations for a new ADU zoning ordinance in Newark:
 - Homeownership requirement is key
 - No family member requirement – too difficult to enforce
 - Limit on number of tenants in unit, could go by square footage
 - Could do away with parking requirements if necessary
 - Setback requirements
 - Limit overall size or percent of home living space
 - Architectural and advertising standards to promote consistency with neighborhood character
 - AirBnB type rentals – currently not allowed in Newark and therefore would not be allowed for ADUs



- Also look at Durango, CO case study for City promotional campaign to build support with the public. Reference:

<https://www.citylab.com/design/2016/05/how-one-colorado-city-instantly-created-affordable-housing/483027/>

- Overlay Districts: illegal in Newark
 - Considering zoning amendment to increase density and diversity of rental housing stock options in downtown area.
 - Let the text amendment to the City Comp Plan take the same effect that the overlay district might

Current City Programs

- Discussion of other best practices in West Virginia, Iowa, and Vermont
 - Rental Unit to Owner-Occupied Housing Models
 - Partnerships with universities to support program funding
- POOH Program (Promoting Owner Occupancy of Homes): past City program
 - Revenues from a potential fee-in-lieu/inclusionary zoning ordinance similar to the Borough of State College could be used to help fund this program again

Development Opportunities

- Newark needs to continue to attract diverse communities. Building units should include amenities attractive to seniors, families, or other demographic groups and not focus solely on building rental housing with amenities geared towards students.
- AARP Survey of desirable housing amenities for seniors – these types of features should be considered in housing development so that seniors aren't excluded:

<https://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/general/home-community-services-10.pdf>

- Subcommittee expressed interest in student/senior assisted living facility relationship where UD students would be provided cheaper housing in exchange for working with the seniors or around the facility
 - This would have to be a property owner initiative
 - Example references:

<https://www.senioradvisor.com/blog/2016/12/mixed-age-senior-living-makes-inroads-in-the-us/>

<https://www.bayalarmmedical.com/medical-alert-blog/mixed-age-cohousing-proving-popular-as-alternative-to-assisted-living-facilities/>

- General concern where some of these initiatives/development could take place: Newark is already built out
- How can the NHA be worked into new programs → housing market and diversification is key

Goal Recap & Solution Progress

1. Better understand the full range of rental housing demand within Newark: **reach out to Ryan Straub for further clarification**
2. Identify more opportunities to help rent-burdened families find good quality rental housing that accepts NHA vouchers inside the city limits: **Inclusionary zoning models**
3. Identify opportunities to collect revenue and incentivize more diverse and affordable housing stock options: **Inclusionary zoning models**
4. Identify areas to improve safety and increase overall neighborhood appeal for non-student renters: **follow-up with Workgroup/Police officers on the 26th, what type of hot spot policing already exists**
5. Identify locations to increase development density and support more diverse rental housing development: **text amendment to the Comp Plan should help with this, need to address "Diverse" by code; concept needs to be promoted**
6. Identify opportunities to increase home ownership with programs to help renters become homeowners and to convert rental units into owner-occupied homes: **similar to goal #3 with inclusionary zoning, consider reinstating the POOH program.**

Items for Next Meeting

- Explore opportunities to partner with other nonprofits in addition to the NHA (Habitat for Humanity, Diamond State Land Trust, NCALL (National Council on Agricultural Life & Labor Research Fund, Inc.), First State)
 - To help generate revenue and funding sources
- Explore possible tenant education programs for those who are struggling to pay rent
 - Money management, responsible spending, etc.

Action Items

- Dr. Freeman to work with JMT to develop report out presentation for next Workgroup session