

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY FAIR HOUSING TASK FORCE

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Meeting Minutes

February 27, 2024

1. **Call to Order and Determination of a Quorum.** Fred Hanss called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

Members Present: Bob Santamoor; Katie Geidel; Amy Plumadore; Mike McQuade; Maureen Rickett (Designee for Andrea Montgomery); Jim O’Neill; Tiffany Pray; Mike Zagrobelny; Matilda Larson (Designee for Jason Pfothenhauer); James Galasinski; Fred Hanss; PJ Herne. **A quorum was established.**

Others Present: Sally Santangelo, CNY Fair Housing; Pamela Weed-Nichols, NYS Attorney General’s Office; Candy Merritt, Legal Aid Society of NNY; Bob Beckstead, Watertown Daily Times;

2. **Adoption of the Agenda.** Larson offered an addition to the agenda. Under new business: “Selection of new Task Force Chair” The modified agenda was unanimously accepted.
3. **Approval of November 28th Meeting Minutes.** The minutes for the previous meeting were approved (Zagrobelny/Santamoor). Hanss abstained.
4. **New Business.**

- a. Potsdam Housing Authority expansion project update – Bob Santamoor

- They have been working on the project for around two years. They will be adding 36 one-bedroom units, 36 two-bedroom units, and 16 three-bedroom units for a total of 88 new units. They will also be renovating the existing 100 units. They are hopeful the Potsdam Planning Board will review the project by early April. There are not many zoning issues to worry about, and they will look to finish the project in 18 months. When the new apartments are finished, they plan to move their current residents into these new spaces and keep them there permanently.
- Hanss: Will they be looking for a tax credit for this project?
- Santamoor: Yes, 4%. They are also looking for grant opportunities for funding.

- Zagrobelny: Where is the project located?
- Santamoor: Behind the Seacomm Plaza in Potsdam.
- Zagrobelny: Is there a tax benefit to the Village?
- Santamoor: There will most likely be an additional PILOT payment.
- Zagrobelny: What will the funding source be?
- Santamoor: Grants, HCR, and bonds.
- Larson: When is the construction date?
- Santamoor: End of June.
- Zagrobelny: Where will the population be coming from? Will it be mostly Potsdam residents or a migration of people into Potsdam?
- Santamoor: Most likely a combination of the two. They have people come from as far as New York City and as close as Potsdam.
- Larson: The County Planning Office provided a letter of support to the Potsdam Housing Authority.

b. Resolution to the BOL to proclaim April as Fair Housing Month

- Staff included a copy of the draft resolution to proclaim April as Fair Housing Month. This resolution is submitted annually to recognize April for the adoption of the Fair Housing Act. In this resolution, staff make mention of a fair housing workshop that will be held in partnership with CNY Fair Housing at the HSC. There will be two in-person training sessions on March 25th; one for landlords and one for tenants and service providers. The resolution will be submitted to the board in time for their March committee meeting with an adoption in April.

5. Old Business. Santimaw reviewed edits staff have made to the Assessment of Fair Housing since the November meeting. Staff added six maps, and summaries of the October 2022 fair housing stakeholder meetings and of fair housing complaints received by partner agencies that were discussed at the November Fair Housing Task Force meeting. He also outlined next steps for the Assessment including goals and action items.

6. Reports.

a. Agency Updates

- Bob Santamoor said that they are moving forward with a merger between the Canton Housing Authority and the Potsdam Housing Authority.
- Fred Hanss said that the Village of Potsdam hopes to get out to public bid in late March or early April for the River Walk trail project.
- PJ Herne said that he is now officially a member of the Fair Housing Task Force since he was appointed between this meeting and the November 2023 meeting.

b. Staff plan to schedule the public hearing for the Fair Housing Assessment the week of April 22nd. A time and location will be determined.

c. Santimaw stated that the Planning Office will collaborate with a SLU Fellowship student, Finn Paulsen, in the summer on a fair housing zoning analysis map for St. Lawrence County. This map will examine a potential correlation between zoning ordinances and income discrimination in population centers. They will use a story map

- created by CNY Fair Housing for a zoning analysis based on racial discrimination in Syracuse as a template.
- d. Larson asked if anyone would be interested in being the new Task Force Chair for the next three years. She asked if PJ Herne would be willing to take on this responsibility; PJ plans to consider it.
 - e. Zagrobelny recommended investing in an updated microphone system so that persons attending virtually can hear the discussion in the room.
 - b. The next Fair Housing Task Force meeting will be Tuesday, May 21st at 10:00 am at the One Stop Career Center Classroom A at 80 State Highway 310, Canton.

7. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 10:46 AM (Santamoor/Zagrobelny).

Respectfully submitted,

Preston Santimaw

Planner I