

**Minutes of the Fair Housing Task Force  
Wednesday, April 30, 2014  
Village Hall - Room 101**

**Present:** Chair Glenn Brewer; Members Pat Cesario, Joe Cregler, Meg Herman, Scott Jensen, Gloria Merrill, Dawn Mueller, Patrice Myers, Andrea Ott (joined the meeting at 7:15 p.m.), Bill Planek, Fr. George Omwando

**Absent:** Members Bob Tucker and John Murtagh

**Also Present:** Village President Anan Abu-Taleb, Village Manager Cara Pavlicek, Development Customer Services Director Tammie Grossman, Village Attorney Paul Stephanides; Oak Park Regional Housing Center; Executive Director Rob Breymaier, Oak Park Residence Corporation Executive Director Maria Saldana

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Brewer called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

**2. Ground Rules and April 16, 2014 Minutes**

The Ground Rules and April 16, 2014 Minutes were distributed for review and will be presented at the May 14, 2014 meeting for adoption.

**3. Work Plan**

Chair Brewer stated that the major item for review tonight is to develop a work plan in order to get an overall goal on various topics to guide our attempt to accomplish a list that needs to be completed by October 31, 2014.

**4. Enforcement of Existing Laws and Ordinances**

Chair Brewer stated that as the Task Force engages in understanding the enforcement of existing laws and ordinances, it was discussed as to how the Task Force would recommend that the Board enforce existing laws. Some suggestions were to interview previous staff and/or outside experts who may have experience with the enforcement mechanism that took place back in the 1970's through 1990's to determine if that process is the appropriate process or not.

Member Cregler suggested a potential project to determine appropriate consequences for any illegal conduct and to consider interviewing HOPE fair housing. Also, to look outside to other organizations such as the Illinois Association of Realtors Code of Ethics to see what they do which might be more detailed and helpful and as to the extent of their education. We might also look to how HUD and other local, county, state and federal agencies enforce

housing laws. It was suggested looking into issues pertaining to crime in the vicinity and region and the impact of crime on housing issues and incorporate in the discussion of law enforcement from the Village Police Department.

## 5. Community Education

Executive Director Rob Breymaier suggested educating the public to be able to respond when a member of the public may have been discriminated against. It was suggested that landlords also receive education. Member Cregler suggested a project for landlords and tenants by researching and developing some kind of Q and A that could be published on the website for landlord and tenant training and what their rights are.

Development Customer Service Director Tammie Grossman stated that both the *Wednesday Journal* and *Oak Leaves* published disclosure language in their newspapers. Member Planek stated that about 90% of apartment rentals are done online with no paper involved. It was suggested to review what training is offered by the Housing Center. The Village also performs training which could also be reviewed.

Chair Brewer suggested getting a better understanding of how people use technology to search for housing and whether people are made aware of their fair housing rights through that technology. Member Jensen suggested interviewing housing provider experts. It was suggested to generate a list of other organizations that provide housing social services that we should be working with.

It was suggested that the Task Force obtain information from the Housing Center and Residence Corporation as to how many landlords there are in Oak Park to understand what kind of volume there is. The whole idea is what sources in the community do we want to partner with to be a vehicle for community education – churches, library, Wednesday Journal? To also think about physical outreach from a technology standpoint too or a community outreach campaign to some extent. It was also suggested that the Task Force ask the Building and Owners Management Association of Oak Park (“BOMA”) to partner in part of an education plan. BOMA has already made a public statement that it co-sponsor such a program.

It was suggested to review current community education programs by the Village's Community Relations Department and assessing those programs. It was also suggested speaking with local State of Illinois elected representatives and groups such as West Suburban PADS. Development Customer Services Director Grossman commented that the recent Crime Free Housing Ordinance made it mandatory for all rental units to be licensed and that there is an annual management seminar in which the community relations director gives an overview of the fair housing laws. It was suggested review what goes into that actual training to see if there are improvements that need to be made and what the Task Force can use from other sources to improve that training. It was suggested having a link/form on the website to report discrimination and what are the avenues are as to reporting that discrimination. Chair Brewer stated that we will perform conflict checks as we move forward.

## **6. Oversight of Housing Related Agencies in Oak Park**

It was suggested to look into how the partner agencies are overseeing and implementing the Fair Housing Act. We should also look at the evolution of the partner agencies and what role they play in providing fair housing education. Development Customer Services Director Grossman stated that Village's housing programs budget currently provides funding for the Village's partner agencies – Oak Park Housing Center, Oak Park Residence Corporation and Oak Park Housing Authority. Community Relations Director Cedric Melton will prepare a report on mediation, diversity counseling and how training is done so the Task Force can gain a better understanding on the agencies that deal with housing in Oak Park.

## **7. Next Steps**

Chair Brewer stated that once all the proposed information is available for everyone, the Task Force should come back at its next meeting and analyze, review, distill and finalize what projects would be in the purview of the Task Force. Chair Brewer asked that the Task Force consider what can be accomplished, when the Task Force can accomplish the projects and what is it that will be the outcome.

## **8. Overview of Village Community Housing and Community Development Programs**

Development Customer Services Director Grossman gave a detailed overview of the Village's different housing and community development programs in the 2014 budget and how the programs are operated.

## **9. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

## **10. Next Meeting Dates**

May 14, 2014 and May 28, 2014.

## **11. Adjourn**

It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.