

Inner Core Committee

A subregion of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council including 21 cities and towns:

Arlington • Belmont • Boston • Brookline • Cambridge • Chelsea • Everett • Lynn • Malden • Medford •
Melrose • Milton • Needham • Newton • Quincy • Revere • Saugus • Somerville • Waltham • Watertown • Winthrop

Inner Core Committee Field Visit

2 of 4 FY19

Wednesday, December 19, 8:45 - 11:00 am

DND, 26 Court Street #9, Conference Room 9C, 9th floor
Boston MA 02108

Summary Notes

Membership in attendance:

Virginia Bullock, Brookline
Chris Cotter, Cambridge
John DePriest, Chelsea
Emma Schnur, Melrose
Dan Bartman, Somerville
James Freas, Newton
Erin Zwirko, Arlington
Tech Leng, Revere

Guests: Domonique Williams, Boston OHS; Ellen Shachter, Somerville OHS

Dominique Williams, Boston OHS

- Founded in 2016; funded through ESG and City appropriation; referrals from partners, via the 311 system, walk-ins, attending community meetings
- Mission to increase housing stability and affordability, through:
 - Case management
 - 7 staff, 100 cases/week
 - Program management
 - Fund non-profit partners
 - Policy making
 - Data-driven approach
- Tools
 - Housing Works Database for Affordable Housing applications
 - Emergency shelter assistance
 - Metrolist email blast with housing opportunities
- Tenancy Preservation
 - City flex funds for rental arrears (up to 30% AMI, may increase), as well as RAFT (up to 50% AMI)

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- Landlord counseling and dispute resolution, mediation prior to court proceedings
- Housing Court Assistance Program (through Home Start and GBLS)
- Evening clinic (education and awareness of legal rights); 2/month for landlords and tenants
- OHS resource guides in multiple languages (tenants, landlords, eviction guide)
 - Distribute information at community events and public institutions
- Policy
 - Jim Brooks Stabilization Act
 - Rent Arrearage Assistance Program (HB84)
 - Right to Counsel
- Eviction Data Collection (where, how much is owed, cause, market-rate vs. Affordable Housing occupant)
- Eviction Prevention Task Force
 - New, 2 meetings so far
 - Based on Philadelphia model
 - Comprised of legal, government, housing providers, property managers
 - Brainstorming on policy; recommendations to be made via a report to the Mayor

Ellen Shachter, Somerville OHS

- The Mayor and Aldermen prioritized established of the OHS after hearing it was a priority on the campaign trail
- Part of OSPCD
- Initial funding request in 2018; used to data on displacement risk to support funding request to City
- Launched a big engagement process to establish the office
- Two-fold mission: direct services to residents; regional approach to policy and programming
 - Focus on homeowners as well as renters; give information to all (no income ceiling)
- Maintain a list of open wait lists and housing opportunities for housing search purposes
 - Private market housing search service for voucher holders and those of all incomes
 - Voluntary Jim Brooks program
- Will issue a RFP for tenant organizing support
- Interest in launching a Section 8 incentive program for landlords who renter to voucher holders
 - Would make up the gap with a one-time incentive fee
 - Similar to Boston's landlord guarantee pilot program
 - 3-year program
 - Would use new housing resources to get these tenants into permanent housing solutions

Dan Bartman, Somerville, on Inclusionary Zoning

- Threshold of 6 units
- 20% set-aside for 18+ units

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- 3 price tiers (rather than income ranges)
- Director of Housing determines preference criteria (Section F, p. 518)
- PILU reflects difference in construction techniques

Discussion

- Idea of a regional OHS portal or service with informational materials and resources to complement local offices
- Push enabling legislation for real estate transfer fee
- Push enabling legislation for inclusionary zoning
- [All In Cities Anti-Displacement Policy Network](#)