



Fair Housing Advocate

Summer 2009

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A PROJECT OF COORDINATED STATEWIDE HOUSING SERVICES FOR THE CHAMPLAIN VALLEY OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Furthering Fair Housing in Shelburne

Housing discrimination is against the law. In Vermont, it is illegal to discriminate in the sale, rental or financing of housing because of a person's membership in a protected category. The Fair Housing Project works to eradicate housing discrimination in Vermont through outreach, education, and enforcement of Fair Housing Laws.

Protected Categories

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Religion
- Sex
- Disability
- Age
- Marital Status
- Family Status
- Receipt of Public Assistance
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity

Fair housing is frequently associated with individual acts of discrimination – a landlord refusing to rent to someone because of their race or because they have children, for instance. However, zoning and permitting decisions have an important role to play in furthering access to fair and affordable housing. A proposed development in Shelburne, Vermont provides an excellent opportunity for the town to further fair housing by creating an innovative mixed-income development that would increase the supply of housing in the village, address the growing gap in senior housing and provide permanent homes for the people currently residing in mobile homes at the site.

The Shelburnewood develop-

ment would add twenty-eight single family homes, eight duplexes and sixty-four affordable and market town homes in downtown Shelburne. Also integrated into the proposed development are senior living facilities, including twenty-eight town homes for seniors. This project would substantially further fair housing in Shelburne by providing dozens of permanently affordable units to families, people with disabilities, people who receive public assistance and other members of protected classes; it would provide affordable housing opportunities for teachers, police officers and low income families while also increasing the stock of market rate housing; and it would provide all of this within walking distance of

downtown, greatly reducing the impact of additional vehicles on Shelburne Roads.

Over the past four years, the Shelburne town board and Shelburne residents have rightfully provided input, voiced concerns and requested additional information. The developers have repeatedly responded and adapted the development to address those concerns. Shelburne has an exciting opportunity to further fair housing and add hundreds of consumers to its growing downtown business district, promoting sustainable growth. The Fair Housing Project and The Mobile Home Project of CVOEO look forward to seeing this development break ground soon.

Would You Like to Partner with Us?

Are you interested in learning more about fair housing laws? Would you like to host a fair housing training for your organization or clients? Have you heard of housing discrimination in your community? Are you interesting in inclusionary zoning for your town? If so, we would like to hear from you!

The Fair Housing Project staff are currently working on a project timeline for 2010-2011. We are looking to continue and expand our education and outreach efforts across Vermont. FHP works with landlords, tenants, property managers, real estate agents, housing associations, community organizations, homebuyers, municipal officials,

and anyone else involved in the sale, rental, or financing of housing. Contact Dani Fuoco, Education & Outreach Coordinator at dfuoco@cvoeo.org or 864-3334 x109 to learn more.



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Thank you for taking the time to read this publication. If you would like to receive a hard copy in the mail please contact our office at the above number. This newsletter is made possible by a grant from the US Dept. of Housing & Urban Development.



\$62.5 Million Settlement in Westchester False Claims Case

All entities that receive federal housing funds must, as a condition of the funding, demonstrate a commitment to affirmatively further fair housing. On August 11, 2009 the Anti Discrimination Center of NYC won an unprecedented \$62.5 million settlement in a housing de-segregation case against Westchester County, NY. Back in February, the court ruled that between 2000 and 2006 the county had “utterly failed” to fulfill its obligation to affirmatively further fair housing and that each of the county’s certifications that it had or would affirmatively further fair housing was “false or fraudulent”. The county received over \$50 million of federal funds over that six year period.

This settlement will compel the county to spend more than \$50 million to build or acquire 750 homes or apart-

ments, 630 of which must be provided in towns where blacks constitute 3 percent or less of the population and Hispanic residents make up less than 7 percent. Westchester has seven years to complete the affordable housing units. The units will be aggressively marketed to non-whites in the county and in New York City. Federal housing officials will appoint a monitor to ensure compliance.

This settlement will have a major impact on the way federal housing and community development funds are used throughout the country. Many of the problems we face as a nation are highly correlated to racial segregation patterns in housing markets. Integrating communities will decrease concentrations of poverty and increase access to education and job opportunities.

Removing Barriers to Strengthen Communities: Affordable Housing and Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing at the Local Level

This workshop will explain the relationship between fair housing law and land use regulations. Tools will be provided to help municipalities avoid violating federal and state fair housing laws.

All municipalities receiving community development grants from the Vermont Community Development Program must complete a Fair Housing Training as a condition of funding. Any municipality dealing with issues such as affordable housing, group homes, residential care facilities, requests for accessibility modifications, or seeking VCDP funding, cannot afford to miss this workshop.

September 10th 2009, 9am—12pm

Milton Municipal Building Community Room, 43 Bombardier Rd, Milton VT
Northwest & Chittenden County Regional Planning Commissions

October 1st 2009, 6pm—9pm

Waterbury, VT

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

January 14th 2010

Southern Windsor & Windham County Regional Planning Commissions

Free and open to the public

To register call Dani Fuoco at the CVOEO FHP 802-864-3334 x 109 or email
dfuoco@cvoeo.org.

FAIR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT

Vermont Human Rights Commission

1-800-416-2010

1-802-828-2480 (voice/TDD)

**U.S. Dept of Housing & Urban
Development**

1-800-827-5005

1-617-565-5453 (TTY)



Do you have questions about your tenant rights and responsibilities?

Contact **Vermont Tenants Inc.**

864-0099