

8 **Housing Work Group – Elderly and Assisted Living Housing**
9 Meeting Notes of April 17, 2007, 4:30 pm, Martha’s Vineyard Commission

10
11 *Present - Members: Richard Toole (Chair), John Best, Barbara Day, Al DeVito, Michael Jumpel, Kristine McDonald,*
12 *Dorothy Young*

13 *Present – MVC Staff: Bill Veno, Christine Flynn*

14
15 Meeting opened at 4:39 pm.

16
17 **1. Welcome and Introductions:**

18 Richard Toole welcomed the participants to the meeting. Mr. Toole introduced himself as a member of
19 the Steering Committee and the Housing Work Group’s Liaison to the Steering Committee. Members
20 then introduced themselves around the table. Since the focus of the discussion was on Elder and
21 Assisted Living. Mr. Toole asked those representing Island Elderly Housing (IEH) to provide information
22 regarding their operations and needs.

23
24 **2. Small Group Conversations:**

25 **A. Identify housing needs for elderly and assisted living:**

26 Al DeVito, Island Elderly Housing board member, began to give an overview of the services that are
27 provided by IEH. IEH has developed 165 units of housing largely for seniors 62 years of age or older
28 in addition to individuals who are the physically disabled. IEH’s tenants qualify for very low-income
29 (30% of the Area Median Income) housing and low-income (50% of the Area Median Income) housing.
30 One hundred and twenty five of the units are reserved strictly for elderly housing and the remaining 40
31 units have both elderly and disabled tenants who do not meet the age requirements but do qualify for
32 assisted living. All the housing units are managed by IEH and also qualify for the state’s Chapter 40B
33 Subsidized Housing Inventory.

34
35 Mr. DeVito went on to explain that there are four campuses for IEH. Hillside Village, which is located in
36 Tisbury, has one - 40 unit apartment complex, two –10 unit apartment complexes and three – 5 unit
37 apartment complexes. Hillside Village was funded by US Department of Agriculture under rural grant
38 program and is not restricted to elderly housing. Woodside Village, which is located in Oak Bluffs, has
39 95 apartment units. All of the Woodside Village units are restricted to elderly housing. Another
40 campus in Oak Bluffs is Aidlyberg I & II, which is also restricted to elderly housing, comprises two – 5
41 unit apartments. Both Woodside Village and Aidlyberg campuses were developed with funds from the
42 federal Office of Housing and Urban Development. The apartments have common spaces and
43 community kitchens.

44
45 Mr. DeVito went on to explain that IEH is not a certified “assisted living facility” however IEH does
46 provide assisted living like services to their tenants. IEH’s provides through their service coordinator

1 meals on wheels, visits with nurses, hospice care, and mental health services, in addition to elder
2 services. Transportation is provided to residents to take them shopping in town to do shopping three
3 times a week. IEH does not receive government funding to provide these services. But with the help of
4 private contributions, small grants, and nominal fees charged to tenants enables IEH to provide such
5 services.
6

7 Dorothy Young, Property Manager, then went on to describe housing needs. Ms. Young reported that
8 IEH has met almost the entire housing need for elderly housing. Ms. Young stated that the wait lists
9 have dropped off in the last few years. It was asked what was the cause for the decline in wait list
10 numbers? Ms. Young responded the recent development projects have now been filled with tenants. It
11 was also pointed out that elderly housing does have a high turnover rate. Ms. Young also stated that
12 even though the need for elderly housing has been covered there is still a housing need for the
13 physically and mentally disabled. It was asked if IEH would anticipate future housing needs for the
14 elderly given that Martha's Vineyard is a retirement community. Ms. Young stated that within the next
15 five years they did not anticipate an increase in need for elderly housing however beyond that would
16 require a housing needs assessment specifically for elderly housing.
17

18 The discussion then turned to the issue of independent retirees who want or need to downsize from their
19 current housing situation. Many people as they get older no longer want or can physically maintain a
20 home. It was mentioned that the options to downsize on the Vineyard are marginal for two reasons one
21 there aren't enough housing options such as condo's or apartment buildings (ideally located in town
22 such as Haven Side Apartments) and second if someone were to sell their current home and then
23 purchase something smaller may not be the best option. Given the current real estate values and
24 options to downsize, it might be better for an individual to stay put or move off island.
25

26 Another issue to consider for those who are self-employed and are considering retirement is that the
27 major asset for retirement is their home. Many self-employed individuals with no 401K, pension or
28 retirement plan will often sell their home and move off island. There is no opportunity to transition to a
29 smaller home such as a condo or apartment unit.
30

31 It was pointed out that in Tisbury there is Haven Side Apartments, which are managed by the Episcopal
32 Church. Haven Side Apartments are restricted to senior citizens who are on limited incomes. The
33 apartments are ideal for two reasons. First the apartments are affordable and second the apartment
34 complex is centrally located in town within walking distance to services, restaurants, and library. It was
35 also pointed out that Haven Side has been in existence for over 20 years and there is an eight-year
36 waiting list to get into these apartment units.
37

38 It was then asked why private developers have not tapped into developing housing for independent
39 retirees? It was pointed out that the housing needs for this component of the housing market has not
40 been studied. The housing needs would need to be quantified. The private sector or other affordable
41 housing entities would need to run the numbers in order for this to be economically viable. It was
42 pointed out that Polly Brown's Continuing Care Retirement Community would require a substantial
43 investment in terms of up front costs and its not guaranteed that these units would receive government
44 subsidies.
45

1 Even if there is a market for this kind of transitional housing for independent retirees, the Vineyard
2 as an island may not be the perfect market. It was pointed out that health and medical needs are often
3 times the deciding factor for individuals to remain on the Vineyard or simply move to a location where
4 specialized medical services are more accessible. Even those with family on island, it is still difficult to
5 access specialized care. It was also pointed out that those who reside at Haven Side or IEH do so until
6 they die or they need to be moved into a nursing home.

7
8 For a development to be successful like Haven Side Apartments, location in town is critical. In order to
9 achieve maximum density would require the development to tie into town water and wastewater
10 facilities. The other reason for maximizing density is to ensure that the development costs are offset and
11 the project is economically viable.

12
13 If a project was located in West Tisbury, for example where there is no town water or town sewer, it
14 becomes virtually impossible to achieve maximum density. Once a project exceeds 12 bedrooms there
15 has to be a municipal water supply that consumes a great deal of land – 200 foot no build radius
16 around the well. DEP standards count 2 people per bedroom with a maximum of 26 people that
17 requires a project to have a municipal water supply. In addition to DEP standards, the project would
18 also be subject to the MVC's DRI review process. The MVC has established nitrogen-loading limits that
19 are more stringent than Title V. In order to meet MVC standards would also require more land in
20 addition to costly denitrifying systems.

21
22 It was pointed out that even if the project were a 40B, which allows projects to supercede local zoning,
23 however, the project would still have to meet DEP, Title V, and MVC DRI review standards.
24 Comprehensive Permits would be better suited in town where projects could tie into town water and
25 sewer systems. It was suggested that affordable housing groups should approach town wastewater
26 committees to allocate flow specifically for affordable housing projects.

27
28 It was also pointed out that 40B projects that are age-restricted to individuals 55 and over receive
29 greater support from towns because there are no school age children. It was also suggested that any
30 friendly 40B rental projects push all the right buttons because the towns receive credit towards the
31 State's Subsidized Housing Inventory for all of the rental units not just the affordable units.

32
33 It was also pointed out that those living in age-restricted communities are an economic benefit because
34 they are spending their retirement money on the Vineyard. Those in retirement also make up the
35 majority of volunteers who serve on town boards. More importantly, these individuals are active
36 participants within the community. But it was also pointed out that as individuals get older towns may
37 need to consider how to best provide services beyond health care. It was pointed out that individuals
38 need services that tend both to their physical and emotional state of mind.

39
40 It was pointed out that elder services provide at a discounted rate cleaning, transportation, in-house
41 personal grooming. But services such as landscaping or yard work or snow shoveling are not provided.
42 Financial and accounting services are needed. It was suggested that there be a service cooperative or
43 senior daycare.

44
45 It was concluded that both condo and rental apartment complexes in town would be ideal. The housing
46 needs for independent retirees, (future) elderly housing and assisted living, and nursing homes need to

1 be quantified. Services for all three age related sectors: independent retirees, elderly and assisted
2 living, and nursing homes need to be evaluated more comprehensively. And the housing needs of the
3 mentally and physically disabled need to be considered as well.

4

5 Meeting adjourned at 6:02 pm.

6

7 No future Housing Work Group meetings have been scheduled.

8

9 Notes prepared by Christine Flynn.

10

11

12

13

14

15