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Housing Work Group

Meeting Notes of November 20, 2006, 7:00 pm, Oak Bluffs Public Library

Present - Members: Richard Toole (Chair), John Abrams, Bill Bennett, Harriet Bernstein, Harvey Beth, Christina Brown, Candy DaRosa, Kendra Frakes, Marge Harris, Philippe Jordi, Rob Kendall, Richard Leonard, Caroline Locke, Tony Nevin, Ned Orleans, Ike Russell, Susan Shea, David Vigneault, Julie Willett,
Present – MVC Staff: Mark London, Christine Flynn, Christine Seidel

Meeting opened at 7:10 pm.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Richard Toole welcomed the participants to the first meeting of the full work group. Mr. Toole introduced himself as a member of the Steering Committee and the Housing Work Group’s Liaison to the Steering Committee. It was mentioned that he was designated chair of the Housing Work Group but the job is open to anyone who would like to volunteer for it.

2. The Island Plan

Mark London gave a PowerPoint overview of the Island Plan, the reasons for preparing it, its mission, and the roles of the Steering Committee, the Network of Planning Advisors, the Work Groups, and the Work Group Cores.

The Steering Committee – in addition to overseeing the overall process and content, and coordinating the efforts of the work groups – will be tackling a number of broad, multidisciplinary Big Issues/Ideas, namely: Global and Regional Forces, Sustainability, Development, Next Economy, Island-Wide/Town, and Vineyard Identity.

The Work Groups will focus on specific topics. The first five, now getting underway, deal with: Energy/Waste, Housing, Livelihood/Commerce, Natural Environment, and Water Resources. The next wave of Work Groups, to get started next year, will look at Built Environment, Culture/History, Health/Education, Governance, and Transportation.

Since between 40 and 130 people have signed onto each Work Group, the Steering Committee set up cores for each group that will meet more often to move the process forward, and has the responsibility to draft the Work Group documents, with the understanding that they should reflect the sense of the overall group.

3. The Housing Work Group

Philippe Jordi, Executive Director of the Island Housing Trust then gave an overview of the 2005 Updated Housing Needs Assessment for Martha’s Vineyard by John Ryan. Demographic information

1 such as population growth, age distribution, and income, in addition to home sales prices was
2 presented to the group. Mr. Jordi then outlined the 2001 and 2005 housing goals for the Vineyard.
3 Outlines of each of the affordable housing groups that are currently active on the island were presented
4 to the group.

5
6 Mr. Toole emphasized that the goal of the Housing Work Group is to deal with the broad spectrum of
7 housing, i.e. seasonal workforce housing, market rate housing not just affordable housing. He then
8 introduced the Housing Work Group Core: Marge Harris, Candy DaRosa, Christina Brown, Harvey
9 Beth, Philippe Jordi, Rob Kendall, and Ben Moore. It was mentioned that the Housing Work Group
10 Core has met 3 times and that the public is welcomed to attend any of the Housing WGC meetings. It
11 was suggested that the Housing WGC might add a few more individuals to balance the overall group
12 such as high and low-end housing developers and perhaps other aspects of the housing dynamic that
13 are not currently represented. Participants were encouraged to utilize the Island Plan website for
14 meeting schedules, meeting summaries, or additional information regarding the Island Plan process.

15 16 **4. Break-out Conversations**

17
18 The group then broke out into four different conversations (instead of five: Taxation and Community
19 Services were dropped) about various housing topics. In the following summaries, the first paragraph is
20 made up of the key points as presented to the whole group in the closing plenary session. The other
21 bullet points were notes taken by each group.

22 23 **1. Location and Type of Community Housing:**

24 John Abrams, Christina Brown, Philippe Jordi, Caroline Locke, Tony Nevin, Ike Russell

25
26 Sometimes there is a conflict between implementing smart growth principles versus taking advantage of
27 opportunities to build affordable housing. It would be ideal to have housing within walking distance to
28 schools, town services, and stores. It was suggested that to develop affordable housing, we would
29 need to rezone areas to model town villages. It would be advantageous to create dis-incentives to
30 challenge (appealing) Affordable Housing projects. Some dis-incentives were to deny a derby pin to
31 enter the Stripe Bass & Blue Fish Derby or to deny the use of airport facilities. It was suggested that all
32 affordable housing projects should aim to meet green building standards for energy efficiency.
33 Affordable housing projects can protect and enhance neighborhoods. It is recommended that all
34 affordable housing projects should include a broad mix of income thresholds:

- 35 • Opportunistic way to go – land price, land-payable: may come up anywhere/anytime.
- 36 • Long-term – can decide where, most advantageous
- 37 • Yes to everything
- 38 • Build-out capacity within town centers
- 39 • Dispersing AH sites has community values (if ?).
- 40 • Create new town density centers
- 41 • Use friendly 40B
- 42 • Conservation based affordable housing models should be utilized and those opportunities
43 should be promoted/encouraged (i.e. land bank, joint purchasing)
- 44 • Do opportunistic projects now and plan for best places to buy or rezone
- 45 • Outreach/education re: what present zoning allows

- 1 • Consider zoning by-right
- 2 • Affordable housing may preserve neighborhood character
- 3
- 4 • Create disincentive to appeal AH decisions:
 - 5 - no derby pin, no hunting licenses or no use of the airport facilities
 - 6 - Adopt 40R clause: locally
- 7 • Need to mix together affordable housing incomes with moderate income housing
- 8 • Green building principles:
 - 9 - cost big now – need to get beyond first cost phobia because low energy, low
 - 10 maintenance for housing is truly affordable
- 11 • Get supportive neighbors and AH recipients to talk to those neighbors that are not in favor of an
- 12 affordable housing project: Advocacy by many different people is important
- 13

14 **2. Form of Rental / Ownership:**

15 Candy DaRosa, Kendra Frakes, Marge Harris, Christine Seidel, Susan Shea, David Vigneault

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17 There was a debate whether town land should be utilized for housing programs that provide private

18 homeownership opportunities with no long-term restrictions such as resident homesite programs. What

19 is a better use of town assets (town land) for permanently restricted units – rental and homeownership?

20 Should the town land be viewed as public equity by the taxpayers? It was suggested that there should

21 be a mix of affordability restrictions with some restrictions in perpetuity and others lifted after 30 years.

22 There should be a mix of housing types such as ownership, rental, and lease to own options for

23 vineyard residents. It was agreed that there is an urgency to develop more rental units sooner. The

24 creation of more rental options would help stabilize the housing market. It was suggested that all

25 housing programs should move toward an island-wide local preference standard regarding residency

26 guidelines. (It was pointed out that durational residency requirements are illegal.) What percentage of

27 all affordable housing units should be reserved for essential workers (teachers, safety, etc.) was not

28 resolved. (The issue of seasonal workforce housing was not discussed.)

- 29 • Differentiation between subsidy of individual (time limited restriction) and public subsidy
- 30 (perpetual)
- 31 • Aging in place” through the “trading” up or down in restricted properties over a lifetime
- 32 • Lease to own option
- 33 • Stabilize market with rental on the way to ownership
- 34 • Address a wide range of incomes
- 35 • Some indexing of affordability to income
- 36 • Need to modify single family home standard
- 37 • Mix of perpetual home ownership and time limited restrictions
- 38 • Island wide residency requirements (vs. town specific)
- 39 • Residency reciprocity between towns – a resident from any island town has the same
- 40 opportunities as a town resident to participate in an affordable housing program of that
- 41 particular town
- 42 • (x) Percent of AH should be set aside for essential/workers but there has to be a mix of incomes
- 43

44 **3. Planning & Zoning Measures**

45 Bill Bennett, Harriet Bernstein, Rob Kendall, Richard Leonard, Mark London, Ned Orleans

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2 It was recommended that there should be a tax on homes that are rented for the summer. Revenue from
3 the tax would then earmarked to develop affordable housing projects. It was suggested that towns
4 should allow illegal apartments to get up to code. Zoning should allow for duplexes and multi-family
5 homes. The pros and cons of expanding town sewer were discussed. Amnesty should be given to
6 apartments that have been built. We need to create linkage thresholds for development. Working with
7 zoning to create smart growth centers for commerce and transportation. Develop greater understanding
8 of the impacts on the need for service workers when developing a 10,000 sq. ft. home.

- 9 • What should be allowed as of right?
 - 10 - Landlords can rent rooms to 3 unrelated individuals
 - 11 - 1 acre zoning
 - 12 - 10,000 sq ft, 8 bedroom house no restrictions all summer
- 13 • ? Community Housing – Affordable vs. vacation homes, housing for community
 - 14 - Tisbury – grandfathering apartments built w/out permits
 - 15 - Amnesty driven allows homeowner to build an apt.
- 16
- 17 • Slow down degrading imbalance of who gets to live here
- 18 • We have married both health and zoning restrictions
- 19 • Should recognize the “bad” housing
- 20 • Town sewer possibilities pro’s & con’s
 - 21 - Can not rehab 2000 sq ft housing into 2 families
 - 22 - But can build large 8000 sq ft. building for more legal apartments already that has
23 septic and is built....currently can’t be done
- 24 • Suggest measure to recognize illegal apts. And allow those units to get up to code.
- 25 • Create new affordable units in existing buildings.
- 26 • Additions to buildings for Affordable Housing (How to monitor)
- 27 • Permanently AH....?
- 28 • If someone rents one month to more than three unrelated people (to you) they are in violation of
29 zoning.
- 30 • Can’t legally move out and then rent to four unrelated people
- 31 • 10 or more units, one has to be Affordable at 5 trigger needs to be reviewed.
- 32 • Anti-growth vs. no growth – sensitive subject
- 33 • Suggest large developments create more housing need
- 34 • Survey commercial units.
- 35 • Land tax for AH – will come up again in state
- 36 • Can’t discount 10 BR house in Chilmark for housing needs in OB & VH
- 37 • 40R: State Law to create smart Development: dense, closer to sewer/transit
- 38 • Better utilized 2nd floors in town centers
- 39 • No tax currently on renting to many in summer
- 40 • Part of solution: Tax on Rentals in summer
- 41 • Legitimize Affordable units by adding to existing homes
- 42 • Increase Density
- 43 • Maybe expanding town sewers

44 **4. Market Housing:**

1 Harvey Beth, Christine Flynn, Julie Willett, Richard Toole

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3 As much as we may complain about current market rate housing, there are some positive aspects that
4 second homeowners contribute to the island community. The following were the top four positives of
5 market rate homeowners: economy, tax base, philanthropy, and diversity. The top five negative
6 aspects of market rate housing included the following: impact on property values, pressure on land use
7 and natural resources, loss of community due to the cost of living/housing, leakage – commuters
8 /drainage of economic resources, graying of the Vineyard due to young individuals and families
9 leaving the island. It was suggested that planned community development whereby zoning changes are
10 made and infrastructure is provided could be a benefit to the Vineyard community. New housing can
11 mitigate its impact on the housing needs of essential workers through linkage programs. Linkage
12 programs are incentives for developers to either increase density to provide actual affordable housing
13 units or provide monetary mitigation based on the size of a project. The group could not reach
14 consensus of whether or not the development of market rate housing should be limited.

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16 • Positive aspects of the market rate housing:

- 17 - Benefit the island economy by creating the need for jobs, support services
- 18 - Tax Base: Non-Voting Tax Payers subsidize town budgets without placing demand
19 on the mostly costly of town services – education
- 20 - Affluence
- 21 - Access for year-round services
- 22 - Summer community is appreciative of the island as a safe haven and its values
- 23 - Philanthropy
- 24 - Island is a community
- 25 - Martha's Vineyard's reputation is enhanced by the summer community:
 - 26 ▪ As a great place to visit
 - 27 ▪ Upbeat and fun persona
 - 28 ▪ Diversity of the Island
 - 29 ▪ Provides great exposure to things such as the arts, theatre,

30 • Negative aspects of market rate housing:

- 31 - Impact on Property Values
- 32 - Pressure on land use resources such as water, solid waste, air pollution, utilities,
33 transportation
- 34 - Not an active part of the community
- 35 - The more market rate homes the less affordable homes
- 36 - The island shuffle
- 37 - Loss of Community
- 38 - Leakage of money off island because people can no longer afford to live on the
39 island
- 40 - Create turn over of property
 - 41 ▪ Cost of Living is too high
 - 42 ▪ Difficult to pay for home repairs
 - 43 ▪ Difficult to pay for taxes or services
- 44 - Young people can't get into the housing market

45 • Facilitate the development of market housing that is of greatest benefit to the Vineyard:

- Change Zoning to allow for greater density / change in zoning may lower land values and taxes
- Provide town infrastructure such as wastewater and water
- Encourage smart growth and cluster development
- Tax the income / revenue generated from homes that are rented on a weekly basis
- Create Linkage programs similar to those used in Cambridge or Brookline, Massachusetts (particularly for larger homes)
- Streamline the regulatory process for projects that will include affordable housing
- How can market housing mitigate its impact on the need for affordable housing:
 - Provide Tax incentives
 - Establish Linkage Programs to provide for affordable housing
 - Create Zoning Incentives
 - Provide incentives to get the housing we want
- Do we want to limit the construction of Market Rate Housing:
 - Yes and Maybe (leaning towards "No") were the answers
 - Set aside land for rental
 - Limit the number of building permits based on a point system that will demonstrate need
 - Establish linkage and zoning incentives
 - Identify the relationship between government and private development
 - Implementing Building Caps on market rate development are difficult, time consuming, costly, and may not be most effective method to adequately address the affordable housing issue
 - Instead of limiting development create opportunities where the public and private sector work together to develop affordable housing that incorporates effective land use planning methods

5. Closing Plenary

Representatives of each conversation gave a brief summary (the first paragraph in each section above). It was asked if the Housing Work Group should be considering market housing or just concentrate on affordable housing? It was agreed that the Housing Work Group was interested in considering all aspects of the housing dynamics on the Vineyard. Issues such as trophy homes and redevelopment were topics that the Housing Work Group Core and the Island Plan Steering Committee would need to discuss in the future.

Meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

The next Housing Work Group Core meeting had not been scheduled at this time.

Respectfully submitted by Christine Flynn.

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