

DRAFT MINUTES

Housing Advisory Committee

MINUTES

April 8, 2016

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was convened at 8:30 a.m. in the Nowak Room of the Town Office. Present were committee members Barry Sandberg, Kathy Corson, Nancy Belanger, and Cliff Sinnott. Town Manager Russ Dean and Town Planner Dave Sharples were also present.

The committee reviewed and discussed the charge, with the membership and the various items to be produced. The town manager noted Tony Texeira had volunteered to attend but could not due to a family issue, and John Mueller from the EDC was out of the country for this meeting.

Discussion ensued on the role of the group which would include producing a “white paper” and a benchmarking tool on housing activity based on the data. The group could give advice to the planning board and selectboard on their findings.

Town Planner Sharples passed out data he had been working on in a packet. Mr. Sinnott arrived and also passed out a data set to the group to begin their review.

The following items were discussed/noted:

- The group reviewed a sheet put together by Dave Sharples looking at all housing underway as of March 1st. There are currently 531 units either under construction or proposed. 64 are condos at Sterling Hill, 96 apartments at 27 Chestnut Street, 13 detached condos at Charron Circle, 68 TH units and condos at 2 Hampton Road. Also 9 new single family homes. Proposed units include 91 apartments at 80 Epping Road, 116 senior apartments (ZBA approved) on Epping Road/Shafmaster property, 7 condo units (Porches at Exeter), and 67 units at the Meeting Place (affordable lmi/senior housing).
- Dave Sharples demonstrated the GIS which is now carrying CAMA data. According to CAMA data over 50% of the single family housing stock is valued under 300,000. This came as a surprise to many in the group. The Town Planner noted this is CAMA data and our ratio is at 96% according to the town manager.
- Ms. Corson indicated homes that are relative by comparison are selling well in excess of this amount. The group discussed the relative ‘hot’ market in Exeter for housing, and compared our market to those around us.
- The Town Planner noted he would like to see sales data and this would help the conversation.
- The new workforce housing law, which Mr. Sinnott has used to update the housing chapter of the master plan, puts affordable housing at 289,100. This is HUD based data and anything under 289,100 is considered “affordable.”
- Ms. Corson said she will work with Mr. Sandberg who is also now a realtor on getting information from MLS to compare sales.
- Brentwood and East Kingston have newer homes than Exeter, as far as what goes on the market now. Exeter has an older housing stock.

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- The Town Planner noted lots that have water/sewer access typically go for \$125,000. This is per Doug Eastman, Building Inspector.
- A general contractor may be looking at a building cost of \$115-\$120 per SF which is why the 1500 SF homes go for upwards of \$325K. Reference was made to Charron Circle and the new homes there, behind Walgreens plaza.

Cliff Sinnott then reviewed his data regarding comparable communities, persons per unit. It was asked that Dover be included. Differences in housing cost between the two places were discussed.

Ms. Corson made a point about businesses like Stonewall Kitchen perhaps going to other places because of workforce availability and not just regulations. Rochester and Dover are more affordable than Exeter and have more of a workforce.

Ms. Corson said the workforce housing coalition has good data on workforce housing and is a resource for the group.

The Town Planner referenced the standard for income as it related to housing costs. What is affordable, purchase versus renting was reviewed. Rents seem very high in Exeter and that number needs to be reviewed again.

Other variables in housing were discussed. Around us there is not a large stock of older homes. Towns with no town centers and living styles versus Exeter. Newmarket and Portsmouth more like Exeter.

On multi family, it was noted that condos might be included in housing units. The review of Cliff's chart H-3 would be looked at which is rentals vs. ownership/occupancy. In 2009-2013 one could find a rental but not now. This is a trend.

Ms. Corson left the meeting at 9:50 a.m. She and Mr. Sandberg will work on trends. It was agreed the 2nd Friday of the month was good for meetings.

Cliff continued the review of the master plan tables. H-9 and its determination of affordable units. Estimates were 65% of owned homes fell within affordable limits according to HUD. The town manager said this matched up well with the notion that 50% of single family homes were under 300K.

Rental units and regional averages were reviewed. The rental numbers are harder to understand. The regional average of rents was reviewed. 41% of units are considered affordable rent-wise. Estimates were put together looking at the regional number of units, and estimates are 795 for Exeter. Rentals are a moving target. Dan Smith at NHFA can be consulted on this data. The outlier for 2015 needs reviewing – can it be correct that rents are that high.

Nancy suggested Advise the company building 80 Epping Road was suggesting a monthly rent of \$1500.

The group discussed the 116 units of senior housing approved for Epping Road via a ZBA variance. This has a three year window on it.

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The group discussed talking with the master plan steering committee once it is formed and presenting findings. For the next meeting, the group would identify the top 2-3 issues facing the town, with problems concerns identified if possible, with data to support. This would be to get us to the next steps.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, May 13th at 8:30 a.m.

2. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Russell Dean
Town Manager