

Island Plan Housing Work Group

Monday, November 20, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. at the Oak Bluffs Library

Agenda

1. The Island Plan (15 minutes)

PowerPoint presentation of the overall process, what has been done so far, roles of the Steering Committee, Work Group, and Work Group Core.

2. The Housing Work Group (15 minutes)

- Housing Needs Study Update – what has been done and what in the current need*
- Housing Groups on the Island – overview*
- Goals, objectives, and issues that have emerged from the planning effort so far.*
- Efforts of the Work Group Core to date*

(Note: there will be handouts for each of these items, which will be briefly summarized.)

3. Break-out Sessions (40 minutes)

Comments on draft goal and objectives (10 minutes)

Brainstorming/discussion of issues (20 minutes)

Red-dotting of choices or priorities (10 minutes)

4. Plenary (20 minutes)

Each group presents their results.

Conclusion.

Goals and Objectives – Preliminary for Discussion

Goal

Provide a full range and adequate supply of housing choices – which are located close to services and use land efficiently – that meet the needs of people of all income levels, age groups, household sizes, and persons with special needs.

Objectives

1. Increase Affordability of Housing

- Work toward the state's goal of designating 10% of year-round housing stock for affordable housing, to be counted towards the state's Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory.
- Seek funding for the development and rehabilitation of homes for affordable housing for both individuals and families earning at or below 80 percent and up to 140 percent of the area median income.
- Pursue programs to dedicate permanent affordable year-round rental housing.
- Identify obstacles to home ownership and secure rental housing for low/moderate income residents. Review town regulations and by-laws (including residency requirements) for potential improvements.
- Encourage employers to offer employee housing to assist in placing summer employees in housing. Design specific housing for summer use to free up year-round stock for year-round residents.

2. Refine Zoning to Encourage Affordable Housing:

- Encourage public and private development of affordable housing at increased densities in certain areas, provided that water resources are protected and nitrogen-loading goals are met.
- Support refinements to zoning to encourage accessory units and enhance housing potential where appropriate.

3. Require Permanent Affordability

- Affordable units should be permanently dedicated for low- and moderate-income use.
- Continue to support resident homesite programs and refine them to ensure that these lots remain affordable in perpetuity by deed restriction or other mechanisms.

4. Provide Housing for People With Special Needs

- Ensure that elderly, handicapped and special needs residents have the choice to stay in housing on the Island near family, friends and community.
- Promote the construction of congregate housing that will provide some degree of independence and care, particularly for the elderly and for those of all ages with mental and physical handicaps.

5. Design Affordable Housing to Fit the Vineyard

- Tailor housing to what people can afford and find desirable, and integrate it into the community.
- Meet housing needs imaginatively while preserving the character of the Vineyard.
- Maximize the year-round housing potential within the Island's existing housing stock. Encourage rehabilitation of aging dwellings as an alternative to new construction for affordable housing. Create new units within existing structures and within existing developed land.
- Identify and designate developable vacant town-owned land that is appropriate for affordable housing.
- Encourage the development of prototype designs for affordable housing in character with the Island.
- Develop standards to ensure that affordable housing is designed to allow conservation of energy, water and other resources.

Note: Community Housing is defined as stable, year-round housing that costs less than 30% of family income. It also includes seasonal workforce housing.

Issues for Breakout Sessions

1. Location and Type of Community Housing: When it comes to locating new community housing projects, do so-called smart growth principles apply to Martha's Vineyard, or do we simply have to take advantage of whatever opportunity arises?
 - Relation to Natural Environment: Is there a conflict between preserving land for habitat/open space & providing community housing to preserve the people of our community? Is there enough preserved open space? How do we reconcile the desire of concentrating development in town areas versus taking advantage of opportunities, including in rural areas? What are opportunities for partnership between affordable housing and conservation interests?
 - Relation to Existing Neighborhoods: Is there a conflict between building community housing projects – especially if they are at higher density than other housing projects – and preserving neighborhood character, community values, quality of life, and property values? Affordable housing projects are often met with strong emotional responses from abutters. Can affordable housing advocates find better ways to bring projects forward that respond to valid neighborhood concerns, that alleviate neighborhood fears, and that are financially viable?

2. Form of rental/ownership: Given the direct or indirect public funding involved in creating community housing projects, who should get this housing?
 - All community housing projects are publicly subsidized, either with special grants and loans, or because the community accepts projects at higher than normal density.
 - Should the projects be rental or ownership? Should ownership projects allow the owners to accumulate equity, or should there be resale restrictions so that the same affordable housing would be available to future generations?
 - Should projects be affordable for specific time limits, say 30 years, or should they be affordable in perpetuity?
 - What about local preference and duration of residency; can we and should we give priority to Islanders? To people from the town in which the project is located? (And how do we define where someone is from: post office address, number of years of residency, family tree going back at least 200 years?)

- In some locations, “essential” workers – police, medical workers, teachers, etc. -- have a priority; should we do this here?

3. Existing Housing Conditions: How can the health and safety of existing housing be improved?

- What problems are associated with the existing housing stock, such as overcrowding, fire safety, health conditions?
- What would the impact of stricter enforcement be on the people now living in this housing?

4. Planning and Zoning Measures: What one or two specific planning measures or zoning changes would best promote community housing?

- What planning and regulatory measures should be included in the upcoming Comprehensive Island Plan?
- Would allowing certain types of community housing “as-of-right” in a town’s zoning bylaw -- instead of with special permission from a planning board or ZBA -- reduce regulatory bureaucracy, identified as an added cost to community housing?
- Would these planning measures or zoning changes adequately protect the communities in which the housing would be located?
- Would these planning measures or zoning changes be effective? Would people actually use them?

5. Market Housing: How can market housing make the most positive contribution to the Vineyard community?

- What are the positive and negative impacts of market housing on the Island community?
- What can be done to facilitate the construction of market housing, especially that which is of greatest benefit to the Vineyard community?
- What is the impact of new market housing on the need for housing for support workers? How can new market housing mitigate its impacts on this need?

6. Taxation and Community Services: How can taxation policy best support housing, particularly community housing?

- What is the impact of real estate taxes on housing?
- What is the impact of housing on education and other community services?
- How can the cost of housing, and especially community housing be equitably borne by the whole Island community?

Updated on October 30, 2006