

## **Town of Falmouth Workforce Housing Committee Report**

Draft: March 14, 2008

### **Preamble**

As the workforce housing committee has prepared the RFP for workforce housing development off Woods Road, this committee has completed its current charge. This RFP is currently being circulated and a pre-bid was held on March 13<sup>th</sup> with about 25 interested developers in attendance. Proposals are due by April 9<sup>th</sup>.

The question now is how the Council wishes to proceed with citizen input and oversight of the workforce housing program. The workforce housing committee has met on March 13<sup>th</sup> and is recommending a new charge and membership to the Town Council. Its proposal follows below.

In appendix A the history of three groups that have tackled the workforce issue in various ways up to now - Affordable Housing Alliance, the Diversity in Housing Committee and the Workforce Housing Committee - has begun to be traced. As you can see, additional research is still needed.

### **Proposed “Workforce Housing Commission” Charge**

1. Review proposals from developers for Woods Road Workforce Housing project, and make a recommendation to Town Council for a preferred developer.
2. Work with the preferred developer selected by the Town Council to prepare final proposal for review by Town Council;
3. Make a recommendation to the Town Council regarding the ongoing management of the workforce housing program.
4. Review all prior committee work and prepare, for submission to the Town Council, an implementation status report with recommended action steps that considers the full spectrum of workforce housing needs in Falmouth.

### **Proposed “Workforce Housing Commission” Membership**

The current committee membership has been informally assembled. A more formal committee will be useful as the commission may likely need to address future homeowner eligibility decisions and other financial issues that the Council may choose to delegate to it.

The current committee proposes:

- a 5-member standing “Workforce Housing Commission” of Falmouth residents with staggered 3-year terms (all 5 are voting members);
- plus 5 additional ad hoc members, 4 of whom are voting members, to assist the commission with execution of charge 1, 2, and 3 only.

The four voting, ad hoc members are proposed to represent:

- Woods Road neighborhood residents;
- Woodlands Homeowners Association;
- Woodlands Villa Owners Association;
- Cornerstone Homeowners Association.

The fifth non-voting, ad hoc member is proposed to represent the Woodlands Country Club Corporation.

### **Staffing Support Needs**

Ongoing staffing of the “Workforce Housing Commission” needs to be addressed by the Town Manager and Community Development Director.

John Gallagher, executive director of the Westbrook Housing Authority, has acted as a technical resource to the workforce housing committee. The committee has much appreciated that assistance. John has pledged to continue to act as a resource to the Town of Falmouth, as desired.

Ethan Croce has prepared the (unfortunately unsuccessful) 2008 CDBG grant application for the Woods Road project. Amy Lamontagne and John Gallagher prepared the 2007 CDBG application. Theo Holtwijk, Director of Long-Range Planning, has assisted the committee in finalizing the RFP, distributing it, and is currently overseeing the bidding process. Other Town staff has assisted with this effort as well.

The Town Manager and Community Development Director need to decide how to best continue to provide staffing support, as needed, for this effort. Therefore, the Workforce Housing Committee has not made a proposal in that regard.

## **Appendix A: Recent History of Workforce Housing Discussions in Falmouth**

### **Affordable Housing Alliance**

<still to be researched>

### **Diversity in Housing Committee**

Authorized by Town Council: October 2001

#### **Charge:**

“To report to the Council (...) as to the current feasibility of the previous recommendations and reports made to the Town by the Affordable Housing Alliance which may include the development of one or more proposals for the Council’s consideration for a mixed/affordable housing project, including proposed site location(s), funding mechanisms, needed ordinance changes and administrative framework, assessment of community support for such proposal(s), the relationship and the impact of such proposal(s) on the Town’s existing and projected growth planning. The goal is to comply with the State of Maine statutes to endeavor to create at least 10 percent of the new housing in Falmouth which is more affordable, small unit and mixed housing, possibly within the context of a walkable, neo-traditional neighborhood and with consideration of means to minimize any fiscal impact on the community in terms of municipal costs for schools, services, transportation and preservation of open space.”

#### **Committee action:**

Development of a proposal for consulting firm to prepare a housing assessment inventory and analysis and action plan for the Town to work in public/private partnerships to create more workforce housing at the edge of, or within, the Town’s commercial areas to further the goal of mixing land uses into a village setting.

#### **Report:**

“Town of Falmouth Housing Assessment Report” (by Community Current/MLRD, undated)

#### **Consultant recommended ordinance revisions to be considered by Town Council:**

- broadening definitions of accessory units, clustering, and residential planned development;
- mandating that a percentage of new and renovated housing units is affordable, and tying this mandate to the Town’s growth cap;
- clearly defining the terms “developer,” “affordable housing,” and “workforce housing,” and ensuring that all developers adhere to workforce housing requirements;
- allowing multiplex and/or townhouse units in more locations through contract zoning or floating zones;
- relaxing setback, spacing, and parking requirements of multiplex units; and
- explicitly allowing housing by right in certain zones, and not just as a conditional or accessory use.

Consultant stated Diversity in Housing committee endorsement of overall approach to housing action plan that combines incentives and regulations. Elements that will be part of the action plan include:

- A mandate that a certain percentage and/or number of units allowed under the residential growth cap is affordable;
- A mandate that a certain percentage of units built by a particular developer be affordable;
- Only making zone-wide changes regarding housing regulations in certain commercial zoning districts; and
- Utilizing contract zoning to improve flexibility for affordable housing development.

Consultant stated issues for further review that “must be resolved” as the Town prepares to enact an action plan for diversified housing:

- The definitions of affordability for both owners and renters;
- Amendments and additions to the definitions section of the land use ordinance;
- Specific changes to be made for zoning districts;
- Specific locations that are most appropriate for diversified housing development; and
- The level and type of involvement of the Town of Falmouth in promoting particular diversified housing projects.

### **Workforce Housing Committee**

Authorized by Town Council: 2004 <check date>

Original charge: Research the need and demand for workforce housing within the Town of Falmouth and the Greater Portland area. <check if there was a council order on this>

Membership: Informal/not appointed by Council

November 28, 2005 Report: “Ad-Hoc Workforce Housing Committee Report to the Falmouth Town Council”

2005 report recommendation: “Development of a Workforce Housing subdivision or neighborhood on a parcel of town-controlled land.”

“Next steps:

- Seek Council consent (...) to identify several potential sites that would be suitable for a development of this size and character.
- Seek Council consent of Committee-recommended target site.
- Develop Workforce Housing Overlay District or Contract Zoning Ordinance with Deed Restrictions and/or Covenants for Council authorization.
- Upon Council authorization, distribute RFP for selection of developer.”

November 9, 2007 Recommendations:

1. Approve the concept of, and RFP for, the establishment of a Workforce Housing Subdivision to be located on the Woods Road property behind the Public Safety Building
2. Authorize the Town of Falmouth to transfer, sell, or otherwise encumber the Woods Road property not used by the Public Safety Building for the purpose of a Workforce Housing Subdivision.
3. Continue to research and apply for funding for infrastructure improvements to the property for the Workforce Housing Subdivision.

February 25, 2008 Recommended RFP:

Draft Request for Proposals for Workforce Housing Home Ownership Development,  
dated February 21, 2008. Authorized for distribution by Town Council.