

LONDONDERRY, NH - Housing Task Force

Minutes of the meeting on February 27, 2008 in the School District Meeting Room

7:00 PM: Members Present:

John Michels, Chairman/At Large; Deb Lievens; Mike Speltz; Jon Weigler, At Large; John Verani, At Large; Marty Bove, Ex-Officio

Staff Present: André Garron, John Vogl, Cathy Dirsra

J. Michels called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM. He stated that because we don't have a quorum at this time we cannot vote on issues (5 members present out of 11). If more members arrive we will be able to vote.


Draft final report- Recommendations

J. Michels commented that the report contains sales numbers that have become dated since the task force started work and may not necessarily reflect the current market. He asked that numbers be updated where newer data is available. J. Verani, Verani Realty, said he has seen an average decline in sales of 6% since 2006 and he expects to see that continue. He said that new construction has been hit the hardest. M. Bove said the Town has to aggressively make changes to reach the goal of affordable housing. He asked that the report specifically state that the housing market is fluid and that even if housing sales prices continue to drop, the market remains unaffordable to entry-level buyers given current incomes. A. Garron echoed this sentiment, saying that land use decisions all over the state have made young families feel unwelcome in communities and thus the future workforces have potentially been turned away. Regarding zoning recommendations, J. Michels feels we should strive for mixed-use developments and encourage builders to work together (commercial/industrial/residential). M. Bove said we need to increase density, create neighborhoods and entice families to Town. J. Verani suggested creating a "village district". A. Garron suggested creating a Conservation Subdivision ordinance, to utilize open space. M. Speltz said Jack's Bridge Road is a perfect example of the size of land that would be needed to foster this "village district" atmosphere. That particular area of Town would place workers near where they work (less traffic flow through Town, less roads) and most likely would have water/sewer available. J. Michels suggested choosing an area that already has water/sewer and to decrease the lot size requirements (increase density). M. Bove suggested looking into residential buildings that would be more than 2 or 3 stories, to increase density and green space.

M. Speltz said that although the report is very thorough and concise we should put together a presentation that would sum it all up. M. Bove said we should not only present this to the Town Council, but to numerous boards/committees simultaneously in a joint hearing. M. Speltz recommended that the recommendations include specific responsibilities and time lines for accountability and implementation that the Town Council should follow. This will provide direction so that the goals remain alive and active. He said we should ask the Town Manager for regular reports as to implementation. M. Bove said we should place ourselves in a position to be able to listen and possibly accept conceptual ideas from developers, which may require some rezoning to achieve affordable housing.

Discussion turned to the presentation of the Task Force's findings. Members discussed holding either a series of meetings with their representative boards or an "all boards" meeting including the Town Council, Planning Board, Zoning Board and School Board. Consensus was reached that we should start with an "all boards" meeting, given the importance of this topic. Members felt that this should be followed up by smaller, more targeted presentations to other boards, including private

1 groups such as Rotary or business groups. They felt the key was to get repeated exposure at local,
2 televised meetings.

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4  Other Business: Communities & Consequences by Peter Francese and Lorraine Stuart Merrill

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6 A. Garron said this is a good book and suggested that everyone on the Housing Task Force read it if
7 possible. He said it directly addresses many of the issues the Task Force has discussed.
8 www.communitiesandconsequences.org

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10 At our next meeting on March 26 discuss the final presentation and try to schedule a joint hearing
11 with all the boards/committees.

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13 Adjournment:

14 Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

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16 These minutes prepared by Cathy Dirsa, Planning Department Secretary.