

January 20, 2015 Housing Meeting Summary and Next Steps (1/27/15 draft, Rachel Bratt)

In attendance: Sarkis Sarkisian, Town Planner; Nan Balmer, Town Administrator; Brian Boggia, Executive Director, Wayland Housing Authority; Becky Stanizzi, Economic Development Committee. From the Wayland Planning Board: Kevin Murphy (also representing Housing Trust), Ira Montague, Colleen Sheehan, Daniel C. Hill and Andrew Reck. From the Wayland Housing Authority: Susan Weinstein (also representing Housing Trust, Mary Antes (also representing Housing Partnership and Housing Trust) and Jackie Ducharme (also representing Housing Trust); From the Wayland Housing Partnership: Armine Roat (also representing Housing Trust) Rachel Bratt, From the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust: Stephen A. Greenbaum and Brian O'Herlihy.

Observers: Molly Upton and Katherine Provost, WHA

Thanks very much for participating in the meeting on January 20. I thought we had a productive conversation and were able to cover a number of important issues.

We agreed to create working groups, which would meet a few times over the next few months only, to explore several issues. Would each Board/Committee appoint one person to sit on each of these three Working Groups? The first two groups would start their deliberations as soon as possible; however, the third group will likely not be able to get its work done until Group #1 has produced its findings.

Can you please get names to me by February 27?

Working Group #1: Defining a shared vision and priorities for affordable housing that will help guide decisions (recommendations for future housing initiatives should prioritize the various options, including, but not limited to:

- preference for rental vs. homeownership;
- senior vs. family housing;
- for family housing, optimal number of bedrooms desired;
- need for additional group homes;
- need for housing for households with incomes about 80% of area median income;
- preference for new construction vs. re-use of existing homes for affordable housing).

Working Group #2: Monitoring and preserving existing affordable housing, including but not limited to:

- identification of major issues involved with monitoring the non-public housing stock;
- going forward, how to assure that monitoring agents will be locally-based;
- identify affordable units where residents are currently over-income and
- better understand implications and options;
- assess future capital needs of public housing stock and develop plan for funding)

Working Group #3: Assessing whether there is a need for new zoning or overlay districts, as outlined in Master Plan, and defining which of the options presented in the Master Plan, or other alternatives, are the most desirable. This should include, but not be limited to:

- Assessing whether there is a need for new zoning or overlay districts, as outlined in Master Plan and defining which of the options presented in the Master Plan, or other alternatives, are the most desirable.
- The above should include recommendations about: mixed use zoning for 1-2-3-4 family conservation cluster developments; Planned Development Districts; senior and family Housing Overlay Districts; permit housing on the upper floors of buildings in the Business A/B Districts; and accessory dwelling units in single family neighborhoods.

After all 3 groups have completed their work, I would like to propose that we meet again as a large group, before June 2015, if possible, to review the output of these three working groups.

Some of the issues discussed at the meeting include:

GOALS, PRODUCTION, and PRIORITIES

- 1) The Town has made important strides in meeting housing needs, particularly since it lacks a Town-wide sewer system.
- 2) If we are able to make significant progress toward meeting the statewide 10% affordable housing goal (.50 % of the number of year-round units, or 25 units), we will be exempt from 40B developments that the Town feels are not in our best interest.
- 3) Is the Town interested in producing units targeted at households at 100 -120% of area median income, even though they would not count toward the 10% goal?
- 4) Should we be focusing future production on rental vs. homeownership?
- 5) Should a key strategy be to purchase lower cost homes for re-sale as affordable homeownership units? In recent years there have been 49 homes sold under \$300K. This, however, also creates fewer opportunities for lower end market-rate homebuyers.
- 6) In doing new production projects, such as River's Edge, we should partner with some of the professional, well-seasoned nonprofit groups in the area that are familiar with the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program (LIHTC).
- 7) The new Housing Trust Fund will have flexibility. Funds will come from the Town Center developer (\$537,000), CPA funds, and private donations. In the future, the Trust Fund will be the main driver of affordable housing. Housing proposals will not be going to the CPA.
- 8) What would each of us recommend if we had \$500K to spend on housing?
- 9) A newly formed Land and Building Capital Planning Committee will be assessing some large-scale concerns and housing issues are likely to arise (e.g., if Town Building were to be relocated, the existing structure could be used for housing).
- 10) We need a diverse "tool box" for meeting the Town's housing needs.

MARKETING, PRESERVATION and MONITORING OF AFFORDABLE UNITS

- 1) There are ongoing problems with the affordable homeownership units in Town, in terms of marketing new and re-sale units to eligible households, and monitoring compliance with deed restrictions. Other towns are facing the same challenges due to the small window available for ownership per the regulations. It is unclear what may happen to homeownership units currently counted toward the 10% goal that have been re-sold to households whose incomes are above 80% AMI. It has been a challenge at times to find buyers who both qualify under the income guidelines and who are still able to get a mortgage.
- 2) Owners of affordable units are not supposed to rent their homes (let alone to market-rate tenants) and they should not be taking out second mortgages or refinancing based on market value.
- 3) There are questions about whether some of the out-of-town monitoring agents are really suitable for this task. WHA agreed that rental management is not a significant burden, but for-sale units are.
- 4) The Housing Authority is trying to raise the funds for a Fire Suppression System. While the federal government has been good about providing funds for repairs for the public housing units in Town, this system goes beyond federal standards. However, the Town would like to install, to better safeguard residents. The cost would be about \$1 million.

PLANNING BOARD, RULES and POSSIBLE ZONING CHANGES

- 5) The Planning Board would like help in clarify their Rules and Regulations regarding comprehensive permits, particularly as they relate to the “exceptional circumstances” for an exemption from the on-site requirement? When would off-site housing be a desirable option?
- 6) What level of financial compensation would be a good deal for the Town, in allowing off-site units? Perhaps in the range of \$400-500K?
- 7) The Town has no zoning for multifamily housing or duplexes, yet the Master Plan called to look at this. These types of units are therefore not buildable “by right.” Under current zoning, to achieve higher density and to build multifamily housing, the Town has to create conservation clusters or overlay districts. Should more such districts be created? Where?
- 8) We need to make sure that the Housing Partnership and Housing Authority are brought into discussions early in the process of Planning Board reviews of housing proposals requiring special permits or requests to build inclusionary units off-site. For projects that continue over several years, with plan changes along the way, the Planning Board should suggest that additional meeting between the developer and the Housing Partnership take place to provide updates and solicit feedback.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

- 9) It is important that we educate the Board of Selectmen about all the housing issues.
- 10) We should open the discussion to the broader community, but probably not until we have some clearer guidelines and working documents.