



MINUTES
Housing Committee Meeting
Monday, July 26, 2021
7:00 PM

Committee Members Attending: Barbara Freeman (Chair), Christopher Hernick (Planning Board), Tom Krebs, Matt Mynczywork, Kristen Schultz, Richard Wright and Alicia Zanderigo, Members; and Darren Finneral (Planning Board Chair).

Consultant

Steve Whitman, Resilience Planning and Design

Public

Members of the public were in attendance.

July 26th Newbury Housing Forum

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Ms. Freeman introduced the Committee members and turned the meeting over to Mr. Whitman.

Mr. Whitman asked everyone to share what type of housing they currently live in.

Ms. Freeman explained the purpose of the Committee.

When forming the Newbury Housing Committee, the group looked at Envision Newbury 2027 as well as state requirements. Mr. Krebs explained the definition of workforce housing law and what kind of zoning and land use codes should be looked at.

Ms. Freeman explained how the Housing Committee was formed from a town wide email posting. The Selectboard, and the Planning Board asked Ms. Freeman to chair the Housing Committee.

Mr. Mynczywork went over the agreed Housing Committee values that guide the Committee's work:

- Fostering a sense of community
- Every Newbury resident has a voice
- Transparent process
- All meetings posted and open to the public

- Everyone deserves a home
- Providing opportunity for housing diversity
- Provide the opportunity to develop workforce housing

Ms. Zanderigo explained that all minutes and presentations can be found online. She said there is an anonymous Google form that people can fill out. Ms. Zanderigo explained where everything is posted.

Ms. Mitchell explained why she is on the Committee. She told her personal story about growing up in affordable housing and how important it was to her family.

The definition of workforce housing was given: Housing for sale qualifies as “workforce housing” if it is “affordable” to a household with an income of no more than 100% of the median income for a 4-person household. Rentals, in contrast, qualify as “workforce housing” if they are “affordable” to a household with an income of no more than 60% of the median income for a 3-person household. The median income for Newbury households is \$93,466 (2018). Up significantly from \$64,475 (2014).

Ms. Shultz explained the work the Committee has done to date.

Mr. Millette gave a review on the March 23 public forum. He went over what the Committee learned:

- Not all factors of housing development can be controlled by the Town.
- The biggest obstacles to developing more housing variety are within the control of the town.
- The costs of land and infrastructure are extremely high.
- These costs make the construction of work force and affordable housing difficult.

Mr. Whitman went over the demographic and housing profile for Newbury. He explained that there are approximately 1700 housing units that are defined as seasonal housing and so are not occupied all year. He also said Newbury has a slightly older median age at 54.9 and shows an aging trend.

Mr. Whitman explained that the Committee also reviewed different housing types other than single family houses that might be appropriate for Newbury. Finally, Phase 1 included regulatory approaches that might help developers create more diverse housing types .

Mr. Whitman explained that they had done a planning and zoning audit. He reviewed existing plans and regulations including the Newbury Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations. They then identified the disconnects between the goals of the Master Plan and the land use ordinances.

Mr. Whitman said that they following the three major implementation actions that were identified in Envision Newbury 2027 (the Master Plan) to continue this work. The next step will

be to amend the land use regulations to encourage development of a variety of housing types beyond single family units.

Possible near-term zoning changes include a new definition for a duplex, possible revising of the cluster definition, and the potential to change the Accessory Unit restrictions such as increasing the number of bedrooms permitted to three and increasing the allowed maximum square footage.

Near-term subdivision changes include coordinating the definitions to include them in the Zoning Ordinance Definitions. Seek a way to waive the additional site plan requirements for new subdivision if the multi-family units will primarily provide workforce housing.

Remove the requirement for major site plan review for multi-family units that include 3-5 units, Allow minor site plan approval for affordable units with more than 5 units.

(see the Power Point presentation for this Forum on this web site.)

Timeline and next steps

Ms. Freeman talked about the next steps. She said changing the land use ordinances to allow greater housing diversity is at least a two-year process. Ms. Freeman explained that minor changes can be made in a year, but anything more extensive needs more study.

The meeting was opened to the public for questions and comments.

Mr. Finneral asked about the accessory dwelling units. He said he is concerned that they will be used for short term rentals. He also hopes that everyone has the opportunity to take advantage of the changes to the site plan review process.

Mr. Holmes said he was happy that the Committee talked about future residents. He also said he thinks the Committee must make it easier for people to come in for a multifamily dwelling by increasing the density. He also thinks we need to incentivize by giving tax abatements.

Mr. Freeman asked about tiny houses in clusters.

Mr. Wright said the 2-acre minimum is because of the topography of the Town and the fact that homes need to have water and septic on each lot. Ms. Freeman said that years ago it was important to keep a 2-acre minimum for well and septic, but there are other ways to regulate this.

Mrs. Holmes shared her concern with the amount of land that is in conservation in Town.

Mrs. Tentarelli asked about our current use regulations and if they are limiting. Mr. Whitman said this is a state regulation and Mr. Holmes said the state is looking at this.

Ms. Mitchell spoke about conjoining lots.

A summary of comments:

- As we enter Phase 2 of this project and discuss specific areas for zoning changes we will run into NIMBY issues.
- We could create regulation changes that leave it to residents to decide how to use
- .
- Changes to ADU regulations should consider their possible use as short term rentals
- Make changes to site plan review regulations to streamline the process
- Be sure to talk about future residents for Newbury
- A middle option is the creation of some four unit buildings
- Increase density allowed to ensure developers can get the units needed to create affordability
- Incentivize with a tax abatement for projects providing affordable units.
- There is a lack of jobs in Newbury - some disagreed
- Promote the creation of small homes – cottages
- 2-acre zoning is due to development constraints - but there are better water/sewer technology choices now
- Is current use creating a dis-incentive to create housing units?
- Lot combining is resulting in a loss of grandfathered small lots.

Ms. Freeman said there will be a fall public forum with the specifics that the Committee will be proposing. Then from there, they will write some Zoning Ordinances that will go to public hearings and then they will go to Town Meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Long, Recording Secretary

