

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

Meeting Minutes

June 17, 2020

ATTENDEES: Nancy Chapman, Maura Curran, Jessica Guardia (*left at 7pm*), Steve Irish (*absent: Ruth Wagner*)

Additional Attendees: Karen Sunnarborg, Consultant

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 pm

The agenda was accepted by unanimous vote

DISCUSSION:

Housing Production Plan with Karen Sunnarborg Discussion:

Karen Sunnarborg reviewed the power point presentation with Board; see document attached. Following are key highlights of the discussion:

1) What is affordable in Scituate?

Of the 7,163 year round housing units, 357 units or 4.98% are currently considered affordable by the state. This is up from 4.33% in 2011. Another 20 units should be eligible for SHI(?), bringing the total to 377 units or 5.3%. The Town has a gap of 339 units to meet the 10% state goal.

2) Key demographic and economic trends:

- Modest population growth since 2000 – 2018 census is projected to be 18,591.
- Demographic shifts driven by 65+ age group – similar to other towns.
- By 2030 expected to be 30%
- Declines in younger age groups and increases in older residents.
- High projected increases in older residents.
- Increases in smaller households.
- Relatively high incomes with household median of \$116,750 – the town is becoming more affluent
- In contrast the county average is \$90,484 and statewide the average is \$79,835.
- Poverty low but increasing.
- Growing income disparities. In 2018 households earning more than \$100,000 were 57%; 12% were earning less than \$25,000
- Significant special needs including 23% of all those age 65+.

Demographic shifts point to an increase in some basic needs – smaller units, resources to serve an increasingly elderly population, more handicapped accessibility and more supportive services. Also there is a need to restore starter housing for younger households to maintain a healthy workforce.

3. Key Housing Trends:

- Slowing down of new production.
- Some teardown activity.
- Predominance of owner-occupancy and single-family detached homes at 86% and 84%,

respectively.

- Declines in rental and seasonal units.
- About 1/3 of Scituate's rentals are subsidized.
- Extremely low vacancy rates.
- Prices remain high - \$599,000 for median single-family home.
- Market rents are also high with a median of about \$2,716.
- Widening affordability gaps.
- Increasing cost burdens as 31% were spending too much for their housing and 14% spending more than ½ their income on housing.
- Of those almost 2,000 households with incomes at or below 80% AMI, 75% had cost burdens including 45% with severe burdens: owners & renters.

4. Priority housing needs:

- Rental units are top need to offer more affordable housing choices; Need permanent housing for most vulnerable residents.
- Homeownership is next priority; Need to attract and retain workforce and families and provide options for downsizing.
- People with disabilities and special needs; 1,458 residents claimed a disability which is likely to increase given the aging of the population that suggests greater need for home modifications and supportive services.
- Older housing stock requires improvements; 3/4 of housing stock built before 1980 with potential deferred maintenance problems, lead-based paint, and septic system problems.

The Board and Ms. Sunnarborg also discussed next steps, including prioritizing housing strategies, finalizing housing needs assessment, drafting the housing goals and strategies. Final steps are approval from the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen and the state.

The 2015 Housing Strategies Plan was discussed specific to property inventory (town owned) and housing resources, and updating the planning and regulatory strategies, such as:

- Adopting inclusionary zoning and housing guidelines
- Allowing residential development under more conditions
- Allow starter housing on nonconforming lots
- Change permit fee policies for projects that include affordable housing
- Add - Adopt North Scituate Village Center zoning

Ms. Chapman noted that the consultant, Ted Brovitz, had worked on the nonconforming lots issue. Ms. Curran said she would get the information from Karen Joseph.

Ms. Sunnarborg expressed her appreciation to the Board for their suggestions and input.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 pm.

Submitted by: Mary Sprague

Power Point Presentation from Karen Sunnarborg