

Exeter Housing Advisory Committee **Report Summary**

Exeter Board of Selectmen

May 22, 2017

Presentation Outline

- **Committee Origin, Charge & Process** - *Nancy Belanger, Chair, Russ Dean, Town Manager*
- **Housing Trends, Issues and Findings considered**— *Cliff Sinnott, Rockingham Planning Commission*
- **Report Recommendations**— *Dave Sharples, Town Planner*
- **Q&A and Discussion**

Exeter Housing Advisory Committee

- Established by Board of Selectmen, February 2015
- Eight members appointed by Board of Selectmen
- Committee active in October 2015
- Why this committee?

Committee Members (as of April 2017)

Citizen at large representative – Nancy Belanger (**Chair**)

Citizen at large representative - Tony Texeira

Board of Selectmen rep. – Dan Chartrand

Planning Board rep. - Kathy Corson

Economic Development Commission rep. - John Mueller

Local Realtor or Developer - Barry Sandberg

Rockingham Planning Commission rep. - Cliff Sinnott

Staff: Town Manager – Russ Dean

Town Planner – Dave Sharples

Committee Charge

Charge: provide advice to the Board of Selectmen regarding, but not limited to, the available housing and potential future housing needs for the Town of Exeter.

Housing Information & Issues to Consider:

- Availability & cost of housing;
- Housing construction trends;
- Changing demographics;
- Strategies to address housing needs and sustainability;
- Housing subsidy programs;
- Regional housing patterns & needs;
- Connection to the Master Plan

Committee Process

- Committee began meeting approximately April, 2016 after full committee was formed.
- Group began reviewing charge, gathering data to support study including looking at current housing activity in the town.
- Committee meetings were held monthly with continuous updates to data and information.
- Observations, findings, and recommendations were vetted and developed by the committee based on the data.

Data & Demographics Considered

Demographics and Housing Data researched for Exeter, SAU-16 Communities and 13 Comparison Communities:

- Population & Housing Growth,
- Housing Stock (tenure & type)
- Residential Construction Activity
- Housing Costs (Owner & Renter)
- Affordability criteria
- Household Income
- Age demographics
- School enrollment & projections
- Other: housing construction costs; housing programs

A few key facts/findings

1. Since 2000, three times more **multifamily** units have been constructed than single. This has not significantly improved access to affordable housing because over half are **age-restricted** and/or high-end rentals or condominiums.
2. After some years of moderation in housing values, prices are now rapidly rising, especially in the rental market, due to scarce supply and high demand.
3. The construction of affordable single family homes in Exeter under existing conditions is uneconomic and highly unlikely.
4. Additional housing growth (not age-restricted) in Exeter is unlikely to negatively affect SAU 16 school capacity

Recommendations

1. The Housing Advisory Committee report should be transmitted to the Master Plan Committee for consideration.
2. The Committee should continue to meet and report on the state of housing in the town.
3. The Town should perform a realistic assessment of housing growth for the near term (next five years) and long term (10-20 years) based on expected population growth and current zoning conditions.
4. The Master Plan should further examine the cost of current housing and examine opportunities the Town may have to help moderate housing costs.

Recommendations - continued

5. Zoning ordinances should be reviewed to ensure that adequate and desirable forms of residential growth is encouraged while maintaining a balance of housing types within the town's housing stock. Specifically:
 - Review the appropriateness of allowing multifamily housing development by special exception in all parts of the R-1 district.
 - Evaluate open space / conservation ordinance triggering limits to determine if they are preventing the realistic application of ordinance given remaining development opportunities of this type.
 - Review the density and other incentives established by the affordable housing ordinance to determine if they are sufficient to encourage this form of development.
 - Evaluate residential zoning lot size requirements in single family residential zones and their impact on the construction of smaller and more affordable single family homes.

Recommendations - continued

6. The impact of the Town's property tax exemption programs, including the elderly, alternative energy and downtown rehabilitation (RSA 79E) exemptions, should be quantified and monitored annually.
7. The Planning Board should consider opportunities and incentives to encourage residential infill development. The Board should also monitor changes in the accessory dwelling unit building activity with the change in the ADU ordinance and consider taking steps to raise awareness about this housing option to homeowners as needed.
8. As part of the Master Plan update of the Town should examine the balance of single and multifamily housing.

Recommendations - continued

9. Using the Master Plan as a basis, the Town should develop a comprehensive housing strategy.
10. The Town should work with the Rockingham Planning Commission and Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast as a means to cooperatively engage with surrounding communities about the equitable sharing of affordable housing responsibility in the region.