

# ***Committee to Assess and Recommend Strategies for Housing Creation Within the Town***

Selectmen's Conference Room 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Town Hall Building  
367 Main Street Hyannis, MA 02601

Rick Presbrey: Chair  
Councilor Paula Schnepf  
Councilor Betty Ludtke  
Councilor Charles Bloom  
Councilor John Crow  
Councilor Gordon Starr  
Maryann Barboza  
Hilda Haye  
Laura Shufelt

January 16, 2025  
4:00pm

## **MEETING MINUTES**

The Chair of the Committee opened the meeting of the Committee to Assess and Recommend Strategies for Housing Creation Within the Town and made the following announcement:

This meeting is being recorded and will be rebroadcast on the Town of Barnstable's Government Access Channel. In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 20, the Administrator must inquire whether anyone else is recording this meeting and, if so, please make their presence known. This meeting will be replayed via Xfinity Channel 8 or high-definition Channel 1072. It may also be accessed via the Government Access Channel live video on demand archives on the Town of Barnstable's website: <https://streaming85.townofbarnstable.us/CablecastPublicSite/?channel=1>

The administrator to the Town Council took Roll call, all members present in the Selectmen's Conference Room except for Councilor Starr; Laura Shufelt.

**PURPOSE:** Recommend strategies for the creation of housing to serve year-round residents and seasonal workers. The committee shall review the Cape Cod Commission's Regional Housing Strategy, <https://www.capecodcommission.org/our-work/regional-housing-strategy> and the proposed Massachusetts State Housing Bond Bill <https://www.mass.gov/lists/housing-bond-bill> and the Town's Housing Production Plan, <https://www.townofbarnstable.us/Departments/planninganddevelopment/Projects/Housing-Production-Plan-Update.asp> with a goal of recommending 2-4 strategies for the Town to adopt, along with recommendations for implementation and resources needed.

The Chair of Committee explained to the members about the Town Council request to explain to the Council how affordable housing is developed, how does home ownership work, so that they have an understanding before making the decisions that need to be made. The Chair had thought that he and Committee member Laura Shufelt could go and do a workshop with the Council, Ms. Shufelt works in this field, and has for years, and he has a working knowledge of being in this type of development for years, so it made sense that the two of them have the workshop with the Council, and this will probably happen in the next month or so.

Chair of Committee asked for any public comment:

Eric Schwaab- West Hyannis- Mr. Schwaab, would like to add to the to-do list the committee has and possibly offer an opinion on the recent news that the homeless shelter located at 77 winter Street in Hyannis is thinking of relocating to 460 West Main Street, and there are concerns that the property may not be suitable. May not be well, and removes people from the services they rely on, and it sort of shuns then off, those are the concerns he is hearing about from the neighborhoods and around town, he believes it will be helpful for this committee to at last offer an opinion to the move. The other issue he

has is about the Marstons Mills property, and apparently when the town applied for sewer funding and started to build all these big conduits, the backbone system that we are building there, there was no restrictions placed on the growth, the town did not accept flow neutral financing, so the town can build on either side of that pipe all the way to the Marstons Mills area, and he understands there is potential for a fairly large development in Centerville, and a whole lot of growth around the Bell Tower Mall area. He would like to see this committee express an opinion on the financing mechanism being used because it is going to cost the taxpayers extra. There is 111 million dollars in financing costs over the next 20 year life of the Clean Water bonds we are applying for, so he believes the town has a choice of what kind of final financing they want and the interest rate is determined by what restrictions the town accepts, so the more restrictive the housing plans are the lower the interest rate is; so if you do not accept any restrictions you can basically go to town, and he sees this as happening. He also suggested the committee ask Director Santos and Director Milne in to verify his concerns and ask them about these issues he brought up. The Chair of committee thanked Mr. Schwaab for his comments but stated that he does not believe this in the purview of this committee to talk about those issues, but they have been noted. Mr. Schwaab stated that it was clear to him that if the town is going to build these apartments outside of Hyannis, there is going to be a need for cluster systems that remove both nitrogen and phosphorus. Mr. Schwaab believes this will impact the building of housing outside the boundaries of Hyannis, so he believes this committee should at least form an opinion. Chair of Committee believes the one issue of does Hyannis become a city over time, say 50 years, and all that building you keep in Hyannis and the town keeps the village communities looking suburbia, or do we as a town allow other things to happen; and to make decisions that will effect the future is a very tough thing to do. Chair of Committee posed two questions to the members.

1. Does this committee form an opinion on the shelter move
2. Does this committee have an opinion on flow neutral financing

Committee member Maryann Barboza understood the committee is to look at affordable housing opportunities, any empty buildings that could potentially become housing to help those that are struggling, and the needy. Hyannis is already a city; they did this a long time ago when they took people's homes and built shops. There used to be neighborhoods all in this area, until the building started and slowly the homes went away. Ms. Barboza said she will fight to the bitter end to make housing affordable. When these big box projects are built with 50 apartments, and only 5 are affordable, and lets face it those 5 are not affordable when you look at who needs the housing, and what they make weekly in a paycheck, there is a big gap, and if you go out and try to bridge that gap with another job, suddenly your over the affordable income, but cant afford the mortgage. All we are doing is bringing in the rich to buy these apartments to leave them vacant until they can retire and live in them. Ms. Barboza said we should be in the discussion about moving the shelter, as these people are the most vulnerable in our town. Ms. Barboza mentioned every time there is mention of the homeless in Barnstable, and moving the shelter to get them off Main Street for the businesses, wherever they decide to move the shelter you are going to hear not here, noy by my neighborhood, not by the school, we need to stop that way of thinking. These are individuals in our town and by certain circumstances they are homeless, but that does not mean we shun them and put them on the streets if there is no shelter. People have a right to a shelter over their heads and a secure place to sleep.

Councilor Schnepf appreciates Ms. Barboza comments, but this committee was charged with a very specific mission, and that was to come up with several strategies for the creation and support of housing, and Councilor Schnepf agrees with her on the affordability of these apartments. Councilor Schnepf does not want to spend a lot of time on issues that are not in this committee's charge or on items that are not going to go before the Council for consideration. The flow neutral discussion is also not for this committee but more pf a planning department/Town Council issue to debate as far as the financing options are available. We have a goal, and we need to stick to those goals. Ms. Barboza appreciates Councilor Schnepfs comments, but Ms. Barboza believes until this town deals with the

underlying problem that no one talks about, we are not going to get anywhere, this town has been working on this issue for years, and nothing has happened yet. People all over town do not want poor people in their neighborhoods, and that is always the way it's going to be, there are Councilors that will vote in a way that appeals their constituents, instead of voting for what is correct.

Councilor Bloom wanted to again read about the purpose of this committee, and believes this committee needs to stick to that:

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As a town we should be doing things for those that are living here right now and working in our community that needs housing, not for those that have the wealth to acquire these apartments at market rate.

Councilor Ludtke agrees with Maryanne, and when this committee was asked in the beginning what groups of people are we targeting for housing initiatives and one of those groups was the homeless, they are the most vulnerable in our community, Councilor Ludtke stated that she does not believe that anyone wants to be unhoused, although there are unhoused individuals that do not want to be in shelters. Councilor Ludtke believes we should be looking at housing for our seasonal workers, our full-time workers who commute over the bridge, and the presentation that Mr. Kupfer did and when she looks at the numbers here in Barnstable, what we have been doing is not working, but it is providing apartments for those can afford it but they do not live here, nor do they work here. Councilor Ludtke suggested we work on the smaller things that can be accomplished what is needed, these big projects are not working.

Councilor Ludtke mentioned the shelter, and said this is a tricky one because the town does not have a Human Services Department, we have a Human Services Committee, so we as a town are outside of the entire decision process, and it makes it difficult for us. Councilor Ludtke believes that the flow neutral is going to be taken up at the Council level, so this committee does not have to right now, but to keep it in mind when we make our recommendations to the Council.

Councilor Crow wanted to clarify that there are a lot of vacancy rates right now in these places, he believes Hanover Place in Independence Park has a 285 vacancy, and they are about to build Hanover II. Councilor Crow believes we may be building ourselves into a position where there is a lot of housing, but no one can afford it. These big projects also take up critical resources like water, sewer, and everything else, and believes this is where we are now, is trying to manage the big buildings and how to get them serviced and believes we also need to think about that as well.

Councilor Ludtke also had a conversation with a woman who helps people into rentals, and is incredibly knowledgeable about it and told me you cannot work in any service industry, and you can't afford an apartment here; even those that have vouchers can't afford anything here, so it's a conundrum which she believes we need to work through to get to that, if we keep looking for the 10 percent affordable, we will never get there, we as a town are not well at all, because those that are working full time in our service industry can't afford to live here.

Ms. Barboza mentioned that whenever she investigates a vacant building that potentially could be used for housing, there are so many restrictions and zoning issues as to why you can't use it. We must look at the Armory, and she knows the restrictions in place right now, but it housed individuals before, it should be used again for the same purpose, so whatever needs to be done there to allow housing, we should investigate it and change whatever needs to be changed. At some point someone in the town decided to preserve this precious building, what about the precious people that are dying on the streets because they have nowhere to live. This town forms so many committees to investigate these issues without ever solving them. Ms. Barboza believes it is less costly to revamp a building than it is to build new. These committees are designed to come up with zoning to keep people out, not to let people in, that is what zoning is all about. The property in Marstons Mills, she has heard that people need swings or recreation for their sweet innocent babies to play on and walk around, but what about the sweet precious babies that are dying on the streets cause there no place for them to go.

Committee member Hilda Haye had the privilege of seeing 310 Barnstable Road's Open House. The apartments are well done and beautiful. There is a lot of lighting, there are only 10 apartments, but its 10 apartments we did not have before, it's not enough, but it will house 10 families. The other issue is she knows of someone who is renting a one-bedroom apartment with 5 people, because that is what she can afford. This individual put in an application for a two-bedroom apartment to move up from one bedroom to a two bedroom and was told you have three children, two girls and a boy so you can't do that, you need three bedrooms. How can we justify someone looking for somewhere to live and because they can only afford one or two bedrooms at 2800 dollars that they can't live there because they have three children, two girls and a boy, and its too many people. She can't afford the 3500 to 3800 for the three bedroom, so how do we balance this out? Isn't it better to keep families together than to separate them? Isn't it better to be able to afford the means outside of rent, food utilities etc. and to have the family under one roof so they can be watched and know they are well taken care of and warm? Ms. Barboza believes that many policies and laws being put into effect are made to keep people out.

Councilor Terkelsen spoke at public comment and said she has not seen every meeting this committee has had so far, but does look forward to when this committee presents its ideas, Councilor Terkelsen thought there would have been more background to affordable housing at this point in the committee, and that this committee would be breaking down the types of affordable housing from the nuts and bolts moving forward, Councilor Terkelsen is currently on the Ad Hoc Zoning Committee, and admits to nowing nothing about zoning, but as time went on what was good about the committee was they started from the assumption that the committee knew nothing, so it was Director Kupfer's job to lay out the zoning and how that impacts the town, so she looks forward to that because having watched the meetings, she does not really feel like she is any further forward on learning about affordable housing, and it is hard as a Councilor to vote on things that she has no knowledge on; and she likes to be knowelegeable about that, and she has tried to educate herself on the topic, but would like this committee should look at what the Coucil needs to know before it votes on this, and she hopes that can still happen. Councilor Terkelsen would like to know if this committee is going to recommends startegies based on data, what is our subsidized inventory look like now, who is responsible for looking at this data and reporting it out, currently the town does not have anyone monitoring this data so how do we know if the dta we are using is up to date? The town has no one looking at the regulatory agreements, the town has affordable units that currently have no one living in them; and we as a town do not have a method in which we can say wev'e given you this opportunity to build in our town, you as a developer promised affordability, and these apartments sit empty. Councilor Terkelsen has concerns not only on her zoning committee, but it should also be a concern of this committee as well. Short term rentals for seasonal workers she also thought would be in your discussions or exchange of ideas on how other communities are dealing with this issue and looking broadley at what might have worked in Provincetown or Aspen, but hopes this committee does a little more research and digs a little deeper and brings something forward, but in listening to your prior meetings, she does not feel like she is any further forward in your discussions; maybe get a whiteboard and through your ideas on it and work

through them, she does feel like this committee has set the table to be able to make any decisions and that is upsetting; she thought this committee was going to do the deep dive to get the information and to narrow it down, so that if a Councilor wanted to view your meetings, we would have a clear understanding of the discussions and possible solutions that you all are working on, but Councilor Terkelsen does not have that feeling and it is discouraging.

Chair of Committee reassured Councilor Terkelsen that there will be a product that comes from this committee that is a solid idea. He will enjoy putting it together with the discussions this committee has had. He has ideas about marketing, or market what we have, this country of marketing, but it's not just marketing, its education, and understanding and comprehending of something that works, its complicated, but interesting, the Chair of the committee doesn't know if its actually this committees to spend a lot of time or going beyond the end of March to deal with this issue, we will get all the standard stuff done before the end of March, we have time.

Larry Morin- Cotuit- Mr. Morin said he is looking at a big picture and a little picture. The big picture goes back to the scope of this committee, and he is not criticizing anyone, but it started off with a defined task as Councilor Schnepf and Councilor Bloom explained. The other issue that happened is there is only two committees that have people beyond the Town Council, this committee and the ad hoc zoning committee, the blend of minds on these two committees is exposing and bringing out the issues not forfeiture for enforcement, this committee is bringing forth way more than just a singular issue, and believes we need more Maryanne's on this Committee, nothing against the other members, but she has the ability to focus and describe the issues so we can adopt them. He had a conversation with Mr. Prebrey the other day and for this committee to look at the late timeline until the end of March, and can this committee come up with a method by which you can decide, where are you now, what can this committee make a recommendation on to date, this committee should go back to Town Council and ask for an enlargement in the scope of our project; it does not necessarily have to be done now, but this committee needs to set the stage for the sequel to where you are. If this committee identifies what can be solved now or at least come close to solving, and then these 4-5 other issues we have identified and tackle those later on as part two of this committee. Mr. Morin offered his help if this committee needs it.

Chair closed public comment, and appreciated all the comments made tonight.

Chair of Committee discussed the list of items he had written down from prior meetings and wanted to discuss those tonight.

1. Armory- can be used for municipal purposes, or for a profit museum (State Legislation)  
Chair of Committee asked Maryann to research the property and come back to the committee with a report as to what she found
2. Air BNB- make them rentals on a regulatory agreement structure for short-term rentals. It's a controversial issue here on Cape Cod, and a significant one. Ms. Shufelt mentioned in another meeting that the short term rentals only were 3-5 percent on Cape Cod and not a real issue at all. Councilor Ludtke mentioned that the town tried a couple years ago to regulate short term rentals and it was put aside for the time, perhaps that information could be relooked at so we are not duplicating research that has already been done. Councilor Ludtke likes having a regulatory structure, without one is not the answer. Councilor Ludtke would like to propose that the town have a regulatory structure in place. Chair of Committee asked Councilor Ludtke to come back with more information on that subject for the next meeting to give the committee a better understanding for those that do not know what that is.
3. Transfer tax on real estate- If an individual sells their home, the seller pays a fee and that fee is used towards affordable housing options. There was discussion on where this money would go, does it go to the Affordable Trust, does it go to the Community Preservation Act, it would help

if there was a housing coordinator at the town that could answer these questions for us. Councilor Ludtke suggested this be one of our strategies is suggesting the Town hire a Housing Coordinator. Councilor Bloom suggested expanding on that a little and add hire a staff person to monitor affordable compliance by aligning town resources and prioritize operating funds to support the administration of housing programs and development etc. This is a how to do it process. Councilor Crow agreed, we need to hire someone who can actually do the inventory of what the town has, what the town has lost, and what we may be able to get back.

4. Define affordability and different levels of income and encourage the Planning Department and others not to approve projects unless this criteria is met which will allow all individuals with different types of income to qualify.
5. Increase the percentage of affordable housing units proposed and developments with perhaps incentives for the developer.
6. Re look at the Inclusionary Ordinance: Councilor Ludtke discussed the possibility of recommending a scaleable ordinance, the more units, the more affordable, the example Councilor Ludtke used was Hanaover Place, the town changed the zoning in Independence Park to accommodate those apartments being built. The apartments could have been built higher, but we did not do that, and now the second phase is coming in and this is a massive corporation building this, so Councilor Ludtke believes they can absorb some of the cost to make these more affordable, or make more of them affordable. The smaller developers can't afford to absorb the cost, but these big developers can, and it is something we should also look at, this committee should make some number recommendations and move them forward to get this done. Councilor Ludtke mentioned that the town needs more 40B projects because they are affordable, she is not sure she wants a housing production plan, if it eliminates 40B projects. Councilor Crow asked a question regarding higher revenue in certain affordable housing projects, would that be something that the funds could go to, or a good use of funds. Councilor Schnepf answered that this has been an issue that has been debated at the Affordable Housing Trust, which again is separate from the Council in its decision making; Councilor Schnepf tends to think that the inclusionary zoning is a density relief and therefore there shouldn't be additional financing subsidy, however the Trust is kind of moving in a different direction where they might be providing financial subsidy for inclusionary units, they have not done so yet, but there has been discussion. Councilor Schnepf mentioned that if the town revised the inclusionary policy, we may also recommend that there for those that are deeper or super discounted that maybe additional financial subsidy could be provided through grouping some of the funding mechanisms. Inclusionary zoning is any building that has 10 or more units requires an affordable unit and that actually is across our entire town; and that was designed to try and drive toward more affordable units without having to have a 40B or change the zoning in different areas. It is a tool that is used in other communities to try and recognize that if you are building a denser development that there's some cost savings and a per square footage basis and some of those units should be affordable. There are economic parameters that Committee member Laura Shufelt could talk about at the next meeting having to do with construction costs, land costs, and a variety of other cost associated with building these units. The town can ask for all the affordability it wants, but if the feasibility of any one project might not make it without deep subsidies either provided through tax credits, state grants, low interest loans, subsidies from municipalities that come from affordable trusts. The gap between incomes and what's affordable is miles apart. Individuals are no longer paying 30 percent of their income for housing expenses, they are paying 50 percent or more, and it is not sustainable.
7. Increase the percentage of CPC funding for housing.

Councilor Crow mentioned that the public has not been a partner in the Regional Housing Production Plan; and the Local Comprehensive Planning, those were basically copied from the Cape Cod Commission to the Housing Production Plan, to where we are now on the Local Comprehensive Planning. Councilor Crow mentioned the changing of zoning in the local villages is not a popular idea, it is one of the reasons people come here is for the village look, not what someone thinks is best for the village, and he sees it as a non starter and this committee should not waste their time on it.

The Committee members decided to meet on January 29, 2025 at 4pm

A motion was made by Councilor Paula Schnepf, this was seconded by Committee member Hilda Haye, all members voted in favor of adjournment at 6:05pm

ADJOURNMENT 6:05pm