

**Town of Egremont
Egremont Housing Committee
Minutes (revised) October 15, 2018, 5 pm**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Bonnie Orloff, Richard Stanley, Bruce Bernstein, Don Pulfer, Richard Allen
Also present was Joan Goodkind.

Guest: Will Sikula, BRPC, filling in for Patricia Mullins, who could not be here.

Housing Production Plan (HPP): Richard Stanley said that this will be a waste of time; we should be instead focusing on creating affordable housing. He asked why this committee wants to do an HPP. Don Pulfer responded that this is because the Board of Selectmen assigned this task to us, along with coordinating with Construct on the moving and construction of the four units on town property.

Richard Allen asked whether the BOS understands this request from Construct for an HPP? We all assess the chance of a hostile 40B application in Egremont as slim.

Will Sikula agreed that an HPP would be a difficult task, and that DHCD would look at our efforts and say, “no hostile 40B in Egremont.” He recommended instead a Housing Action Plan.

Housing Action Plan (HAP): BRPC’s recommendations are:

A Housing Needs Assessment,
To give the town an inventory of existing housing stock and the ability to make informed recommendations for future housing, and

A Housing Action Plan,
To outline future goals to address housing needs; establish priorities and create strategies to implement these priorities.

A Housing Production Plan to create a proactive strategy to meet the town’s 10% affordable housing needs in accordance with Chapter 40B would protect the town from unfriendly 40B projects, but Egremont is a very small market unlikely to have such a large developer; it would be unlikely that DHCD would fund a plan.

BRPC also recommended that Egremont create a Community Preservation Fund; it is a good way to fund new affordable housing. We told Will that the CPA has been rejected twice in Egremont.

There also might be state funds available from DOR.

Creating Affordable Housing: Richard Stanley pointed out that for ownership housing there is no funding, but there is funding for rental units if there is available land and a plan for a number of units.

Auxiliary Units: Don Pulfer pointed out that there is a possibility for some amount of affordable housing if the Zoning Bylaw allowed, in addition to the auxiliary apartments it already allows, also auxiliary buildings, two buildings on the same lot in single ownership. Of course, these auxiliary apartments or houses would need deed restrictions to count as “affordable.” Joan thinks that this would make it economically unlikely. Richard Allen said that these auxiliary apartments and houses never happen. Tim Gellert told him that it has not happened in South Berkshire.

Housing Production: Richard S said that we need a large-scale project; we would need free land and/or contributions. The Construct project has free land and free buildings.

Richard S suggested that we advertise for a developer to come to Egremont and to a 40B project, possibly with a tax abatement. We need land: who has it, and who will work with us? If we could get land for free, we could develop four-unit buildings, perhaps in a scattered site manner.

Bruce wondered whether the Congregational Church would be a possibility, or the buildings next to the Post Office.

Housing Action Plan: - The committee agreed that it will proceed with a HAP, not an HPP.

Reports: Bonnie Orloff distributed copies of Lenox Housing Production Plan. Richard Allen presented some information on our zoning bylaw provisions that hamper affordable housing and a HUD document “Regulatory Barriers and Affordable Housing.” He said that land use restrictions are the biggest impediment to affordable housing. Richard S and Don P pointed out that that is why we have 40B, to produce affordable housing in spite of these obstacles. Don Pulfer has plunged into the census figures, but there is more work to be done to make them accessible.

Housing Committee Tasks, short term:

Census figures for the Comprehensive Needs Assessment, first step in the HAP (Don)
Affordable Housing cost projections (Will Sikula)
Look at numbers and best development scenarios.
Try to find free land.
Construct plans to build out the town site, time projection (Don).

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 29th, 6 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Pulfer