

Winthrop Comprehensive Planning Process
Housing
August 10, 2009

Board Attendance:

Patrice Putman
Andy Wess
Sarah Fuller
Ken Johnson
John Callinah
Brian Ketchen
Harold Burnett

Kristen Bartlett
Jack Kaiser
Jim Norris
John Carpenter
Phil Locashio

Town Support:

Chris Huck, KVCOG
Cornell Knight, Town Manager

Community Members:

Priscilla Jenkins
Russ Hazzard
Roger Lajeuness

7:00pm— Meeting opens

The members referred to Chris' handout to see state minimum requirements that Winthrop must take into account.

Ex: 10% of new housing must be under \$110,000. What happens if don't meet standards? No penalty. Must just adjust for next ten years, etc. Each town is looked at as a unique entity and if they are meeting needs in other ways (apartments, mobile homes, etc) then it is not considered a problem.

If you meet the needs of the community then you meet the state requirements.

The Committee discussed what kind of housing we ourselves might prefer as we aged and needed to live on a more limited income. The Committee also discussed what kinds of reduced cost housing might be most desirable for young adults with or without families. Most preferred are bolded below.

- Subsidized individual houses
- Mobile homes
- Congregate houses** (unrelated persons, existing houses)
- Assisted living
- Rentals
- Condo** (in the mill or on lake)
- Cluster housing
- Duplex** (new or conversions)
- Accessory Apts

-Rentals (a lot of rentals in Winthrop are older homes, could use **some nice, new rental units**)

-Family multi-generational where lots could be divided (with some ease and looser regulations)

-Multi-family dwelling downtown (current downtown housing is old and needs to be re-worked)

Shared housing (duplex, condos) can create a sense of community as well.

There currently are things in the ordinance that restrict aspects of accessory apts, etc (will need to be looked at to make more lenient if desired).

Must look at needs of different groups (ex: walkability for those without transportation, ADA accessibility, sidewalks, low maintenance, proximity to town and stores).

Energy efficiency -- problem with older housing stock.

Minimal land/dwelling area

Senior housing – accessible, low-maintenance, smaller homes as well, proximity to large community (churches, health center, store, etc), assisted living. Winter weather an issue when living outside the town center. People who want to age in their own homes will need things to be adapted in order to continue to live there happily. Some would enjoy multi-generational housing. Some might move to be located near children (however that may not end up being in Winthrop...economic situations may prevent children from remaining in Winthrop)

If senior housing is created and seniors move, this will open up their housing which can attract younger families.

Consider amenities that add other town costs (for example: families with children like sidewalks, etc)

Of the approx. 90 houses currently on the market in Winthrop the average list price is \$220,000

Larger houses (in general) are less affordable. Is there a way to encourage people to build smaller homes? Smaller families now, but continue to get bigger homes.

Some wondered if the new state building code might discourage building larger homes. Rising energy costs will also deter from larger homes.

Decreasing the minimum lot size may also encourage people to go to smaller homes. Could the size of the house be tied to the size of the lot required?

Need to look to other towns for feasible examples of what has worked.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Look at zoning ordinance to determine if certain aspects of it are discouraging lower priced housing (ex: 2 acre minimums, accessory apt. limitations, attached in-law apartment requirements, or the feasibility of tying size of house to lot size required).
2. Look to other towns to see what has worked to allow them to ensure the provision of lower cost housing units (both rental and owned) that are compatible with the community.
3. Pursue grant funding for proving energy efficiency improvements in older homes (green committee already tackling this issue)
4. Consider changes in the ordinances to allow “congregate housing” or the ability to create a separate apartment for rent to unrelated persons within an existing single family structure.
5. Further explore multiple senior housing options within the downtown (condos and new rental apartments)
6. Consider providing exceptions to subdivision requirements within families so properties could be easily divided within a family (support multigenerational living arrangements) but each could still have their own house.

Update on Historical Commission from Sarah Fuller: Talked about at last Town Council meeting. Pros and cons were discussed. Some concerns were raised and tentatively at the council meeting in September there will be a speaker there to discuss possible language and how the town might approach the subject.

Next Meeting: August 24, 7:00 Town Hall Land Use

In preparation for our all day (give or take) Sept. 12 meeting, please review the issue papers that Chris Huck has provided and the meeting minutes that have been taken since we began this process last January. More details to follow.