

MDI Tomorrow Housing Summit Committee

Notes from Planning Session May 29, 2003

Note: Next Meeting set for June 24, 2003 8-9:30 AM, Terry Kelly's office, Mount Desert Housing Authority, 80 Mt. Desert Street, Bar Harbor

Present: Hook Wheeler, Terry Kelley, Marla Major, Robin Weir, Jill Goldthwait, Cuff Train, Emily Eller, Bev Paigen, Sam Coplan, Ron Beard, Sydney Roberts Rockefeller

Check-in on housing progress, observations and activities

Members of the group noted the session with John Abrams, of Martha's Vinyard, who met with members of this group on May 13. Sam volunteered to write up general notes and share handouts with members of the group. Sam noted that Martha's Vinyard had commissioned John Ryan to define the housing need for community housing, resulting in a defensible number of year round housing units (owned or rented) which remain affordable in perpetuity. He volunteered to find out the methodology and costs for such a study here. Marla indicated that the study is online, by searching for island affordable housing fund.

Marla also indicated some partial data from 1989 in a housing study coordinated by Jean Marshall, and will share a summary with anyone interested.

Terry noted the purchase and sale agreement between the town of Bar Harbor and the owners of the Log Cabin Restaurant, which, if approved by voters, would result in a year-round workforce housing for up to 75 people. Other parts of the project include purchase or lease of the restaurant for a welcome center by the Chamber of Commerce and other municipal services.

Robin illustrated the difficulties of finding year-round rentals for families, given the opportunities property owners have for seasonal vacation or worker rentals.

Jill noted the previous work of the group and wondered if part of the summit or a follow-up might bring large employers together to discuss common needs and possible projects to solve work-force housing needs.

Marla, Cuff and Sydney noted progress by Mount Desert Community Trust on its strategic plan and a fundraising appeal for initial operating funds. The trust has begun discussions around possible housing projects that they might help establish.

Bev introduced Emily Eller, a college student who will serve as an intern to research and assist staff at the Jackson Lab with its housing interests.

Ron said he would mail the "State of the Island Housing Report" out to members of the group as a review document that frames the issue, sets some goals and outlines

alternative community action, including revising land use policy to make it less expensive to develop housing, tax policies that provide revenue to a community housing fund, such as envisioned by Mount Desert Community Trust, and models which have been successful here and elsewhere. This report, completed by the MDI Tomorrow Housing Issue group in October, 2002, will serve as the basis for the housing summit.

Planning for the Housing Summit (September 24 or 30)

The group reviewed its work to date, including outcomes and audiences, noting the importance of presenting the issue in both verbal and visual terms, and to assure that everyone who attended had the opportunity to sign up to stay involved in some aspect of moving forward.

The group focused on the content of the housing summit and agreed to include four components:

- A review of what we know about the housing issue on MDI, including data and anecdotes that link the issue to real people and to the larger issue of sustaining year-round communities, with volunteers for town, church and organizations, with viable school populations, with year-round economies. This review would build on the current “state of the island” report and on the visual depiction of housing solutions, including infill and clustered housing.
- The story of how Martha’s Vinyard is working on similar housing issues, from John Abram.
- A panel representing resources who can be tapped to aid in a variety of ways:
 - MDI Housing Authority
 - Mount Desert Community Trust
 - Maine State Housing Authority
 - Coastal Enterprises, Inc
(a member of a statewide coalition of interests in community housing)
- A case study (real or hypothetical) which shows how the private sector (lenders, developers, land-owners) might help address the community housing issue, with lessons learned or red-flags that might help highlight the need for land use and other policies more supportive for housing.

The group agreed that two follow-up sessions might build on the information presented at the summit: a session for large employers who might share needs and solutions; a session for town officials to focus on how “model” ordinances and incentives might be adapted

effectively by towns, and a session for prospective renter/buyers to develop more options, including co-housing.

The group agreed to meet on Thursday, June 26, from 8-9:30 am at Terry Kelley's office and to the following homework assignments.

Assignments

Terry offered to work with the lenders and others to develop an initiative for first-time and other home-buyers that would contribute to the solution of the community housing issue.

Sam agreed to confirm one of our two dates (September 24 or 30) with John Abrams and to share details of John Ryan's study of community housing need on Martha's Vinyard.

Jill agreed to work with Bev, Robin, Emily and others to see what resources might help us determine a "good enough number" to serve as a defensible target for housing units needed to sustain year-round workforce and their communities.

Ron will write and send notes and notice of next meeting

Future agenda items include:

- Targeted invitations for intended audience
- Background packets (framing the issue, showing solutions)
- Location of summit and other logistics (meal, registration, etc)
- Publicity and work with the newspapers to highlight the housing issue
- Budget and possible sponsorships of conference