

**Town of Freedom
Planning Board
Public Hearing
August 8, 2021 – 2 pm**

The hearing was opened at 2 pm by Anne Cunningham. Present are: Carol McIntire, Beth Earle, Jeff Nicoll, Paul Olzerowicz Anne Cunningham. Ernie Day – Selectman's Representative is also present.

Introductions were done.

The goals of this session were presented.

Master Plan goals and recommendations were discussed.

Chuck Brooks – had a question about allowed density being quite high. This is in regards to elderly housing and they are allowed to build on one quarter of an acre.

Information was presented about housing sales in Freedom. There were 415 qualified sales in the past 4.5 years. 149 of those were in Spindle Point, Totem Pole and Danforth Bay. The Freedom Village Condos are not large enough for families with children. That left approximately 250 sales that could have been an option for a family.

Home sales in the last 18 months – Affordable home price is now \$267,500. In the past 18 months there were 69 sales of homes, and 35 of those were under the affordable price guideline. Only 11 of those buyers have a Freedom address. The median price of those 11 homes was \$180,000. The remainder had a median price of \$309,000. We need to find out how to make homes more affordable for families in Freedom. Sales of raw land were not registered to any buyers with a Freedom address.

Christine Shields – when did this become imperative? What is the basis for wanting young people in? Anne explained that the Master Plan survey indicated that we did not want Freedom to become a retirement community.

Chuck Brooks – what is the average cost of an acre of land in Freedom these days? Anne will research and send the information.

Beth Ann Williams – if homes are being transferred in family, isn't this allowing families to stay? Anne will post the info on the bulletin board.

Bobbi McCracken – children are not going to move here until they retire. They can not afford to move to Freedom.

Carl Bloomquist – what is wrong with what we are doing right now. Anne explained that we are trying to find ways for families to move to Freedom that may not have an inheritance that allows them.

Bobbi McCracken – concern is that if this is strictly a retirement community, we will not have people to volunteer for our services, hospitals, landscaping, etc.

Paul Olzerowicz- the issue is that property is too expensive for younger people. We are looking for opportunities to increase affordable housing.

Carl Bloomquist – feels that the more critical problem is jobs.

Paul O. explained that we need to make an ordinance that will allow affordable housing to be ready to accommodate those with jobs when they come.

Vincent (Vito?) - Times are changing very rapidly. Many of the questions can be identified by what is happening right now. Housing for younger families that can work remotely from home needs to be a consideration.

Carl Bloomquist – where would you find the land and how much would you be able to spend? Anne

reiterated that the purpose of this meeting is to promote possibilities for developers to be able to build more affordable housing.

Deb Sellers – question about the numbers of cost of housing right now – the prices everywhere are very high right now.

Three options were presented –

Detached accessory dwelling units - currently attached units are allowed. Anne presented information about what the Planning Board has developed as recommendations regarding DADUs.

Pat Bernard – in barn/garage is a living unit allowed on the top floor?

Betty (Root?) - concerned about short term rentals being made out of the DADUs.

Don Johnson – asked about the rationale of DADUs – is this for younger families to take over the home while the older parents move into the DADUs. This is a scenario, but there is also the possibility of renting the units out.

Carl Bloomquist – concerned about developers and would like to work with local builders.

Glen McCracken – prohibitive costs are well and septic systems. Suggests that the town start to supply town water/septic to make costs more affordable.

Nadine Chapman – Hypothetical – a 20 acre property makes an area available for someone to build a small cottage – what are the restrictions as to where that unit would be on the property?

Ann Gallagher - would these be considered two deeded properties? It would be one. What was the basis for the one lot/one house regulation? She has concerns about having enough water resources to support more housing. The Planning Board will have to look at this.

Carl Bloomquist – will only legal residents or all taxpayers be allowed to vote? Only residents will be able to vote.

Pat Bernard – this would encourage families that have had homes here for some time, it will be the grandchildren who will be looking for homes here, and would like to allow their parents to still live here as well. She supports allowing additional units attached by a breezeway and not a common wall.

Cluster Developements

Anne explained the concept of cluster developments.

Don Johnson – this is the option that is being proposed that has the most promise for maintaining rural character and bringing more affordable housing.

Deb Sellers – what would that do to the taxes?

Don Johnson – that is a good point for the town to consider. A lot of the motivation for what we are trying to do comes from the school.

Deb Sellers – concerned about the school not being at capacity – suggests combining schools.

Anne Cunningham – the Effingham school is in a different district.

Ann Gallagher – is there an area already spec-ed out for this How much control/regulation would you have over this?

Betty Lee – it sounds as though this is focused on the rural residential area. Is that the focus, to look for potential areas for cluster development?

Carl Bloomquist – if we continue to have a million people a year crossing the border in the South, the lower income group will be immigrants and the issues that come with them, such as crime and language barriers.

Duplexes

More affordable than standalone homes, lower construction costs, less infrastructure.

Nelson Reilly – does building department have sufficient control if this happens? The Zoning Officer

and the Building Inspector have been granted increased resources.

Pocket neighborhoods were also presented.

Possible issues with these options were presented.

Bobbi McCracken – the land on 153 – is that light commercial zoning. South of Bennett Road is light commercial.

Christine – will there be an additional meeting that will discuss this in more detail? Yes, there will be.

Peg – some people are concerned or happy with the idea that if changes happen in zoning, real estate prices will spike.

Deb Sellers – the Drake house is gorgeous. She spoke with Vinny regarding the parking.

Will what is happening at the Drake House be a step toward providing affordable housing?

How can we know if these units are affordable that it will accomplish the goal of bringing in younger families? We can write an ordinance that will restrict whether these will be vacation homes. Mount Washington Valley Housing is working on wording that will require a percentage of low income housing in any development.

Vinny spoke about cluster housing for multi use units in developments.

Janet Johnson thanked the Board for the work they do and will be doing.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Donaldson
Recording Secretary