

*Special Board of Selectmen's Meeting Minutes  
7:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 28, 2008  
Lower Level, Durham Public Library*

**Meeting Minutes-unapproved**

Joint Meeting - Board of Selectmen, Planning & Zoning Commission, Economic Development Commission and Board of Finance.

In attendance: Laura Francis, John Szewczyk, James McLaughlin, Peter Cascini, Ona McLaughlin, Richard Hanley, Geoff Colegrove, Dick Erickson, Frank DeFelice, Stuart Keating, Dave Foley, Jay Berardino, Duncan Milne, Joe Pasquale, Casey Cordes, several town residents.

Guest Speaker:  
Housing for Economic Growth  
David P. Fink  
Policy Director  
Partner for Strong Communities

Laura Francis called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. and led with the pledge of allegiance.

She opened the meeting by referring to a conversation at a prior Board of Selectmen's meeting where a number of residents spoke about the need for comprehensive planning for land use in the Town of Durham, and to look at the Town's goals and vision. She then presented a PowerPoint presentation that covered population growth, household incomes, housing/real estate, affordability index, mortgage payment vs profession income, job availability/employment, and commuters. She then introduced David Fink, Policy Director, Partnership for Strong Communities.

D. Fink started by explaining how HOMEConnecticut works. The HOMEConnecticut statute was created by Governor Rell and the General Assemblé in June 2007 to provide incentives to municipalities that voluntarily choose to expand their array of mixed-income housing options. Under the law, municipalities that agree to create housing in responsible growth locations (near town centers, transportation facilities, or existing infrastructure) at (1) densities of 6 single-family, 10 townhouse or duplex, or 20 multifamily units per acre and (2) ensure that 20% of the units are priced so they are affordable to residents earning 80% of the area median income or less, will receive from the state: Zoning incentive payments of \$2,000/unit that could be built in the designated Incentive Housing Zone created by the town; Building incentive payments of \$2,000/multifamily unit or \$5,000/single-family unit at the time that building permits are issued in the zone. Towns are also eligible for technical assistance and planning grants of up to \$50,000 to determine the feasibility of creating mixed-income in Incentive Housing Zones with no strings attached.

He then opened the meeting up for questions and discussion.

A resident asked how the town would make this profitable for the builder/contractor. D. Fink responded that they have spoken to many builders and they feel the 80/20 mix would work for them. The resident then asked if the 80/20 worked, referring to Massachusetts where this was put in place, asking if all the units sold. D. Fink responded that yes it worked well with all the units selling and gave a local example of Wallingford; 80 single family starter homes (freestanding condominiums) were built on old industrial property consisting of 24 acres of which 30% of the units were affordable.

Geoff Colegrove talked about the minimum of 6 units per acre; in order to accomplish this in Durham you may have to get involved in community water and sewer systems stating this discourages developers. He asked if the state would do anything to help with this. D. Fink stated at this time the state was offering the technical assistance and planning grants; over (36) thirty-six grants have been approved, none being rejected.

Dick Erickson said that density means school expenses and mentioned the State of Massachusetts intends to fund/subsidize education and asked if the State of Ct was going to do so. D. Fink responded no, that statewide enrollment peaked in 2005 and enrollment is projected to be down 17% by 2020. He then referred to census data on the handout he provided; he also stated the town could control the amount of potential students by what type of units and where the units would be placed.

Michael Good agreed the statistics presented ring true. He talked about Durham's young adult children who cannot afford to live in town, attend schools in Connecticut, and are living out of state.

L. Francis asked if there was a tool to determine what the town needs; how do we assess needs, not just antidotal or private needs. D. Fink suggested employing private planning.

A resident asked if completed grant studies were available to be reviewed and asked if the economy was bringing a downturn to the applications. D. Fink responded that all applications are available from OPM and stated the application interest is still very good; towns are using this time as a planning stage.

Ona McLaughlin asked Town Planner Geoff Colegrove if there were sites readily available in town for community sewer and water systems. G. Colegrove stated the site would have to be unique and fairly large; in general (6) units per acre have not been seen to date. O. McLaughlin asked if the Merriam Manufacturing site, if cleaned up, would be an acceptable site. G. Colegrove stated that this site could be an adaptable re-use site and worth looking at.

J. Corona agreed that this would be a good time to plan but feels the town would not be able to put in (6) units per acre with a sophisticated community sewer and water system because of the soil. Jay Berardino commented about provisions in the statute to work around the (6) units per acre.

Joe Pasquale stated that grant funding is for our future; this may identify possibilities and we should take advantage of planning.

Meeting adjourned 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Moncata

RECV'D: Office of the Town Clerk  
November 10, 2008 at 3:40pm