

Date:

May 15, 2025

To:

Barnstable Town Council

From:

Committee to Assess and Recommend Strategies for Housing Creation Within the Town

CC:

James Kupfer, Mark Ells, Kathleen Connolly

History:

On March 7, 2024, a Resolve was presented to the Barnstable Town Council (2024-166D) to establish an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Housing. This initiative was designed under the leadership of Town Council President Felicia Penn. Continued action on the Resolve was scheduled for the following Town Council meeting on March 21, 2025.

On March 21, 2024, the Resolve (2024-166D) was passed by the Town Council (10 yes, 2 no). This created the Committee to Assess and Recommend Strategies for Housing Creation Within the Town. It was determined that five Town Councilors would serve on the Committee, as well as four registered voters in the Town of Barnstable.

Purpose:

A final report would recommend strategies for the creation of housing to serve year-round residents and seasonal workers, with a goal of recommending 2-4 strategies for the Town to adopt, along with recommendations for implementation and resources needed.

Time Period: _

The Committee was originally charged to complete the work and make recommendations to the Council by September 30, 2024. Extensions were granted by Town Council Presidents Felicia Penn and Craig Tamash with a final report due on or before April 30, 2025.

On April 23, 2024, April 24, 2024, April 30, 2024, and May 1, 2024 the Appointments Committee began interviews under Chairman Jeffrey Mendes to choose 4 registered voters as members of the Committee.

On May 6, 2024, the Appointments Committee voted to place Rick Presbrey, Laura Shufelt, Hilda Haye, and Maryann Barboza on the Committee.

The first meeting of the Committee to Assess and Recommend Strategies for Housing Creation Within the Town was held on July 18, 2024. Rick Presbrey was elected as the Chair of the Committee.

Members of the Committee:

Rick Presbrey: Chair

Laura Shufelt

Maryann Barboza

Hilda Haye

Councilor Paula Schnepf

Councilor Gordon Starr

Councilor John Crow

Councilor Betty Ludtke

Councilor Charles Bloom

Further meetings were held on August 26, 2024, September 16, 2024, October 7, 2024, November 25, 2024, December 30, 2024, January 16, 2025, January 29, 2025, February 24, 2025, and the last meeting was held on March 28, 2025. Quorum was met at all meetings. The committee researched and reviewed many ideas and documents about housing and the current need for housing. Several Barnstable residents appeared before the committee to present their ideas about our shortage of housing for many in need. The committee considered documents from the state, the County, the town, the Cape Cod Commission and other communities within the US.

The Committee decided that affordable housing was of primary concern. These are the four recommendations that were approved by the Committee. Several other proposals were discussed, but these four made the final cut:

1. “Submit a home rule petition to create a transfer fee of an amount to be determined for houses sold above a certain amount. Revenue from the fee shall be deposited in the Affordable Housing Growth & Development Trust,”
2. “Use Town Assets (including buildings and land) for Affordable Housing.”
3. “The committee recommends that the Town Council and the Town Manager, as appropriate, prioritize funding and hiring a Housing staff person and/or find other means to immediately commence inventorying existing affordable housing, and to effectively monitor, including but not limited to, inclusionary housing, housing funded by the public through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and the Affordable Accessory Apartment Program.”
4. “Create a regulatory structure for short-term rentals.”

Summary:

This section of the report outlines key policy recommendations to increase housing production and improve affordability within the Town of Barnstable. The recommendations focus on enhancing local revenue streams, optimizing use of public assets, improving housing oversight, and regulating short-term rentals. Together, these actions will support the long-term stability and equity of the Town's housing market.

Recommendation 1: Home Rule Petition for Transfer Fee on High-Value Home Sales (condensed)

Summary:

The Town should submit a home rule petition to the state legislature to authorize the implementation of a real estate transfer fee on the sale of homes exceeding a threshold value to be determined. Revenue generated from this fee would be directed to the Affordable Housing Growth & Development Trust.

Purpose & Impact:

- Creates a dedicated funding stream for affordable housing development.
- Targets luxury real estate transactions to support broader community housing needs.
- Encourages reinvestment in the local housing ecosystem.

Next Steps:

- Determine appropriate sale price threshold and fee percentage.
- Draft and submit the home rule petition.
- Conduct public outreach and education on the policy's benefits.

Recommendation 2: Use of Town Assets for Affordable Housing (condensed)

Summary:

The Town should identify and repurpose publicly owned land and buildings for the development of affordable housing.

Purpose & Impact:

- Reduces acquisition costs for affordable housing projects.
- Encourages strategic redevelopment of underutilized assets.
- Increases the Town's ability to control and manage the affordability of new housing units.

Next Steps:

- Conduct an inventory of municipally owned properties.
- Evaluate properties for suitability in housing development.
- Partner with non-profit and mission-aligned developers.

Recommendation 3: Prioritize Housing Staff and Inventorying Efforts (condensed)

Summary:

The Town Council and Town Manager should prioritize funding for a dedicated housing staff person or develop alternative means to begin a comprehensive inventory of existing affordable housing stock. This role would also be responsible for oversight and monitoring.

Purpose & Impact:

- Provides accurate data on the current state of affordable housing.
- Ensures compliance and long-term viability of publicly funded housing programs.
- Increases the Town's capacity to respond to housing challenges with timely and informed actions.

Next Steps:

- Allocate budget for a housing staff position.
- Begin housing inventory process, including inclusionary housing and publicly funded units.
- Develop tracking systems and periodic reporting mechanisms.

Recommendation 4: Establish Regulatory Framework for Short-Term Rentals (condensed)

Summary:

The Town should develop and implement regulations governing short-term rental properties to balance economic opportunities with housing availability and community integrity.

Purpose & Impact:

- Helps preserve long-term rental housing stock.
- Enhances neighborhood stability and safety.
- Provides a mechanism for data collection and enforcement.

Next Steps:

- Draft short-term rental regulations, including registration, fees, and operational standards.
- Solicit public input and review best practices from other municipalities.
- Establish an enforcement and compliance strategy.

Conclusion:

The above recommendations provide a strategic framework for addressing housing production and affordability challenges in the Town. By acting on these measures, the Town can make significant progress in securing sustainable, equitable housing opportunities for all residents.

Rick Presbrey, Chairman

Committee to Assess and Recommend Strategies for Housing Creation Within the Town