

Demographic Change Task Force
Minutes
June 1, 2009
Town Hall Room 111

Margaret Coppe (School Liaison), Ben Esty, Bebe Fallick (Chair), Dan Krupka, Candace McLaughlin, Carl Valente (Town Manager)

Other members not present: Marian Cohen

Non-members present: Charles Hornig, Planning Board Chair, Mary Ann McCall-Taylor, Town Planner

Chair Bebe Fallick called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM.

Charles Hornig made the following points about the role of the elected Planning Board in the community:

- Classical conservatism in the community, i.e. resistance to change
- Board has not been successful in making zoning changes based on demographics
- Used limited powers to produce diversity in housing, e.g. townhouses, duplexes (Shade St Journey's End is example of preservation + single family + town houses + duplexes)
- Trying to encourage a diversity of housing choices
- Cluster housing was originally thought to introduce diversity in housing costs, but did not
- The town does not produce much housing (LexHab has built some new affordable units)
- Lexington has 11, 000 housing units
- Average new house is over one million dollars
- Approximately 50 tear-downs a year
- One development the town had input into was Avalon Hills at the old Met State location. Took 10 years of planning and negotiation with towns of Belmont and Waltham
- Conversion of schools into housing produced large number of units, but not always successfully either for affordability or livability
- Affordable is defined as 80% of the area median income
- Not much demand for age-restricted housing
- Another type of housing that is less expensive is accessory apartment, but few permits are pulled for them
- Current housing mix is not bad, could use more rental units
- Automobile based town
- Minorities in Lexington have the highest average income

In summary, Charles said that the Planning Board is not doing anything to change the housing mix in town. The majority of the population seems happy with things the way they are.

Mary Ann noted that it has been difficult for the Planning Board to obtain data from the Town Assessor's office, and when it is available is not accurate especially for older homes. Data from the Town census has become increasingly difficult to obtain due to privacy laws.

Ben asked if we could get data from the past 10 years on units built.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for either July 8 or 29 with Housing Authority Director Ann Whitney.

Minutes submitted by
Margaret Coppe