

**Jamestown Vision**  
**Findings on Affordability and affordable Housing**

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Scribed by New Commons

The town and state approved affordable housing plan is sound. How does Jamestown implement it to comply with the required production of 38 units in the next five years (the 38 unit result assumes no dramatic population growth)?

**Implementation Principles**

- Use good design to make affordable housing acceptable
- Focus on both Affordable Housing “big A” and affordability “little a”
- Do mixed income housing, with affordable and market rate together, and not the clustering affordable housing in one place
- Change zoning to more density is the only way to build affordable housing
- Conduct continuous education and communication to the public
- Addressing affordable housing requires the integration of other issues: parking, open space and water...can't do housing without addressing the other three issues
- The local public has to finance the building of affordable housing

**Strategies**

Presented from most ready and feasible to more complex, requiring more time:

- Greatest impact is town controlled sites: old town hall, lot next to fire station, ambulance barn and 2 water towers (put 5 units in a vertical building between them). Maximize the use of each site. For example, with the old town hall, challenge the assumptions to get more than the 12 proposed units and how to make it work without 2 car minimum?
- Identify sites the town can significantly oversee
- Partner with developers “who are ready to” go like Ray Bazzano at 10 and 24 Narragansett as a packaged development with affordable housing in one building; what incentives do they need to be successful? Pilot a comprehensive zoning and permitting process?
- Subdivide oversized lots, sell excess land to land trust, and build a second unit
- Buy existing property and place restrictions on them – this the current practice of Church Community Housing (over the next few years take advantage of the drop in property values)
- Apply the Martha’s Vineyard model of John Abrams of South Mountain Company: When someone buys a small house for the lot and wants to tear the house down, John negotiates with the owner to take a tax deduction for the value of the home (minus the land), and write a check for that amount to the affordable housing trust and takes the small house and moves it to a different lot
- Identify large parcels where up to 15 units can be built
- Do infill with mixed income with 3 units with one affordable

- Using large open space sites done as a combination of conservation of open space and clustered housing that is both mixed income and perhaps some mixed use. Do the project as a self-contained, man-made eco-system that internally handles renewable energy, composting sewer, brown and rain water use, and uses green building applications.
- As school population continues to decline, turn them into affordable apartments

### **Zoning and Policy changes**

- Change CL zone to allow for commercial/mixed use with current residential use deeded for current owners
- Reduce the required lot size for affordable housing to 2000 square feet
- To accommodate affordable housing parking requirements, put the parking behind or underneath the building
- Parking: omit residential requirements in core and relax commercial requirements
- Allow for accessory units on current property

### **Financing the Affordable Housing Trust**

Trust requires a dedicated public purpose where the funds can't revert to general revenues. Chamber to take the lead? Three kinds of resources for the trust:

#### *Town*

- Receipts from land sale of tax deed foreclosures used for the trust

#### *Tax*

- Local bond issue
- Universal transfer tax either applied across the board or for 500K or higher (like Block Island and Nantucket)
- Special use taxes dedicated to the fund
- A universal % of property tax dedicated to the trust was proposed (but determined not to be feasible because the town is already at the state set ceiling of property tax increases, per year, of 5.25%)

#### *Philanthropy*

- Planned giving with residents putting the trust in their wills
- Campaign to raise money like the recent purchase of farms for a combined effort of affordable housing and open space...activate the state law on the books since 1992 that creates a combined trust

### **Capacity Required for Implementing the Affordable Housing Plan**

- The town council and other municipal bodies have to make affordable housing an explicit goal and publicly endorse and execute a town-wide campaign to implement the ratified affordable housing plan
- Engage an affordable housing implementer who regularly works on implementation