


Buckland Planning Board
Minutes for Housing Public Forum
October 24, 2019 7:00 p.m.
Buckland Town Hall

MGH JG
AD BCR


AGENDA

1. Open the meeting.
2. Background and Purpose.
3. Identified Housing Needs in Buckland.
4. Presentation of Housing Ideas.
5. Other topics not anticipated the Chair 48 hours prior to meeting.
6. Public Comment.
7. Adjourn the meeting.

ATTENDEES

John Gould - Planning Board Co-chair
Michael Hoberman - Planning Board Co-chair
Andrea Donlon - Planning Board Member
Brian Rose - Planning Board Member
Jon Wyman - Planning Board Member
Alyssa Larose - Senior Land Use and Natural Resources Planner, FRCOG
Mary Bolduc - Board Clerk
See also attached sign-in list

FORUM/MEETING

1. Open the meeting - Meeting opened at 7:04 p.m. by John Gould. He outlined the format of the meeting, briefly explaining the Power Point presentation, the Q & A sessions after each section of the presentation, the final Q & A period, and the questionnaires on which those in attendance could answer the multiple choice questions and make any additional comments.
2. Background and Purpose - Andrea Donlon began the Power Point presentation which addressed the background and purpose of the 2016 housing survey and its findings. Some points that were emphasized included:
 1. Zoning changes are one way, but not the only way, to satisfy housing needs. There is a mismatch between what we have and what we need.
 2. Population of Buckland has not changed significantly, but number of households has increased.
 3. Cost burden to resident is high if spending greater than 30% of income on housing.
 4. Buckland has an aging housing stock.
 5. Complete survey is on Buckland town website and that of FRCOG.

6. Definition of Affordable housing (designated with a capital A) vs affordable (lower case a) housing. Throughout presentation and discussions Affordable housing would refer to housing stock in which the sale price or rents are Affordable due to a deed restriction, and must be rented or sold to households which meet specific income guidelines. Naturally occurring affordability without deed restrictions and subject to market forces refers to affordable (lower case a) housing stock; this housing is available to anyone subject to meeting landlord standards or lender approval for mortgage.
7. Various charts illustrating survey results and income guidelines were reviewed and discussed.
3. Identified housing needs in Buckland - The following needs were identified accompanied by an explanation of each including demographics, etc.
 1. Senior housing.
 2. Housing for first time home buyers.
 3. Rental housing.
 4. Housing for persons with disabilities.
4. Presentation of Housing Ideas -
 1. John Gould pointed out and explained the various zoning districts in Buckland using an enlarged map as a visual aid. He also introduced the three areas of potential zoning changes that would be covered: 1). Accessory apartments, 2). Smaller lots in the village zoning districts, and 3). Modification to the Cluster/Conservation Development Bylaw.
 2. Brian Rose gave the presentation on Option 1: Accessory Apartments.
 1. This segment covered current Buckland zoning and what it provides for regarding accessory apartments, followed by potential changes to Buckland zoning. Number of rooms, square footage restrictions, occupancy limits, owner residency in one of units, "by right" and Special Permit circumstances, were areas of note.
 2. Photographs illustrated examples of attached/expanded accessory apartments as well as detached options.
 3. "What Do You Think?" questions posed at the end of Option 1 asked if Buckland should 1). Allow Accessory Apartments as an expansion to an existing single-family home and 2). Allow Accessory Apartments in separate structures. The multiple choices for each were Yes, No, or Unsure.
 3. Jon Wyman presented Option 2: Smaller Lots in the Village Zoning Districts. He proceeded with Option 2a:
 1. The effects of reducing minimum lots size requirements with reference to conforming/non-conforming lots was shown in a graph. (Reducing minimums would decrease non-conformity). Examples given for 20,000 square feet (current minimum lot size), 15,000, 12,000, and 10,000 square feet.
 2. Reducing lot size would increase possibilities for infill opportunities. Photographs of 2 infill examples were shown, giving a "before" and "after" of each location to show its impact.

3. Photographs of nine Buckland streets/neighborhoods were taken and statistics given for each one to compare/illustrate the range of lot sizes and frontage throughout the village. These photos serve as a helpful tool to visualize the current densities in the village and compare them to existing zoning.
4. John Gould followed with the presentation of Option 2b: Village Cluster/Cottage Development.
 1. Statistics on minimum land area and open space requirements given for current zoning, compared to a cluster bylaw that would focus on the village. Such a bylaw would allow for infill development while balancing increased density with open space.
 2. The bylaw might also include incentives for affordable housing, design guidelines in keeping with character of village. Capping size of homes in a cottage development is possible, and the option of co-housing form of ownership could be a result of such a bylaw.
 3. Photographs were shown as examples of actual village cluster and cottage developments to illustrate the various layouts of buildings, use of open space, densities and architecture. Both developments which included Affordable housing and those that did not were included.
 4. The "What Do You Think?" question for consideration following Options 2a and 2b asked what form of new housing one would support in the Village zoning districts 1). Infill housing on smaller lots, 2). Infill housing on smaller lots for Affordable housing only, 3). Village cluster development, and 4). Cottage housing development. Could choose all that applied.
5. Michael Hoberman presented Option 3: Modifications to Cluster Development/Conservation Bylaw.
 1. Current Cluster Development/Conservation Development is allowed in all but Industrial districts in Buckland.
 2. Possible changes offered for consideration were 1). Make cluster/conservation development the preferred method in Rural Residential zone, 2). Increase required protected open space from 40% to 60%, 3). Relax dimensional requirements for individual lots, and 4). Provide density bonus for including Affordable housing in the development.
 3. Photographic examples were again given to visualize Option 3, three out of four of them offering Affordable housing. The examples differed in density, housing style, single family or duplex homes, layout of buildings and open space. All were in Massachusetts, the closest being in Haydenville and Belchertown.
 4. Following Option 3, there was an "Overall- What do you think?" question asking if one supported zoning that encourages deed-restricted Affordable housing in Buckland. The multiple choice answers were Yes, No, or Unsure. Any additional comments were also solicited.
6. The "next steps" for the process were bulleted at the end of the Power Point and are:
 1. Refine proposed zoning changes based on public feedback.
 2. Hold a public information session on final draft changes

3. Hold a Public Hearing on final proposal.
4. Present proposed changes at Annual Town Meeting for vote.
5. Other topics not anticipated by Chair 48 hours prior to meeting - Agenda item #3 from preceding ANR Planning Board meeting. Minutes from October 3, 2019 meeting were reviewed and approved. Michael moved to accept. Brian seconded. Vote to approve unanimous.
6. Public comment - Public comment took place at intervals throughout the meeting with the most participation after completion of the Power Point presentation. Public comment, questions and points of discussion included, but were not limited to, the following:
 1. 18% of Buckland households responded to survey. How significant is 18%?
 2. Comment on the hardship of cost of housing relative to income based on graph in presentation.
 3. Regarding airbnb's, can one exist in a detached dwelling? Alyssa responded that zoning can address long and short term rentals. Also, point raised that airbnb's are a commercial venture and do not provide housing.
 4. One resident offered opinion that occupancy limits should be placed on accessory dwellings.
 5. Why current 800 square foot maximum for accessory apartments? Alyssa and Board members responded with how maximums may be established, and also gave examples from area towns.
 6. Regarding detached accessory dwellings, the following points/questions were raised and discussed :
 1. Are detached units, in part, an aesthetic decision?
 2. Lot size and setbacks should both be considered .
 3. What input would abutters have?
 7. Could different requirements be established based on density?
 8. What is capacity of current water/sewer infrastructure? There is possibility that infrastructure could be capped if population becomes too dense on current systems.
 9. Is it known how many lots are possibilities for infill?
 10. Can owner live in smaller accessory unit and rent main house? Answer was "yes".
 11. Where are two family and/or multifamily homes allowed? Board responded.
 12. Described differences between cottage and cluster developments. Town could choose one as "default" development model.
 13. One resident described a development in the village of five buildings on 3 acres with 60% or more open space. Formed an HOA. He offered his development and experience as a model.
 14. What will be impact on neighbors? Some will be able to avail themselves of opportunities offered, some will not based on lot size, topography, etc.
 15. Buckland needs growth for tax base. Has an overlay been done?
 16. How does infill impact village of Shelburne Falls? Would Buckland be more dense than Shelburne?

17. Where is Buckland on how much Affordable housing is offered? How does town compare on spectrum of offering Affordable housing?
 18. There is a narrow window of qualifying for Affordable housing. A property in Greenfield was cited as an example of sale Affordable units vs those subject to market forces; the latter sold more quickly.
 19. Could survey be expanded to include information on what areas/properties meet certain standards/criteria? Shape process around responses based on that information.
 20. How does Affordable vs affordable housing affect tax base?
 21. Could there be volunteers to offer their properties for purpose of illustrating the possibilities that exist? Could a piece of town owned property also be offered as an example?
 22. There is a need to create opportunities to attract young and first time home buyers.
 23. There was discussion and feedback generated by all of the above.
 24. Survey questionnaires were collected.
7. Adjourn the meeting - Forum was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Attachments: Power Point Presentation
Survey Questions
Affordable Housing Examples
Public Forum Sign-In Sheet

Respectfully submitted by Mary L. Bolduc, Board Clerk