

Dare Housing Task Force

Dare County Administration Building, Manteo, NC

August 20th, 2024

Approved on 9.17.24

Present: *Chair Donna Creef, Vice-Chair Malcolm Fearing, Robert Outten, Bob Woodard, Craig Garriss, Monica Thibodeau, Elizabeth Morey, Matt Neal (Virtual), Michael Siers, Drew Havens, Anthony Fletcher, Melissa Dickerson, Melody Clopton, Ryan Lang, Jeff Schwartzberg, Bob Peele, Duke Geraghty, Tess Judge, Ronnie Sloan, Noah Gillam*

Absent: *Briggs McEwan, Sherry Wickstrom, Mitchell Bateman, Ron Payne, Caroline Basnight, Andy Garmin, John Windley, Carol Warneki*

Also Attending: *Skyler Foley-Clerk, Mary Helen Goodloe-Murphy, Misun Hur, Emily Yeager (Virtual), Chris Sawin*

Madam Chair called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Tess Judge led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and then led the meeting in a prayer.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Madam Chair reminded everyone about the three active subcommittees: The Plan/Sites Subcommittee, the Nonprofit Subcommittee, and the Community Engagement Subcommittee. During the Plan/Sites Subcommittee meeting in June, a local developer, who has a significant background in multi-family construction in Virginia and North Carolina and is now a resident of Dare County, gave a presentation. He shared valuable insights on how economies of scale operate in his projects and the considerations investors make when handling such developments. He also reviewed an inventory list of properties in unincorporated Dare County, focusing on those that are two acres or larger and discussing the applicable zoning regulations. Madam Chair noted that the subcommittee chose to set aside privately-owned properties to concentrate on publicly owned ones at this time. Additionally, they covered the initiatives the Dare Education Foundation is working on, highlighting their successful model for teacher housing and the relevant legislative review. Furthermore, Madam Chair addressed the Nonprofit Subcommittee, sharing that Chris Sawin presented on the role of nonprofits in housing. He discussed similar programs implemented by community foundations in Florida and South Dakota, emphasizing the collaboration between nonprofit organizations, governmental bodies, and the private sector. Sawin pointed out that defining the target population is crucial, noting that in our area, it consists of individuals who are "asset limited, income constrained, but employed." Madam Chair emphasized the subcommittee's belief that a nonprofit organization will be essential for the success of any housing project in Dare County. Madam Chair also mentioned that the Outreach Subcommittee held its first meeting, which featured a presentation from East Carolina University. In conclusion, she announced that at the end of the year, all subcommittees will present a summary of their research to the Task Force. Judge expressed that she found the developer coming in to talk to them was extremely helpful. The Vice-Chair emphasized the idea that if there is an individual that owns a private piece of property and they would like for it to be considered then they should inform the Task Force. Outten commented that having some perimeters would be beneficial or an unlimited amount of phone calls will be received. The Vice-Chair also emphasized that the Task Force is making headway and they are getting work done, he highlighted that there is no longer a law suit against the state.

PRESENTATION–ECU STUDY–COMMUNITY ATTITUDES ON WORKFORCE HOUSING

Misun Hur, Ph.D., and Emily Yeager, Ph.D., delivered a presentation titled “Combating NIMBYism for Workforce Housing in Dare County, NC.” Their talk began by focusing on the 2023 State of Dare County Tourism Annual Report, which revealed that visitor spending reached \$1.97 billion. The county supports 12,030 jobs related to tourism and generates \$66 million in state tax revenue, alongside \$74.2 million in local tax revenue, all attributed to tourism activities. Another point that was highlighted was that county residents benefit from tax savings amounting to \$3,696, the highest in the state. The presentation also addressed the funding necessary for developing essential and workforce housing. Several reasons for the current affordable housing shortage were presented, including: 1) unequal socio-demographic structure in society, 2) complexity of targeting the problems, 3) location-specific variations, 4) regulation restrictions, 5) increased housing production costs, 6) reduced supply of all housing types, and 7) "Not in My Backyard" (NIMBY). The speakers emphasized that housing politics often stem from emotional responses, particularly a fear of losing existing advantages. They referenced various studies that outlined common concerns, such as: 1) Fear of declining property values (Nguyen, 2005; Wasser & Wahid, 2019), 2) Decreasing public service quality, poor aesthetic qualities of affordable housing, increased traffic volume and parking (Ding & Taylor, 2021), 3) Reluctance in the socioeconomic mix (McNee & Pojani, 2022), 4) Increased density in the area (Bröchner et al., 2021), and 5) Cycle through a catalog of objections (Monkkonen & Manville, 2019). Two key objectives were emphasized: 1. To identify effective strategies and tactics for addressing NIMBYism (Not in My Backyard) by examining community perceptions of workforce housing. 2. To gather baseline data that will help tackle workforce housing issues within the county. The methods discussed included initial research, which involved creating a community profile and conducting interviews with community leaders. This was followed by primary research methods, including a comprehensive online survey targeting the entire community and organized focus groups. Four potential scenarios were outlined: 1. No change. 2. Construction of high-density residential units. 3. Addition of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). 4. A systematic approach utilizing incentives. The timeline for the project was reviewed. Research, interviews with community leaders, and community-wide online surveys are planned to take place from now until December 2024. Between January and May 2025, there will be site visits and focus group meetings. The Dare County Study is expected to conclude in July 2025, at which point a presentation of the findings will be made.

Emily Yeager expressed that their aim is to aid with ongoing initiatives. They are eager to gather input and ideas, especially if there are specific areas where feedback is desired. Additionally, they are focused on engaging community members and would greatly appreciate opportunities for collaboration.

MOTION

Tess Judge motioned for the Housing Task Force to participate and collaborate with the ECU NIMBYism Study.

Craig Garriss seconded the motion.

VOTE: Ayes unanimous

Woodard inquired whether the study would offer recommendations to the Task Force regarding how to address NIMBYism related to issues such as declining property values, density, and reduced public services. Hur responded that their aim is to alleviate people's fears and concerns. Yeager added that they could include questions and property information at the end of the survey, which would provide further insights into these topics.

CHAIRMAN AND MEMBER COMMENTS

Thibodeau highlighted the importance of the simulation in providing citizens with a visual representation, which will enhance their understanding. Schwartzberg mentioned that they had talked about showcasing existing developments within the community. Sloan pointed out that traffic remains a significant concern for residents. Madam Chair stressed the necessity for everyone to be involved in the discussions. Woodard shared that various communities nationwide have successfully tackled the issue of NIMBYism. He suggested examining how other communities across the country have navigated these issues to assist with their approach moving forward. Fletcher pointed out that the level of acceptability may vary among different communities, with some being more receptive than others. Additionally, he emphasized the significance of choosing an appropriate location.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Task Force reviewed the minutes from the 06.25.24 meeting.

MOTION

Bob Peele made a motion to approve the 06.25.24 Minutes.

Melissa Dickerson seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 10:15 a.m.