

LINCOLN PLANNING BOARD

SEPTEMBER 29, 2004

MINUTES

A joint meeting of the Planning Board and Town Council was held on Wednesday, September 29, 2004 at the Town Hall, 100 Old River Road, Lincoln, RI.

No members of the Planning Board were present. All Town Council members were present at meeting.

Mr. Ranaldi opened the meeting by announcing that this was the last public forum before the Affordable Housing Production Plan was to be considered by the Planning Board and the Town Council. He explained that the process began with hiring Barbara Solokoff and Associates, Inc. A steering committee was formed, four public meetings were held and a plan was drafted. Rhode Island Housing reviewed the draft and gave the town high reviews. The town must reach the 10% affordable housing needs mandated by the General Assembly. The town has until December 31, 2004 to submit a plan to the state; otherwise, the Town loses control over future developments. Public input is welcome at this meeting.

Ms. Sokoloff explained what affordable housing is. The Low and Moderate Income Housing Act mandates that every community have

10% of housing as affordable. Federal guidelines define housing as affordable if it costs no more than 30% of monthly household income, and look at affordability for three levels of households:

- moderate income: households having between 50%-80% of the market area's median household income**
- low income: households having between 30%-50% of the market area's median household income, and**
- very low-income: households having less than 30% of the market area's median household income**

Comprehensive Permits applications were only offered to nonprofit developers, but the act was amended to include for-profit developers as long as a percentage of housing was classified as affordable. This amendment resulted in a large increase of Comprehensive Permit applications being filed throughout the state. The revisions to the Act placed a moratorium on Comprehensive Permits until July 2005. The 10% requirement was changed to a 10% goal for cities and towns. Municipal, State or Federal subsidies are allowed and require properties to remain affordable for a period of time (not less than 30 years).

Affordable housing is needed by teachers, police officers, firefighters, town employees, child care providers, service-sector employees, retired persons, and young families. In 2002, Lincoln was

the 16th most expensive town to live in; Lincoln is now the 11th most expensive.

Ms. Sokoloff reviewed the plan in detail. She explained the assets that our town has, the barriers that our town is facing, and set forth the goals to meet the requirements of the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act. The Town now has 557 units that meet the state definition of affordable housing – 290 more units are needed to reach 10%. To reach the 10% goal by 2020, the Town needs to create 183 units every five years. It is important to show action and progress in meeting the 10% goal. Housing strategies include revising zoning ordinances, identifying locations, strengthening partnerships with community development corporations and the Lincoln Housing Authority, identifying existing and new resources, and ensuring long-term affordability by deed restrictions. Ms. Sokoloff reviewed potential locations throughout the town and the number of affordable housing units that could be created.

Bob Wingate asked how schools would be affected by developments in specific locations and Mr. Ranaldi explained that those concerns can be addressed and amended at a later date. Derek Miekeljohn asked how many communities were in compliance with the Act and how penalties were assessed. Ms. Sokoloff explained that there are no monetary penalties assessed but that the towns and cities would lose control over development projects. A private developer can come into the town and file Comprehensive Permit applications and

without a state approved affordable housing plan, the town is very limited in the amount of control it has.

Ms. Sokoloff advised that this Affordable Housing Plan is a working plan and provides the town will strategies and actions to reach the 10% affordable housing goal. There are a vast number of housing units that the state doesn't allow to be counted towards the 10% goal, because the units are not subsidized. A number of units could be sold at any time and rents could be increased.

One resident spoke against developing the former bowling alley as affordable housing and creating another Prospect Heights and further stated that she does not want people from Central Falls moving into her neighborhood. Another resident stated that it is a known fact that people in Section 8 housing have lower IQ's.

Mr. Ranaldi explained that the Planning Board and the Town Council would be reviewing the Affordable Housing Plan at their next regularly scheduled meetings. The plan has to be submitted to the state by December 31, 2004.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Weigner