

MINUTES
Survey Committee of the Durham Housing Task Force
May 23, 2023
3:00 pm Upstairs Conference Room - Durham Town Hall

Survey Committee Members Present

Cathy Frierson
Chuck Hotchkiss
Sally Tobias

Others Present

Robin Mower
Beth Olshansky
Todd Selig, Town Administrator
Michael Saputo (task force member)
Michael Behrendt, Town Planner

The meeting began at 3:00 pm. The group discussed the proposed Housing Survey developed by the Survey Committee. Beth and Robin said the survey was not objective and that it promoted a view supporting more housing, which did not necessarily reflect the views of the public. They recommended holding off on presenting the survey so that more work could be done. They questioned the first page with statements about housing. Robin read a statement from Dennis Meadows. Cathy and Sally stated that the survey was carefully written and would be effective.

Todd suggested reaching out to Andy Smith at the UNH Survey Center about the survey. He said if there was a cost for the Survey Center to work with the Town then he would look for funds to cover that cost. There was discussion about various ways to educate the public and learn more from the public about people's ideas related to housing.

Chuck said the issue is more complex than reflected now in the survey since many Durham residents probably feel supportive of workforce housing as long as it does not affect their taxes, open space, and character of the neighborhoods. Todd said an incremental approach to addressing housing makes sense. He said if we can get it right the first time through a collaborative public process then things go more smoothly.

After much discussion there was largely a consensus to hold off on presenting the survey (originally planned to be presented on Durham Day, June 3) and to work with the UNH Survey Center. Sally and Cathy will do outreach to the public about housing issues to educate the public and hear their thoughts but no survey will be presented at this time.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Behrendt, Town Planner