



Town of Bristol, Rhode Island

Department of Community Development

10 Court Street
Bristol, RI 02809
bristolri.gov
401-253-7000

May 1, 2024

TO: Planning Board

FROM: Diane Williamson, Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Diane W", is written over the "FROM:" line.

RE: Update to the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan

Please re-review the attached status report on the Housing Element Action Items from the current Comprehensive Plan.

The consultant will be discussing strategies for the Update.

Thank you.

Housing Action Items and current status of same:

H-1 – Create standards for Multi-family housing created for affordable housing

Not Done.

H-2- Adopt public advertising campaign

Not done specifically by Bristol but Statewide attention given

H-3 Build an affordable Housing Trust Fund

Not done. We had no Fee -in -Lieu received from any inclusionary zoning projects. The Town rescinded the Inclusionary zoning with the recent state law that required significant density bonuses. We have the one fee from Bristol Yarn Mill expected to be received in 2024-2025. This was from a prior zoning change that was renegotiated by the Town. The original zone change was prior to the Town's inclusionary zoning ordinance so it was negotiated at that time as well and gave the developer options for on site, off site or fee in lieu with a minimum of 10% affordable. When the zoning was amended the Town re-negotiated for 20% with 10 units in mill, 3 across the street and the rest fee in lieu. There had been two other previous developments that would have paid a fee in lieu "Belvedere" which was denied by the Zoning Board and "Longfield" which opted to provide off-site affordable units and came back to the Board for a modification of the original permit.

H-4 Work with RWU to encourage more on-campus housing and a right of first refusal for Almeida

RWU does have a plan to build more on-campus housing and they are aware of the Town's interest in Almeida Apartments when they go off-line.

H-5 Re-institute the Affordable Housing Committee

The original appointed Committee provided recommendations to the Town Council and disbanded. We'll have to look at what other Towns accomplish with their Affordable Housing Committees since the original Committee didn't see a need to keep meeting.

H-6 Develop a Section 8 Home ownership program

Not Done. This is something to ask Candy Pansa about at the Bristol Housing Authority.

H-7 Develop a program with Bristol Housing Authority to recruit more landlords for Section 8 since there are more recipients than apartments.

This is something else to ask Candy Pansa about.

H-8 Develop a program and promote East Bay CDC as the only East Bay Agency recognized as a monitoring agent

This has been done informally. Whenever we have an applicant for affordable housing we meet with the East Bay CDC as the monitoring agent. Community Housing Land Trust (Melina Lodge) is the monitoring agent for the home ownership affordable units that had been monitored by RI Housing.

H-9 Partner with East Bay Chamber of Commerce to raise awareness of need for workforce housing.

More could be done here.

H-10 Utilize the service of RWU Community Partnerships Center to develop creative ways to provide affordable housing

This is ongoing as opportunities present themselves with the CPC. The CPC reaches out for project ideas but hasn't been as active as in past years.

H-11 Continue and expand the CDBG home repair program

This is ongoing with a very active CDBG Home Repair Program.

H-12 – Consider best use or re-use of Town owned property to including housing or apply a portion of the sale to a housing trust or first time homebuyer. Exception are the former schools on the Town Common which cannot be sold or used for housing per the Grand Deed.

The former Oliver School was recently sold and is proposed for 11 residential units with 3 to be affordable. Also proposed to have one accessible unit.

H-13 Work with State Legislature to broaden definition of affordable housing

Ongoing with Statewide initiatives but not successful. Bristol has some landlords that have had long term rentals with rents sometimes less than what they could charge as documented "affordable" units. However, these landlords don't want to commit to the 30-year deed restriction and so we can't count them towards our 10%.

H-14 Identify individual properties and neighborhoods for architectural or historic significance and work with owners for National Register of Historic Places designation.

Some preliminary work has been done but need to do more.

H15 – Explore and consider form based versus use based zoning to maintain characteristics of existing neighborhoods.

This has not been done but could be done in conjunction with H-1 for the multi family standards.

H16 – Continue to update streets with sidewalks

This is ongoing with developments and with the Town and RIDOT. RIDOT is currently working on sidewalks on the west side of Hope Street and Ferry Road as well.

H17 – Cul-de sacs should be discouraged where possible.

This is ongoing with Planning Board as part of subdivision reviews.

H18 – Adopt a night sky ordinance to address the impacts of exterior lighting on neighborhood.

We prohibit lights from impacting neighbors with shielding, location, and intensity, but not as a comprehensive “night sky ordinance.”

H-19 Continue to participate in Community Rating System

Yes, we are doing this and are now a Class 7.

H-20 To provide incentive for property owners to create deed restricted affordable rental, continue to limit the property tax on the deed restricted unit to 8% of the gross income received.

We are still doing this. This is ongoing.

H-21 Continue to list sites for affordable housing and consider scattered units.

We need to update this list. A lot of the sites are no longer available.

H-22 Continue to required affordable units as a condition for zoning relief and zone changes that include residential.

This is ongoing specifically with the Zoning Board; however, the Board doesn't always agree with staff's recommendations to require affordable units.

H-23 Create an info packet for non-profit developers to help promote creating affordable housing

This is not yet done

H-24 Create design standards for in-fill development

Not yet done. This would be important for multi family infill but not sure as important for single family infill.

H-25 Help seniors in place

Ongoing

H-26 Work with service providers to create affordable child care

To be done.

H-27 Work with homeless agencies to track homeless individuals or families

This is ongoing.

H-28 Work with the State to amend current state law on affordable housing including allowing Section 8 vouchers to count toward 10% goal.

State Laws are currently being amended regarding housing.