Comprehensive Plan – Housing Subcommittee
Wednesday, September 15, 2021
Information Gathering with Andrea Perley – Realtor & Resident of Bristol

Note of a meeting between Andrea Perley and Richard Francis 15 Sept 2021
Edited and agreed 21 Sept 2021

At Kris Poland's suggestion, I met Andrea Perley who offered help with Housing. She is a realtor (third generation) and was until two years ago Chair of the Planning Board. I told her that we could collect most of the data and came to her for advice and guidance

Our conversation was frank and thought-provoking and offered another perspective on both Housing and Land Use.

Our concentration was principally on affordable housing, and we used Chapter 208 as a reference. We agreed that it would be difficult to create affordable housing and cited among other things water and septage restrictions. She emphasized that developers were primarily interested in profit, and it would be difficult to sell the idea of affordable housing to them. We discussed possible strategies to achieve the recommended 10% of new developments including asking developers to pay into a fund that would enable the Town to create incentives for affordable housing.

For seasonal/year round she suggested that Jess Westhaver should be able to help with data from the Planning Board, assuming that the information has been registered for seasonal/year round conversions. She suggested that we consider seasonal rentals for workforce housing, a problem she thought particular to Bristol in the area. Seasonal workers are not as common in other towns.

She pointed out the difference between taxpayers and residents with respect to voting and made clear that renters are not considered taxpayers. She suggested that we review housing stock and values using Assessor reports. Joe Rose may be able to help with Tiny House, RV, and vans.

She suggested we look at 'cluster housing' and how incentivizing that would be beneficial to growth. She also gave Crabapple Lane in Bremen and Pond Circle in Damariscotta as examples of past affordable housing efforts.

We looked at the map of Bristol and she pointed out the lack of big spaces that could be easily designated as 'growth' or 'affordable housing' areas. The current map shows multiple long skinny lots.

We talked of 'ribbon development' along Route 130 and Route 32 and differed in our interpretation of the benefits and disadvantages. We discussed the designation of areas for growth with specific characteristics, such as housing or industry.

The issue of 'from away' was hard to answer. She described herself as a multigenerational resident who did not want significant change; she also recognized that changes had already happened and that she does in part benefit from development in the Town. She explained that many multigenerational residents had inherited land that was effectively their potential income source for kid's college, retirement fund, land to hand down to their own children to build on, etc. and, although they may sell it, they were opposed to any changes.

Covenants attached to a sale are important to consider. As a generalization, people 'from away' want to have covenants that protect them from future development and maintain a certain 'feel' to the neighborhood, local people who wish to stay in the area do not want any restrictions, feeling they should have the right to do with their land what they wish.

She offered two answers, the unpopular being Zoning and restricting the number of building permits issued per annum by including a certain percentage that must be for affordable housing. The 'good answer' is monetary incentives which could include no tax on new subdivided lots until sold and a discount on applications.

We also noted that the Town Land Use ordinances allow an accessory apartment or ADU, which is an excellent way to increase housing options, but was, in her view, exceptionally restrictive to achieve that goal.