

Portsmouth Listens Housing Dialogs

Fall 2017

DISCUSSION GUIDE

A diversity of places to live by price-point

has been a critical and much-discussed issue in Portsmouth for the past ten years or more. Recently, the conversation has begun to expand to include **location and design** – a Blue Ribbon Committee created recommendations for a new ordinance that would expand housing options, and the North End and West End charrettes included discussions about where places to live could be located and they types they might be (ie apartments, small homes). In September, the Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast hosted a Housing Expo, within which a wide variety of housing options (including design, location and pricing) were explored.

These dialogs are being convened as a next step, so that together we can take a community-wide, broader look at what we ALL think about what people who live, work, and/or play in Portsmouth need for places to live - for now and for the years ahead:

for people who work, for retirees who wish to downsize, for all kinds of people with all kinds of needs, incomes and desires for what kind of home they want.

The dialogs are meant to address the question:

***“How can housing – linked to every aspect of our community –
make Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for everyone?”***

We are not limiting this discussion to a specific type of “housing” (eg, workforce housing), or for any particular group, but will talk about places to live for **everyone** in our community.

The City wants to hear from YOU – what do YOU think about this issue, and based on what you know now and will learn throughout these sessions, the City wants to know:

- What kinds of places to live are needed?
- How can we create them – what will it take to get there?

After the Kickoff on October 5, there will be four sessions for the dialogs, including an evening with City decision-makers, during which you may share some preliminary ideas and get their feedback and ask questions. One or two of you (in each group) will prepare a final written report of what this group thinks and recommends – this will be shared with the other groups and with the City on a night of “report outs” and will also be published in the *Herald*.

Each session will last approximately two hours, from 7 – 9 PM (unless a day group).

Session One (week of October 9) :

- Review of program, expectations
- Get to know each other
- Discussion: what we know now – about ourselves, our friends and neighbors, about places to live in Portsmouth

Session Two (week of October 16)

Discussions of

- types of homes, price points and locations that might be needed in Portsmouth
- proposed ordinance

Session Three (week of October 23)

- Meet with City decision-makers for questions and feedback of ideas you may be starting to have.

Session Four (week of October 30)

- Brainstorm and develop recommendations

Week of November 6: no meeting but work on recommendations

Week of November 13: present recommendations

Thank you for taking the time to participate in and contribute to this important discussion.

SESSION ONE (Week of October 9)

15 minutes

1. Facilitator introduces self and role of facilitator
2. Participants introduce themselves
 - Name
 - Family? Job?
 - I want to be involved in these discussions because _____.

5 minutes

3. Facilitator explains Session One goals:
 - Get acquainted
 - Study Circle logistics
 - Ground rules
 - How do we see issue of choices in places to live in Portsmouth?
4. Logistics
 - Sessions One, Two and Four at same time, same location
 - Session Three – date and location yet to be determined
 - This group will have to prepare a written report (3-5 pages) of findings and recommendations – need to be thinking about who will do that (all of you will contribute but need one or two people to coordinate and compile)
 - Summary of each session can be foundation for this report
 - Report-outs: Date and location yet to be determined

10 minutes

5. Ground rules
 - Set up ground rules, post
6. The purpose of these dialogs is to gather input from you, people who live, work, and/or play in Portsmouth, regarding expanding diversity of places to live in Portsmouth.

What ARE the needs (current and future) for places to live and what do you recommend the City do to meet them?

10 minutes

8. **Vision:** Through the Master Plan process, the City expressed its vision for the City as a viable and sustainable community over the next ten years. While we do not want to spend time dissecting the Master Plan Vision, we want to know if everyone is comfortable with it. It includes the following five themes:
- **Vibrant:** A city that provides a high quality of life with an abundance of opportunities for living, working and playing.
 - **Authentic:** A City that treasures its unique character, natural resources and historic assets.
 - **Diverse:** A City that welcomes residents of all ages and income levels and supports a mix of small to large businesses.
 - **Connected:** A City that provides strong links throughout the community, supports all forms of mobility, & encourages walking, bicycling & transit.
 - **Resilient:** A City that considers and values the long-term health of its natural and built environment.

What do you think the future will look like for Portsmouth? What are some of the “forces of change” (ones that we cannot control but need to address, such as an aging populations, changing weather patterns, a different economy, more) that might affect our city, and have an impact on housing choices?

9. What did we learn in the “housing 101” presentation? What stood out for you?

20 minutes 10. **DISCUSSION:** *What are the basic characteristics of a good place to live – your home?*

- Take a couple of minutes first for people to jot down ideas
- Record characteristics – everyone call out examples without going into a discussion at this point
- Discuss priorities, dot vote
 - ***This information is part one of your final report.***

45 minutes:

11. Regarding where you are currently living:

- How does this affect your life?
- Is it working for you?
 - Why or why not? (for example, think about what you said in #10, above)

- What about where you live in the future, across the rest of your lifeline:
 - What do you anticipate might be your “needs and expectations” for your home going forward? (either your current home or another)
 - Do you think you might need or prefer a different type of home in the future? (from where you are now?) Why or why not?
- Do you foresee any challenges to meeting your “needs and expectations” going forward? (Whether you stay where you are or find somewhere different?) Explain.
- What about others you know (or know of) in the general Portsmouth community in terms of the questions above?
 - (Note: these should be *specific* examples, although do not name names. For example, “I have a neighbor who...” or “My friend’s mom)

15 minutes

9. Wrap up

As you can see, this is not a simple issue.

For homework,

- A. Please take another look at the “housing database” of information just so you know what’s in there.
- B. Think about some of the needs you would like to see addressed in your own home, and do some research: what are other places doing to meet those same needs?
 - What do the “solutions” look like?
 - What needs might they address (often beyond the obvious)
 - What are some of the challenges these other places have had to address to achieve this kind of “housing?”

For example:

- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU’s)
 - Multi-unit apartments (studios to multi-bedrooms)
 - Manufactured homes (eg, Hillcrest)
 - Duplex, tri-plex, four-plexes/”the missing middle”
 - Tiny homes
 - Cottage-style homes
 - Other?
- C. Please review Portsmouth’s proposed zoning ordinance to expand housing options and be prepared to discuss – what do you think of it?

Session Two (Week of October 16)

10 – 15 minutes Review ground rules

Check-in question: Have you thought differently about “housing” in the past week? If yes, briefly explain.

40 minutes **What are the housing needs of everyone who lives, works, and/or plays in Portsmouth?**

Suggestion: *1start with demographic category: eg, service workers, people getting older, mobility-challenged, etc. Participants name some groups without going into detail, record them. Then list needs that each might have related to where they live.*

Then, by need, what kind(s) of homes/places to live would meet those needs?

What does the group see as the most important of these – most important needs to be met and most important as far as housing type to meet those needs?

- Keep track of
 - Needs
 - Housing to support
 - What are the most pressing of these needs/housing needed? (Dot vote?)

60 minutes What will it take to create these kinds of housing? (TAKE EACH SEPARATELY)

- Eg, more land? Zoning changes?
- What actions do we need to take, **and who is the “we?”**

Facilitators: for each of the above, keep track of

- Needs mentioned
- Types of housing to support
- Top dot votes to indicate what your group sees as priorities
- Ideas of how and by whom to make them reality

This is the beginning of this discussion – you will share these ideas next week with the City Council, Candidates and others and see how they react. You may revise these in the last session.

10 minutes Wrap up and identify who will write this summary for the report.

Session 3 (week of October 23) – with City.

Session 4: (Week of October 30) LAST DELIBERATIVE SESSION

5 minutes Review ground rules

5 minutes Check-in question

20 minutes What did you learn last week from City Councilors, candidates and others?

15 minutes What would you like the City to know about your thoughts regarding the proposed new ordinance?

55 minutes **REVIEW:**

You have identified needs which you see as priorities for the City.

- Have these changed based on your meeting last week?
- What does this group recommend re taking action to create housing that will make Portsmouth the best place to live, work and/or play for **everyone**?
 - **What are the priorities?**

YOUR REPORT SHOULD INCLUDE: (note: a template will be provided)

- A summary of the characteristics you believe contribute to a good place to live
- What are the housing needs of everyone who lives, works, and/or play in Portsmouth?
 - What does the group believe should be the priorities to be addressed?
- What actions must **we (and who IS the “we”?)** take to create or expand those kinds of housing, and what are the priorities?

Keep in mind that

- your recommendations should include diverse needs (eg, workforce, getting older, mobility-challenged .. other)
- recommendations do NOT have to be brick and mortar (eg, young people live with seniors)

10 minutes

Wrap up – review final writing of report, report-outs

Report Template:

1. What did your group identify as the characteristics of a good place to live?
2. What are the housing needs of everyone who lives, works and/or plays in Portsmouth?