

**Scarborough Housing Alliance
Meeting Minutes
June 25, 2025**

Present Via Zoom: Bryan Shumway

Present at Town Hall: Bob Nadeau, Bill Donovan (Council Liaison), Bill Shanahan, Bryan Shumway

Absent: Leroy Crocket, Eric Boucher, Jean-Marie Caterina, Stephan Zamierowski

Guests: Karen Martin (SEDCO Staff),

6:11 Call to order

A quorum was not declared, but the group decided to proceed with general discussion.

The Alliance members began the discussion with a recap of the joint Council/Housing Alliance Workshop on that took place on June 4, 2025.

Chair Shumway asked Karen Martin of SEDCO to give the board a brief summary of the workshop. Karen said that according to comments, the Council felt the workshop was very. The Presentation given by Bryan discussed the current stock of housing and identified pockets where supply and demand are mismatched.

The Council was interested in understanding where the market is not working and what the actions could be taken to address those needs, particularly for Scarborough residents. Basically, where should the Council focus – on Senior Housing or workforce housing or something else?

Bryan noted that the presentation provided invaluable data backing up the status of housing in Scarborough.

Bryan also noted that he was appreciative of the Alliance members who were able to attend the workshop.

Bryan noted that there a Councilor's Corner style meeting on Housing was on the books and the Council would get more public feedback for the Alliance on the issues. Bryan explained that the Alliance will need to be responsive the public, to the Council and to how Scarborough is changing.

Bill Donovan commented that he thinks the Council might be somewhat frustrated about what actions to take on housing issues. They are very supportive of the mission of the Housing Alliance, but they recognize that housing costs are off the charts and that is creating a problem.

One difficult aspect is that Scarborough is creating a significant amount of housing, compared to other communities, but is this increase in supply helping affordability issues or providing new opportunities for existing residents?

The discussion of the group turned to question of identifying some concrete actions that the Alliance could endorse. What should council do to make a difference in housing? Are there ways to reduce the cost of housing for exiting residents?

The following items were discussed under the topic of what can be done.

- 1) The Council did ask the Alliance to be more specific about the market gaps and what actions could be done to improve current conditions?
- 2) Why doesn't the increase in the quantity of housing fix some of the market gaps?
- 3) How do we identify the more specifically the market gaps?
- 4) Scarborough scores well in the MaineHousing QAP, how do we take advantage of this?
- 5) What made the South Portland Housing Authority identify Scarborough as a good place to do a project? They approached us, so they must have identified a specific need.
- 6) We do not have a housing authority, so should we explore working more closely with the South Portland Housing Authority?
- 7) There are a number of affordable housing developers that have done projects here in Scarborough, such as Developers Collaborative and Cyndy Taylors company.
- 8) How do we reach out to them to hear their stories?
- 9) Do we need a focus group of local developers that we could ask about conditions in Scarborough and what would make them want to develop more projects that would fit the needs in Scarborough?
- 10) Can we ask them if there are zoning or other land use tweaks that could make housing more affordable? Tell us what the roadblocks are.
- 11) Could we set up a system that says if you build these types of housing, then you should have an easier time developing in Scarborough?
- 12) We do not have the funding to make a giant dent in the financing housing, but are there steps on the edges that we could make – zoning tweaks, clear objectives – etc.?
- 13) The group discussion centered around creating focus groups of developers and financing institutions - 2 Separate groups. Karen noted that SEDCO would be interested in helping/cosponsoring such events, if the Housing Alliance is interested.
- 14) Could we apply to the Federal Home Loan bank to leverage federal funding locally? It was stated that it's entirely possible, but we have to start with local lenders.
- 15) What is the best way to approach developers – will they be reticent to talk in a groups that may include competitors? The consensus was that everyone works well together and that they would be talking about things the public sector could do – so no trade secrets. Developers are competitive, but civic minded.
- 16) We can involve Autumn Speer, the Planning Director in planning the sessions.
- 17) In public comment, a local guest asked the group to not forget about homeowners and small developers who might do an infill project. How can the average citizen be involved in providing solutions for affordability? The Alliance members were very receptive to this idea.
- 18) One member reminded the board that they discussed putting together a handbook of resources and references for the public to use.

Bryan wrapped up the robust discussion of strategies and workshop review.

He then introduced the idea of looking at how demographics, such as household sizes are affecting the market.

The households that we have are not matching up with the housing in town. The average household size has dropped, but people are still buying large 3 and 4 bedroom homes. We do not have a supply of smaller homes to match the smaller family sizes. Even if folks in the larger homes want to downsize, there are few smaller homes on the market.

Could there be a village of small homes for seniors to buy? Hillcrest is a good example of this demand. What can we do to encourage smaller more affordable homes?

What can we do to encourage smaller scale homes? Such development might encourage more affordability and more infill – let's put this discussion on the agenda for the next meeting. But there is no place for them to go if they want to downsize.

The workforce housing is critical for the local employers. But we are not sure that the community has embraced the workforce housing concept. We used to have "starter home" neighborhoods -Is that really what "workforce" housing is?

The group ended the discussion reaffirming the need to have two focus groups – Developers and Financing Institutions. We will develop the lists of attendees and circulate around to the group.