

SAINT ANSELM COLLEGE

CENTER FOR ETHICS IN BUSINESS AND GOVERNANCE

Executive Summary

The Housing We Need: A Politics, Business, and Justice Roundtable held on 18 June 2018 at Saint Anselm College

On June 18, 2018, the Saint Anselm College Center for Ethics in Business and Governance (CEBG) convened a large and diverse group of stakeholders to discuss problems of housing and housing affordability in New Hampshire, and to start developing recommendations for solutions and action. The group was divided into 16 tables, each of which held a moderated discussion on these issues and developed recommendations. Over the ensuing two months, a task force led by CEBG staff compiled and refined the recommendations. Significant effort was made to ensure that the recommendations from the stakeholder session found a place in the final results. Four categories emerged from this effort. Recommendations are not ranked for priority.

Local Land Use Regulation: Housing developers consistently identify local land use regulations as a significant barrier to their ability to construct affordable homes for purchase and rent.

- Increase allowed density.
- Increase the speed of review by local boards.
- Increase regulatory flexibility to allow developers to respond to changing markets.
- Encourage younger people to serve on local boards.

Education: The greatest number of recommendations from stakeholder tables involved the importance of educating various constituencies about the need for housing, counteracting housing myths, and engaging businesses.

- Conduct NH-based research that evaluates the benefits of housing to communities.
- Develop marketing campaign on the benefits of housing and the impact of regulation that links housing and economic growth, and that underscores the needs of different population sectors.
- Create messages that counter the myths associated with affordable housing.
- Engage major business leaders to advocate for housing at the local level.

State policy: A series of recommendations focused on actions that could be taken by the NH Legislature to impact local regulation or to improve developers' financial capacity to build affordable housing.

- Create a state-level housing appeals board as an alternative to court trials on local decisions.
- Require a portion of new development to be affordable.
- Audit municipal compliance with the workforce housing law; work with those that don't comply.
- Create a state-chartered real estate investment trust to finance housing development.

State funding and incentives: Recommendations also concentrated on how the NH Legislature could directly fund housing development or provide tax incentives.

- Fund the existing Affordable Housing Fund.
- Increase or set aside a portion of the Real Estate Transfer Tax to fund Affordable Housing Fund.
- Restructure tax policy to assist with affordable housing development.
- Exempt first-time homebuyers and affordable housing from the Real Estate Transfer Tax.