

Bangor Housing Working Group – Session II

Quality & Affordability of Housing in Bangor

Challenges to developing affordable housing

- Age of housing stock, thus condition is often such that extensive rehabilitation work is needed.
 - Deferred maintenance exacerbates the situation
 - Becomes daunting

- Application of today's Codes to 100 year old and older buildings
 - Can potentially necessitate layout changes - \$ (stairways)
 - Sprinkler systems – mixed emotions: they are great and I am 100% for them but often the need for them is often pointed to by developers as the one item that prevented rehabilitation of a building
 - Smoke and CO detectors (hardwiring; interconnection)
 - Egress issues in unpermitted units and buildings with unpermitted units (number of exits; hallway size; travel distances, fire escapes, etc.)
 - Egress window size (in bedrooms only; SFMO has provided some flexibility in pre-'76 buildings; not the largest of issues but sometimes proves tricky)

- Buildings that have been vacant for any period of time have entire systems that need replacement; the cost of the needed work is certainly a challenge. There are a good number of buildings out there that have sat vacant for multiple winters and are in this very condition. (Placarded = 154; Registered Vacant = 197)
 - Foundation – very costly repairs from the beginning
 - Plumbing – copper often stripped (associated wall damage)
 - Electrical – again copper stripped; antiquated systems; K&T
 - Heating – if boiler, copper stripped; corrosion
 - Roof – Mostly at or beyond useful life
 - Windows – often broken
 - Interior – moisture causes paint to peel; plaster to fail; tin ceilings corroded; floors swollen and warped
 - Appliances – mostly gone; inoperable if present

- Unpermitted units. Many large single family homes throughout the City have been divided up and been turned into multi-family units, often times without permits. This creates zoning snafus in addition to potential life/safety issues. Issues created upon sale; sometimes prevents sale; issues created when future permits pulled.
- Zoning – Parking & Lot Coverage
 - Parking requirements were created when society was at a different place; bus, Uber, bikes, walking are all more popular now; society moving away from Automobile centered decisions/planning.
 - Physical space for required parking spaces is very often a challenge in the inner core (smaller, tighter and more filled lots)
 - Construction costs to create required spaces
 - Recent ordinance changes to ISR in the inner core helps by allowing parking spaces to be created on tight lots, if needed; additionally, changes to the size of required parking buffers help.
 - ISR and buffer changes will help, but the number of spaces required remains and is often a development challenge for multi-family housing
- Historic Preservation
 - Adds cost due to materials allowed
 - Exterior only
 - Due to relatively small area of Historic Zones, not as much impact as other challenge areas, but still present
- Property Owners
 - Business models designed to extract max. cash leave no \$ for maintenance/repairs and results in unsafe conditions
 - This business model lowers the overall housing stock quality
 - Investing in a building allows an owner to collect a higher rent over a longer period of time – not all buy into this theory.
 - Example of land lord that just doesn't care – deck falling off – absolute absurdity of reply when contacted 2nd time by HUD
- Available space
 - Very limited; large tracts not available