

## **Summary of BRHSSC procedure**

The Sudbury Blue Ribbon Housing Site Selection Committee (BRHSSC) has been charged with a very specific mission. The mission is to identify the current Town-owned properties that are best suited to build Sudbury Housing Authority (SHA) “duplexes” according to the concept approved by Sudbury Town Meeting 2003. The mission must be completed by the beginning of December so that a report can be delivered to the Sudbury Board of Selectmen for their use in formulating actions for the 2004 Sudbury Town Meeting. Community involvement is encouraged to enhance the selection process.

The SHA construction plan is to build 7 buildings on 5 or 6 sites, for a total of 16 rental units. The buildings would include either: (i) a 3 bedroom unit and a 2 bedroom unit, or (ii) a 2 bedroom unit plus a pair of single bedroom units. The second type is actually a triplex, but the external size of the building would be approximately the same as the regular duplex, so all the buildings are called duplexes for simplicity.

The task of determining which sites are best suited to SHA duplex construction requires evaluation of several criteria testing each of the approximately 200 available sites. The criteria can be sorted into two general categories: physical and legal; and some criteria involving intangible considerations. It is simpler to evaluate the purely physical and legal criteria first, to be followed by the intangible criteria. For example, properties that are too small or too wet to support construction can immediately be dismissed from consideration. The first legal consideration is ownership and deeded use; this is used to divide the properties into short- and long-term studies, with Town-owned land being considered first while State-owned, Federal-owner, and other tax-exempt-ownership land will be recommended for further evaluation. Other legal questions such as existing restrictions on a property, and intangible questions such as other town plans for potential use of the land will be addressed on the subset of properties that are determined to be physically suited for SHA construction. The Selectmen have given guidance to the BRHSSC that properties with conservation or park and recreation restrictions should not be considered in this phase of the effort.

The physical criteria include:

Buildable issues/Costs (B) - site physical constraints including: earth moving, shallow rock, steep slopes, septic, etc.

Wetlands (W) - do wetlands exist on the site and if yes, do they constrain or preclude development.

Geometry/Size issues (G) = is the parcel too small or configured to constrain or preclude development, e.g., not enough land to build on, etc.

Existing Structures (E) = do existing structures constrain or preclude development, e.g., can't build in a cemetery or at Town Hall, etc.

Access Issues (A) = are there access issues, e.g., landlocked, access too narrow for driveway, safety issues for driveway, etc.

The BRHSSC will consider the physical parameters for each site and identify those sites that are clearly unsuitable for construction. Some of the parameters are simply yes/no evaluations, while others will be graded on a scale. For example, a 400 square foot traffic island would be instantly recognized as unsuitable for construction. A 3 acre property containing wetlands, however, might include a buildable acre that could be separated from the rest of the site. Wetlands and conservation lands will be rated on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 indicates good construction viability and 4 is totally unsuitable (such as a 3 acre site that holds a 2.9 acre pond).

Finally, the intangible criteria will be considered. Apart from the initial ownership question, these include:

1. Compatibility with current uses: zoning issues -- the SHA homes should not be inappropriately sited in non-residential zoning districts; existing uses, such as a site that is surrounded by cemeteries; and area density -- to not conflict significantly with existing development.
2. Other attempts to use the land: current use other than existing construction, existing restrictions on development, and any known plans for other town usage.
3. Other relevant considerations: many parcels have unique characteristics that will impact their suitability for the SHA construction. There may be physical, legal, or intangible concerns not included above. Community involvement will be sought particularly for this step, since town residents will have knowledge to help the decision process.

The BRHSSC is committed to have an open and well documented process of reviewing the sites. Meeting minutes and agendas are posted on the town website and at Town Hall. Future meetings are scheduled for Wednesday October 29 and November 12, in order to complete the work of the committee in time for Town Meeting in 2004. The list of properties will be publicized so residents will have an opportunity to comment on the process or facts the committee may have missed about specific sites during a public forum which will be held on November 19 at Town Hall.

Please feel free to contact the committee via email at [BRHSSC@town.sudbury.ma.us](mailto:BRHSSC@town.sudbury.ma.us)

Submitted: 10/21/03