

Synopsis of July 22 public event

The Dublin Housing Task Committee, along with consultants Carol Ogilvie and Ivy Vann, conducted an interactive event at the Dublin Elementary School on July 22 from 10-noon. Approximately 65 residents participated, most for the entire two hours. Participants began by tracing their own housing journey and by noting which of a list of jobs they had either held or knew someone who held now.



Participants were seated at long tables, two groups of 5 or 6 at each table, to answer a series of questions after they had introduced themselves to each other and explained why they thought it was important to come to the meeting. Most said that they came because they thought housing was an important issue for the town of Dublin, and that they wanted to be sure that any changes were appropriate for the town.



The participants were primarily older people; many of them said they were retired.

The first question was: Think about your living situation right now. Does it meet your needs?

Nearly everyone described their house as the perfect Goldilocks house – not too big and not too small, in exactly the right place. A few said their house was too big or had too much land associated with it.

The second question was: Think about your house in five or ten years. Does it still meet your needs?

Here people began to acknowledge that their houses might not always be perfect. Commenters noted the issue of stairs, inconveniently located laundry, houses and yards that were too big to be easily maintained, as well as the difficulty in finding people to do necessary work. Snow came up more than once.

People also mentioned the expenses associated with their current housing, noting they wouldn't be able to stay because of the cost. Many people said they would like to move to something smaller but they didn't want to leave Dublin. One person said their house would be too small as their family grew.

People wanted to stay in their current houses as long as practically possible, but acknowledged that might not be possible. They also mentioned wanting to live somewhere that allowed more

walkability than their current residence. The issues around transportation if they lost the ability to drive were a concern for several participants.

Some respondents had already decided that they would have to move out of their current house in 10 to 15 years because of its size and necessary maintenance. There were also people who believed their house would remain perfect event into to future: they said they had either chosen it with that in mind or had already made changes to the house to allow for single floor living.

The third question was: thinking about people you know who either already live in Dublin but would like to move to a different house, or people who don't live in Dublin but would like to move here, what kind of housing do you think they need?

This question produced lots of conversation, conversation which repeated the same themes at every table. Many respondents noted that their own children would like to move back but that there was nothing available for them to purchase. Particular housing types that were mentioned repeatedly were Accessory Dwelling Units, smaller houses suitable for either retirees or young couples, as well as clustered houses to create neighborhoods.

The idea of communal living for the elderly was mentioned at many tables. Some noted that being able to divide a large house into smaller units would help both the older people who owned the big house stay there while also providing living situations for younger people who wanted a smaller place to live.

Participants said they knew of younger families that wanted to move to Dublin because of the school, but hadn't been able to find anything suitable they could afford. Young teachers who wanted to live in town were mentioned.

The third question was: when you think of a village, what do you see?

People named Hancock, Harrisville, and Francestown as examples of good villages.

They thought good villages were walkable and had some locally owned shops for necessities.

The idea of being able to interact easily with other residents was mentioned as an important part of village life.

Having the village be compact, with houses and shops close together were important to more than one person. People also mentioned that the scale of buildings was important to creating a village, that buildings shouldn't be too big.

Participants mentioned repeatedly that they liked a village, and thought villages were important. They said that having enough people living in the village contributed to its success, and that anything that reduced the need to drive was a positive. People were clear that they didn't want a strip center, national chain stores, or big apartment buildings.

Further conversation

After each table reported out we opened the floor to comments about anything that had come up for participants as they worked the questions: anything surprising or anything new. There

were not a lot of comments but people did note the importance of the school in making a place a village. One commenter was adamant that Dublin's future lay in being attractive to retired people and that trying to attract young families was futile

Two commenters noted that no young people were in attendance and that participants should as why, and what did the town need to do to make Dublin a good place for younger families,

Comments made individually as the event was ending were that they had enjoyed the event and that their own thinking had been made clearer by the exercises.