

## **Block Island Housing Board Annual Report July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015**

This fiscal year has found the Housing Board focused primarily on planning for the development of the Brown/Smith Property. In 2014, the Planning Board approved, in the pre-application stage, the concept of five house lots – three 3 bedroom homes and two 2 bedroom homes. Solidifying the site layout began in earnest following the pre-app approval. We held design work sessions, did a site visit with the property abutters and collected feedback from those in the neighborhood and around the community. Our “design team” members Kay McManus and John Spier worked to produce two additional lot placement design scenarios and we were able to select one that addressed the concerns voiced.

Attention was then directed to additional design issues with the Brown/Smith Property: basement vs. slab; ranch vs. two story homes; storage for homeowners; maximizing open space; etc. Also, a RFP for engineering services was drafted by member John Spier with input from the Town’s Engineer. The RFP process has not been as speedy and fruitful as we hoped. We had no bidders on the advertisement and have been working diligently to find a firm to take on the project.

Additionally, the Board has initiated meetings with BIED and the West Lane Homeowners Association, with the goal to work in concert to look at the issues of affordable housing deed restrictions. We are looking for fair and enforceable restrictions, addressing existing violations and best practices going forward. We will continue this investigation into the future.

As you know, the Board is anxious to have legislation approved to redefine income eligibility for affordable housing in New Shoreham, from adjusted gross income of less than 120% of the area median income, to less than 140% for Block Island only. Though this was unsuccessful in the 2015 legislative session, we are hoping to see it initiated again in the 2016 session.

In other news:

- Member John Spier attended a symposium/site visit regarding affordable housing projects on Martha’s Vineyard. We find there are a lot of things to be learned from other’s successes. The Board hopes to schedule another trip in 2015.
- The board reviewed and gave final input regarding the New Shoreham’s Comprehensive Plan update.
- The Champlin Road homeowners passed their third year certification.

Additionally, the Housing Board is working towards another potential property purchase and we are always on the lookout for other opportunities.

Most importantly though, we wouldn’t be able to do the work that we do without the dedicated participation of Block Island homeowners who rent their homes weekly. This year, 2014 – 2015, the tax receipts raised were \$108,724.32. Attached, please find a year-end statement of our accounts.

Respectfully Submitted,

Millie McGinnes  
Block Island Housing Board