

Thank you Chair Perreault and members of the Brunswick Town Council.

I am Craig Phillips, Executive Director of Tedford Housing.

All are to be commended for the respectful nature of the conversations, the willingness of all to listen and learn, and, most of all, to understand the circumstances of persons of Brunswick and the region who are temporarily without a home and how an entire community and region can and must partner on solutions.

Even though all may not agree on how to get from here to there, most participants have spoken to and have acknowledged the need and the responsibility to support people trying to get to a better place.

The American Planning Association Guide on Homelessness tells us that...

Planners should ensure that local comprehensive plans address the need for a wide array of emergency, transitional, and permanent housing to serve the homeless.

Planners should work to ensure that every community has reasonable facilities to accommodate the needs of the homeless on a short-term or emergency basis.

...and, finally, best practice trends point to collaboration of certain agencies and services by sharing a common physical location...

Stable housing is not an option, it is a must have asset for a community to be healthy along with parks, recreation, bike paths, quality schools, health care, parking, fire and police protection and other social services and amenities.

The people Tedford is able to serve have housing, albeit a temporary bridge, and a supportive pathway to a "home." Temporary housing for people facing homelessness is a part of the spectrum of housing resources that a healthy community needs to offer.

We hope we have brought a reasoned and informed voice to the ordinance discussions.

In general, Tedford Housing believes the Task Force report sets an appropriate tone and direction for the next phases of work with you and the Planning Board.

The three definitions have been well researched and adjusted over time and discussion to reflect a good outcome.

The points of agreement on pages one and two are ones which Tedford Housing believes all who participated to date will agree with and will support.

They are foundational in support of establishing reasonable zoning standards.

On the other hand, the recommendation that homeless shelters are not by right a permitted use anywhere in town is disheartening at the least.

According to my understanding of the Growth Area Permitted Use Table, all lodging, household living, and group living uses have at least one permitted district.

Small scale telecommunications towers, kennels, marinas, ultralight airport, junkyard, and helipads are the uses I see which do not have any permitted use district.

We have often mentioned the difficulty that conditional permitting will create trying to find potential sellers who are willing and able to accommodate a protracted conditional permitting process with a lower probability of success.

For a small nonprofit like Tedford, which is trying to marshal its limited resources to most effectively provide services to the homeless in our community, the additional time, expense and uncertainty this creates will be burdensome.

Given the likelihood of opposition to any proposed shelter location and since the conditional use process incorporates perceived adverse impacts, the conditionally permitting process is likely to be contentious.

The existing zoning ordinance language regarding density numbers for the growth zones are already important determinants with the siting of emergency housing facilities as evidenced by the “Density Analysis” in Attachment C.

The combined effect of density and conditional permitting, on top of the limited availability of suitable developable sites in Brunswick will make it difficult for Tedford, or any shelter operator, to serve the needs of our community.

As suggested on Page Two of the cover report, examining the use table to add more zones and considering a maximum density cap for non-apartment style uses higher than 4 at this juncture are worth considering.

The Planning Board should be reasonable in its approach to establishing any supplemental standards. Any standards applied should be based on objective knowledge as opposed to inaccurate impressions of shelter operations and commensurate with the supplemental standards applied elsewhere in the ordinance for uses that are somewhat analogous (e.g. hotels, boarding houses, congregate care, apartment buildings). The proposed supplemental standards suggest a degree of micro-management on the part of the Town.

Thank you.