

## Selectboard Meeting Minutes

June 9, 2025

**Present:** Pat Harvey, Chad Richardson, Michael Teetsel

**Guests Present:** Kristen LaPell, Julie Smith, Terry Severy, Walter Golub, John Champion, Kricket McCusker, John Lambert, Orca Media, Nancy Woolley

**Guests Present on Zoom:** Orca Media, Martha Slater, Troy LaPell, Heather, Jeff Gephart, Deb Moore

Pat called the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Pat confirmed the open meeting law conformity.

**Prior Meeting Minutes:** Chad moved to approve the 05-12-2025 SB minutes. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved. Pat moved to approve the 5-26-2025 Special SB minutes. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, approved. Pat moved to approve the 05-30-2025 Emergency SB minutes. All in favor. So, approved. Pat moved to approve the 05-16-2025 Executive session SB minutes. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

**Highway Updates:** John asked the board to decide on the replacement truck for the Ford 550. The current Ford 550 is in for a replacement transmission. He said the new truck ordered is 18 months out. He said for what the offer of the trade in is, to maintain the current truck we will be continuing to sink more money into it could be equivalent to the amount of the trade in for the next year and a half. He suggested to keep the truck and get rid of it when the new truck comes in and not trade it and sell it or trade towards the next truck because of the 18-month guarantee, we could be putting \$30K into a truck that only has a trade value of \$23K. John is hoping the transmission company that has the truck in for repair can do more than what has been done in the past. Pat would like to meet with John to come up with a plan to bring back to the board.

**Utility Updates:** Terry said there was a leak in the village and met with contractor to find the location of the leak and will dig up on Wednesday. He said he is also having issues with site 1 of the sewer system. He is getting notification alarms at 2 am to let him know things are not working and when he goes down in the morning, all is working fine. He said the control box is original and was installed in 1983. He put a call in Chapman and will have them come service it. Pat asked if the alarms are indicating a problem in the field and not the tank. Terry said the alarm is indicating the pump is not working and the system then lets him know 10 minutes later its working fine.

He had all the tanks pumped on Site 1. He said this new company is saving the town \$1k each time its pumped. He said this is the first time these tanks have been pumped in over 20 years because he pumps the first tank every year. He said they didn't have to be pumped but felt they should be and now he knows they won't have to be pumped again for a long time.

**Energy Coordinator Updates:** Jeff advised the board that Green Mountain Power has agreed to do the lighting at the park and ride with option 2 as discussed. He pointed out one thing that has come up with respect to the high school and future solar use on the high school roof is that we are pretty maxed out on substation here in town. He is wondering about getting support from the board by writing a letter to GMP. He said we have state effort that each town will do their best to from the standpoint of improving efficiency and affordability for electric heating and transportation etc. He said in order to hit the state goals of 90% of energy use to be renewable we need to see a substation to handle additional loads. He said a letter of support from the board would be helpful in moving this forward. Pat asked if Jeff wanted to draft the question and expedite this. Mike added there was discussion about meeting with GMP to decide the best way to put pressure on them is to get additional support from our legislators.

Jeff spoke about the north wall scope of work on the Library building. He said he had done most of the work in 2023 with the assumption of having 3 walls that are the same spec with one wall failed and the other two close behind. He said with financial considerations to scope out the one wall in the worst condition. He said he is having a hard time to find the materials. He put word out to several agencies and receive 3 interested responders and hope to get a number to complete the costs for the library this week.

He said with the MERP grant the compliance for the ADA are beyond what they initially thought. He said it comes down to primarily other things that are needed such as upstairs with door widths, counter height work, bathroom brought up to ADA compliance. In the basement, he was able to find an inspection in 1983 and with the ambulance service use in there, we could simply put up a sign that says not open to the public allowed them to not have to do anything to the basement except for one door. Today, there is public use and so that changes our ADA list of things to do to bring it up to compliance. With the grant we can only use 20% of costs towards ADA work. Jeff felt that needs to be addressed for the basement if we keep public use in the basement. Chad asked if the 20% is for the total grant or just the Town Building share. Jeff will investigate this and get back to the board. He explained that he was hoping the R-values for the town office would be greater than they are. He would like to see a completely electrified version of our heating and HVAC. He said the report didn't call for it. He said it called for a pellet furnace or air source heat pumps. With the system costs on those he is hoping to get R-values increased by going to air source heat pumps to the whole job and look at a ground source heat pump as well. He said he is not seeing a lot of support from the state on this. Pat asked if we have a deadline on this project. Jeff said it is good till 2028. He said we can put that out to bid soon. Mike said in early July he was willing to support Jeff.

**Repurposing High School Committee Updates:** Vic spoke about the financing end and said there was a meeting last week with the Community Development Block Grant. We should learn in early July if funding was granted. We applied for \$750K. The agency received 6 million dollars of requests for 3 million of available grant funds.

Vic shared on the expense side; they are expecting another opinion of costs from Opus Construction management provided by June 23. This will allow them complete construction documents to work from to allow better details to get a more accurate cost estimate for the project.

There has been a lot of transition work with the school as far as between the two buildings and clean out. Then the transition with the town office with expenses and revenue and understanding how that all will work. Pat made a request to remind Jamie that we are waiting for a septic report from 2018 to review prior to closing.

**Selectboard Updates:** Pat had a few issues come up since the last meeting and has addressed about the complaint of practices and condition of a nearby home on the south end of town. She passed the information along to the health officer and awaiting response from him. She has seen some results to the property.

She said that the board received a letter from Mr. Marshall and Ms. Weir about their dwelling or the remains of a dwelling up in Quarry Hill community within Lyman Hall. She said they have come to ask the town to reverse a document previously recorded with the town clerk several years ago and has been a point of contention with them. Pat forwarded the letter to the town attorney for legal advisement. The attorney advised them to not take any action for their requests.

**Tri-Town Softball-Katelyn Bowen:** Katelyn Bowen approached the board asking permission to use the ball field on July 5 to hold a softball tournament game, now held annually for the past few years. First was sponsored by the Fire Department and recently by Tri-Town Youth Sports. They are happy to take this on as it has become a popular event. She said the fields are in great shape. She said they are considering food. The fees and money made will go towards Tri-Town Youth Sports. Pat moved to approve.

**Housing Committee Data review:** Deb Matthews presented Sarah Danly a power point presentation (attached) to the board on the housing needs, challenges and assessment for our town. Sarah Danly joined Vital Communities in 2022 to support the White River Valley Consortium working with 11+ communities. The committee is currently seeking volunteers to join the housing committee that came out of the Rochester Climate Initiative in December of 2019. They started to meet in 2020 and continued meeting. They put together the housing data based on information gathered in 2019 and present time. In 2021 through 2022 the Vermont Council on Rural Development facilitated community conversations for the Rochester area Climate Initiative. Housing was one of the committees that evolved from that. At the same time, the Rochester Selectboard had signed up to the White River Valley team to be part of the Working Community Challenge, which was a grant and technical assistance program posted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. Rochester signed on with 14 other communities which resulted in a three-year grant to work on housing across the White River Valley. Sarah was hired to manage the program across the whole White River Valley and joined forces with the housing committee as local partners in the Rochester area.

**April Treasurer's Report:** Pat moved to approve the April Treasurer's report. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

**First Class Liquor License for Maple Soul:** Pat moved to approve. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

**Driveway Application for 66 Access Road:** Pat moved to approve with conditions given by the road foreman. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

**Orca Media Request Event Coverage for the Rochester Summer Concert Series 2025:** The town was asked if they would like to have coverage for the Summer Concert Series on

**Permission for Delinquent Tax Collector to abate all unpaid tax amounts under \$5:** Pat moved to approve the total amount of \$28.31 to be abated for all tax amounts not collected under \$5. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

**FY26 Pay Rates for Town employees' approval:** Pat moved to approve the new pay rates that would take effect July 1 for the 7 town employees. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

**Rescind Park Use Application approval at 4/28 Selectboard Meeting:** Chad explained that the approved application for selling baked goods on the park would need to be rescinded. He found in the ordinances that there was a policy not allowing the sale of goods other than at the Farmers Market, who fall under the tax exemption. Chad said that many years ago there was a vender who sold hot dogs and was able to ask the state for permission to sell in their right of way just in front of the park on Route 100.

**Second Class Liquor License-Village Grocery & Liquor Inc.:** Pat moved to approve the liquor license for Village Grocery. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

**Tobacco License-Village Grocery & Liquor Inc.:** Pat moved to approve the Tobacco license for Village Grocery. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

**Tobacco Substitute Endorsement-Village Grocery & Liquor Inc.:** Pat moved to approve the Tobacco Substitute license for Village Grocery. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

**Park Use Application-Pierce Hall 4<sup>th</sup> of July Chicken BBQ and 50/50 Raffle 9am-2 :30pm:** Pat moved to approve the park use application for the annual chicken BBQ on the fourth. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

**Park Use Application-Pierce Hall-Riverside Park-Community 5K run/walk-July 4<sup>th</sup> 7am-10:30 am:** Pat moved to approve with conditions that the race run the course behind the fire house instead of in front of. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

**Approval for Treasurer to start the process to apply for TAN (Tax Anticipation Note) indicating who will sign and who will be authorized to advance:** Treasurer Julie Smith, asked the board for permission to apply for a TAN based on the amount of taxes not received for the May installment and keeping the town afloat until August taxes come in. The process includes written permission of the signers for the loan, and who will advance the funds. Then, the town attorney will review the loan docs and provide an opinion letter to the lender. Pat moved to agree to apply for the TAN. She agreed that the board member would sign the loan agreement and Kristen LaPell would receive permission from the board to advance funds as needed. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

## **Old Business**

**Approve and sign revised amendment to the WLA (Wiemann Lanphere Architects) contract for the high school project:** Board was advised to table to allow time for more quotes to come in.

**Pledge of Allegiance request:** Board all gave their opinions to how they felt about the request and left it up to the individual committees to decide. Pat said for all committees to conform a policy would have to be written and board felt this is too political at this time to come to an agreement.

**Further discussion on purchasing new truck for highway:** tabled until board meets to discuss with John.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Julie Smith

# History

- In 2021-2022 the Vermont Council on Rural Development facilitated the community conversations for the Rochester Area Climate Initiative
- Housing was one of the three committees formed
- Concurrently, the Rochester selectboard had signed onto be a part of the White River Valley team for the Working Communities Challenges hosted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. In Jan 2022 the WRV Consortium began a three-year grant to work on housing across the WRV
- The Rochester housing committee has been meeting regularly since 2022, including with the Initiative Director for the WRV Consortium

## Rochester Area Climate Initiative

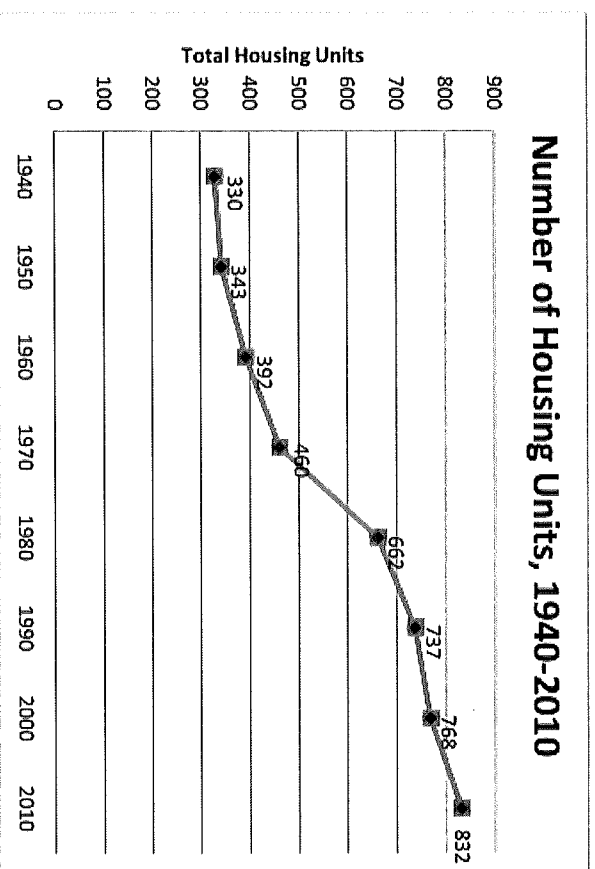
Report and Action Plan - February 2022



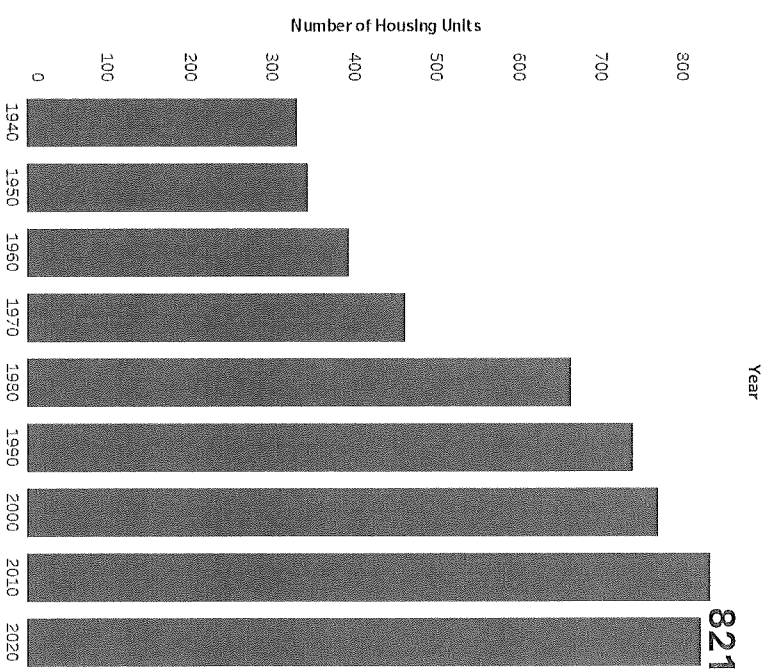
Vermont Council on Rural Development

the housing landscape

The most recent Town Plan only includes census data through 2010 and American Community Survey data through 2016.

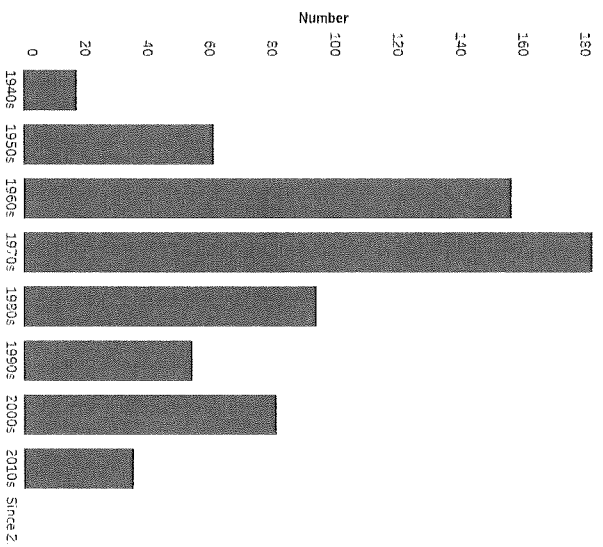


## Number of housing units, 1940-2020

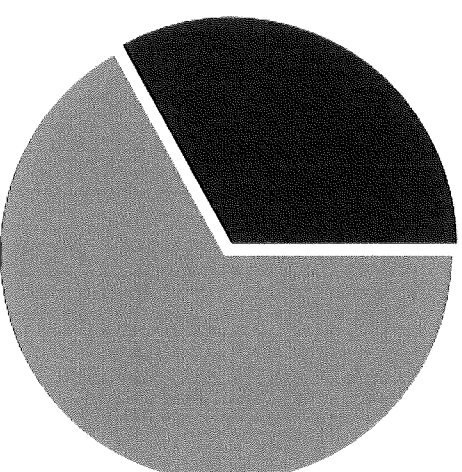




## Number of units built each decade since 1940



33% of all Rochester's housing stock was built before 1939



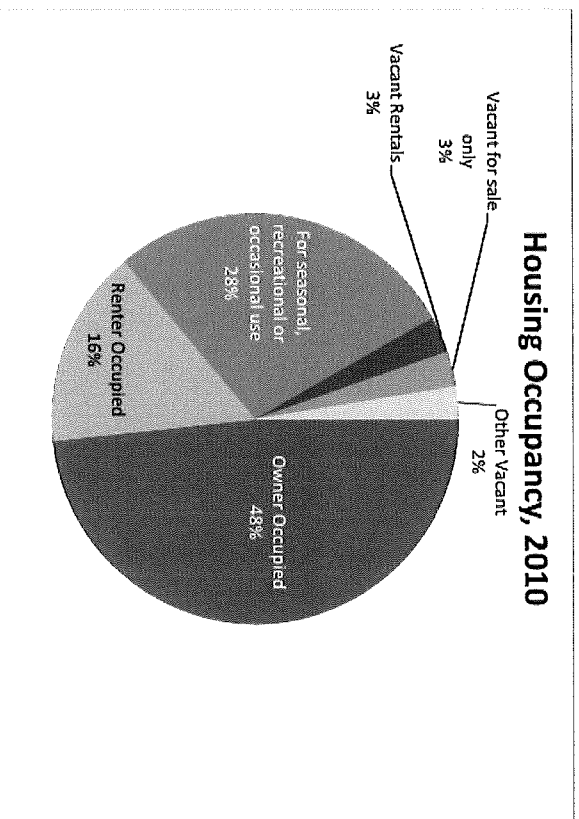
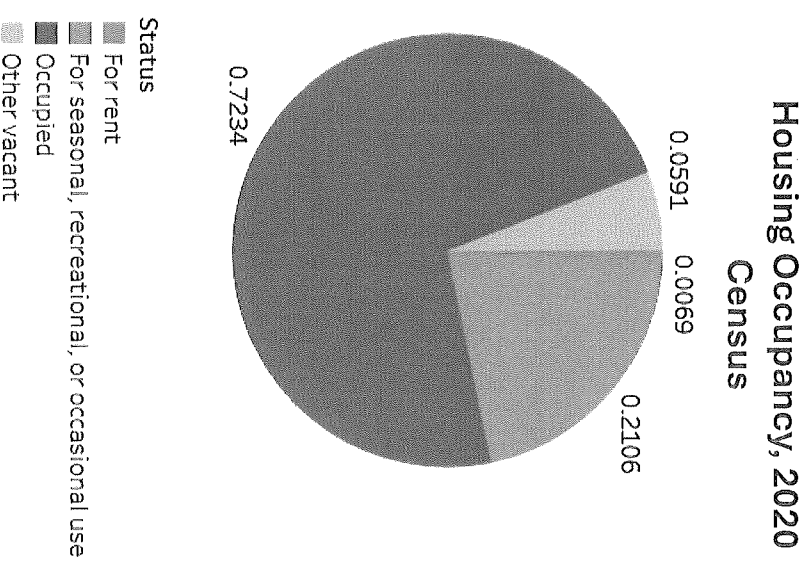
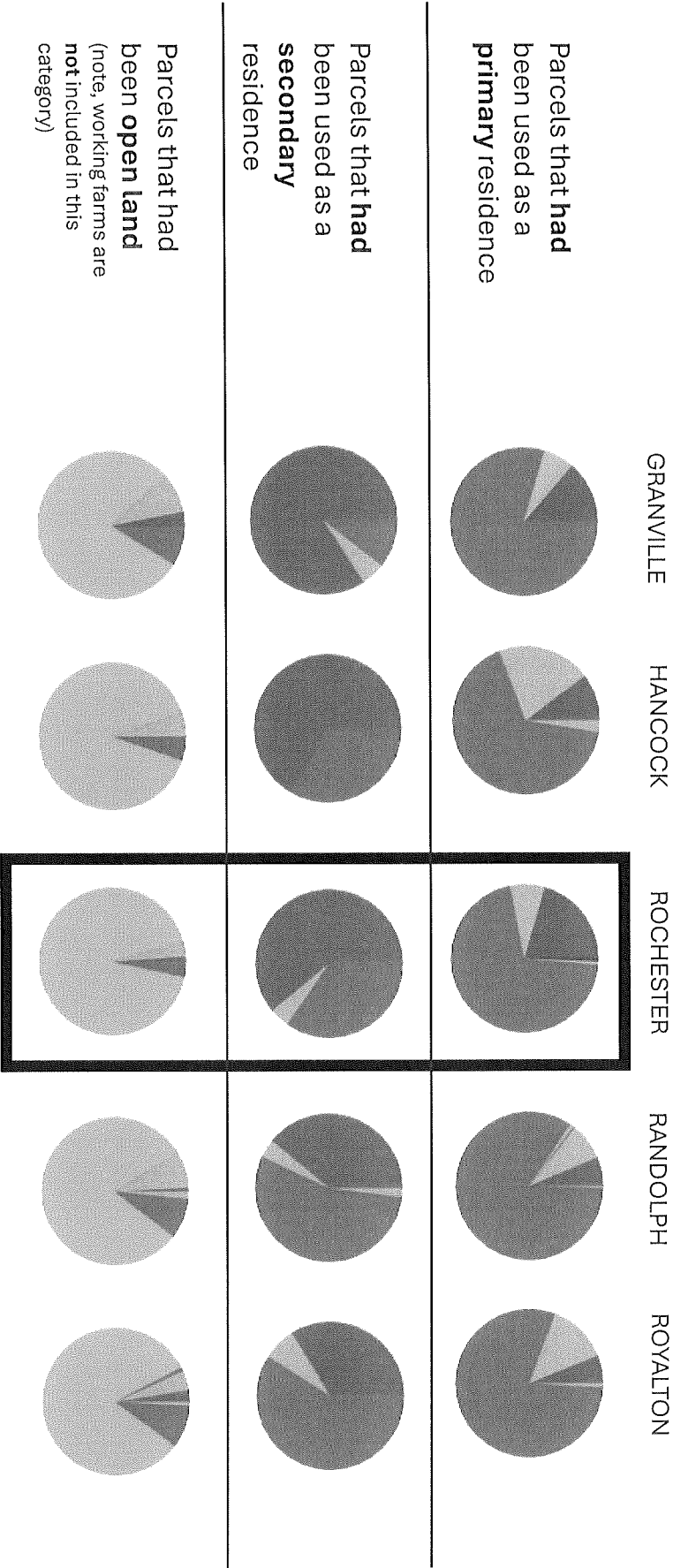
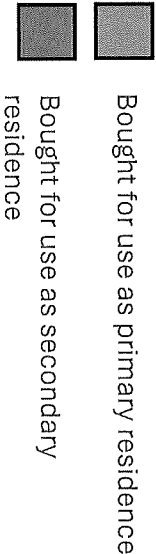


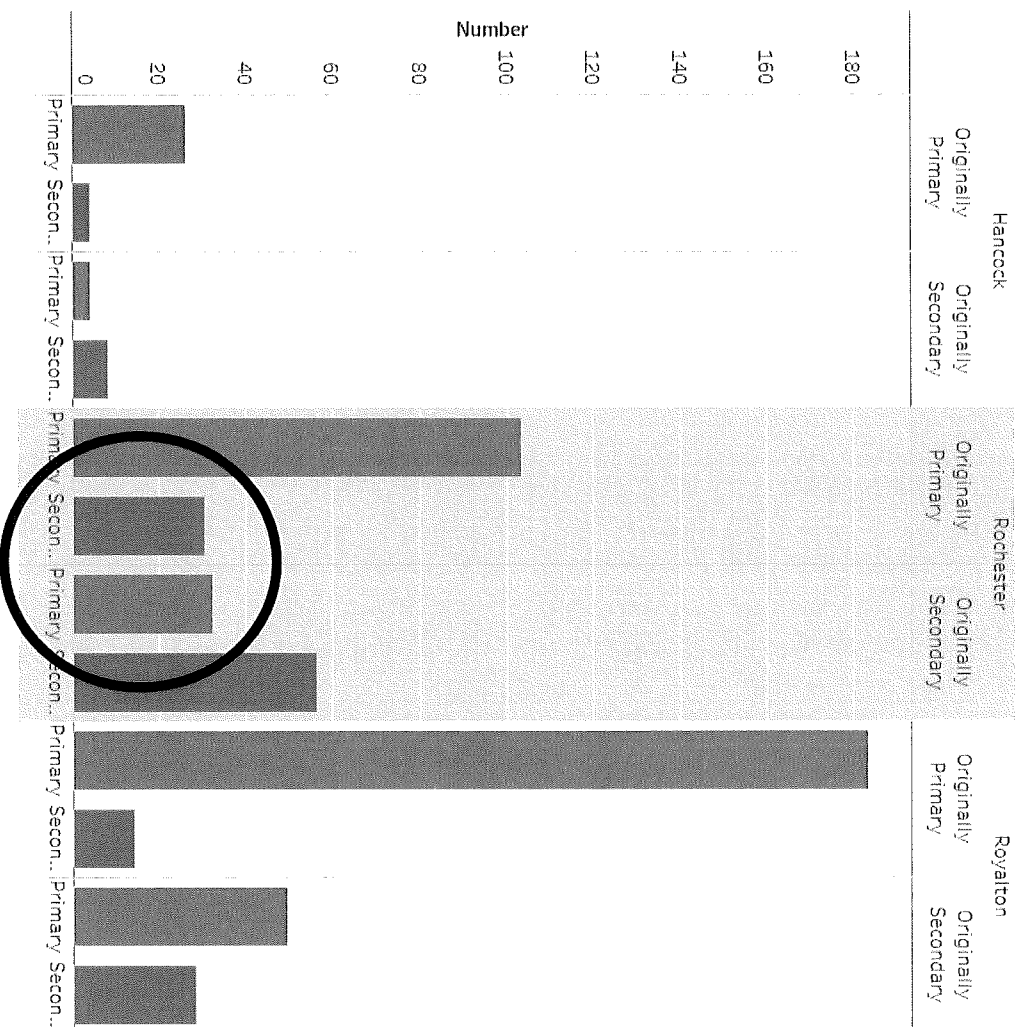
Figure 5- Housing Occupancy, 2010 (Source: US Census)

- 2020 actually had a higher percent occupied than in 2010 – this may reflect the moment in time during COVID that the census took place
- But only a .6% “for rent” vacancy rate – 5% is considered healthy



# All sales of property since 2019





- In Rochester since 2019, primary residences becoming secondary and secondary residences becoming primary have mostly evened each other out.
- But, Rochester has had **86 sales that either stayed or became a second home** (39% of all sales, compare with Royalton's 42 sales / 15%)
- Takeaway is that sales second homes may not be driving the problem, but provides a big opportunity to help address the problem

#### Town plan:

- “Only 19% of Rochester’s housing stock in 2010 was rental units. The tight housing market and lack of unoccupied apartments continue to drive up rental costs. In 2000 the US Agency of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) calculated the fair market rent for a modest two-bedroom apartment in Rochester at \$498 per month. In 2016, that cost had risen nearly 110% to \$1,097. For a renter in Rochester to be able to afford rent at this rate, he/she would have to make at least \$41,200 annually. Given that 54% of Rochester’s households made less than \$35,000 in 2016, it may be difficult to find affordable rental housing in Rochester.”
- In 2020 the estimate was that renter-occupied units only make up 13.3% of housing units (although the margin of error includes 19).
- The 2025 FMR for a two-bedroom apartment is now \$1,301. The FMR for the smallest apartment, an efficiency, is also higher than a two-bedroom was in 2016 (\$1,124).

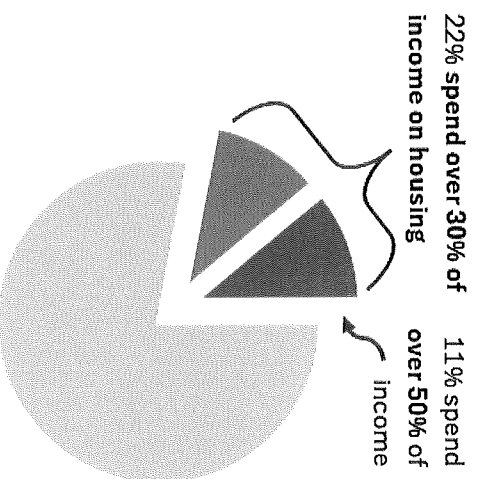
Consultants doing a market study for the Randolph area in 2022 found:

“Our research identified only eight active rentals in the area. While it is likely that there are rentals that trade off-market, our research makes it clear that it is difficult, at best, to find an available rental in the Randolph area. Based on this small database, it appears that one bedroom units typically rent in the \$1,030+/- range monthly, while two bedroom units typically rent in the \$1,215+/- range monthly.”

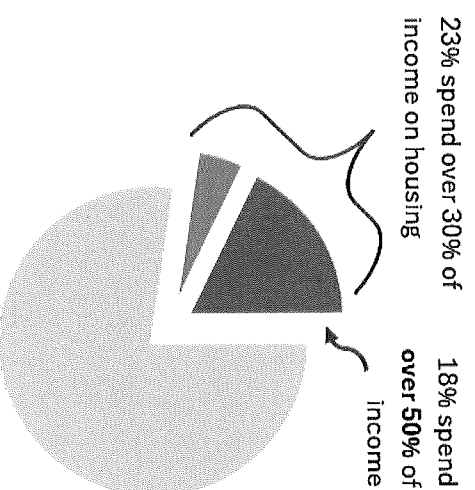
Housing is generally considered affordable when the household spends 30% or less of total household income on housing costs.

According to estimates from the 2022 American Community Survey, in Rochester:

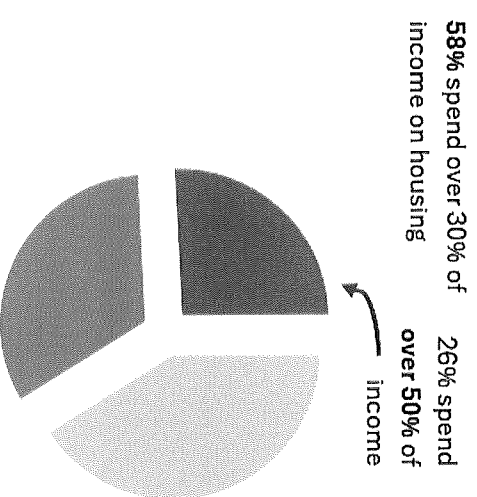
In owned units without a mortgage:



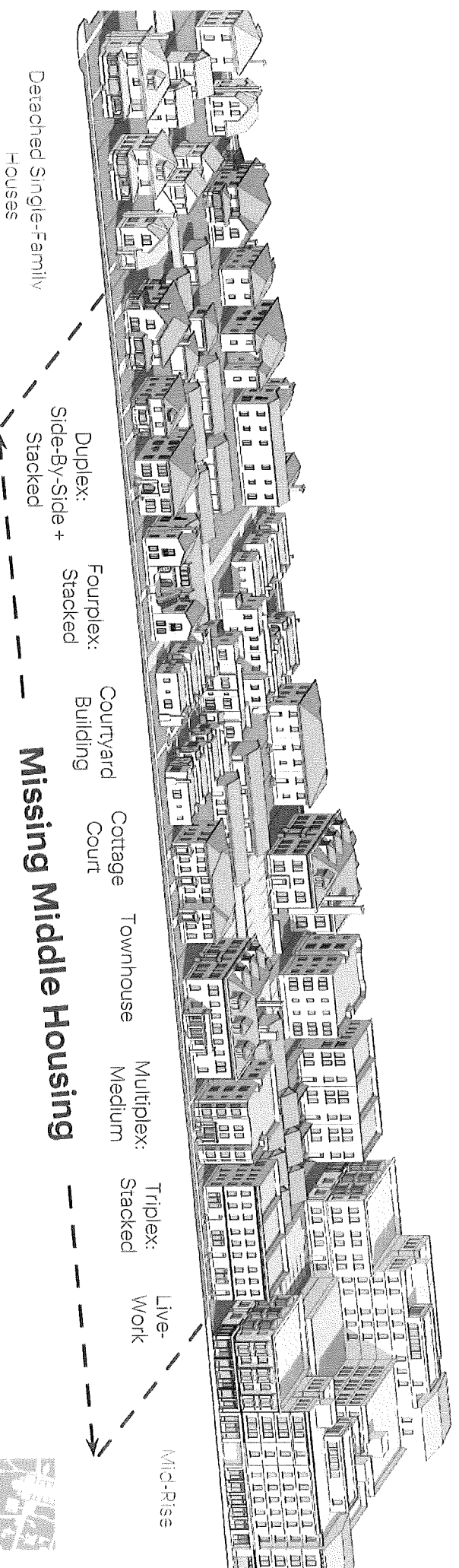
In owned units with a mortgage:



In rented units:



# Updating how we think about housing



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Our Work so far



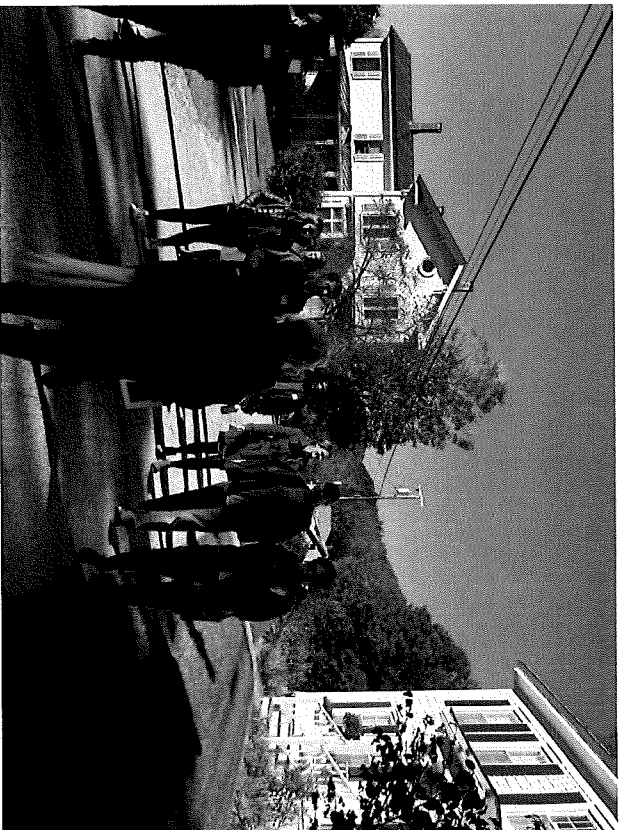
# Feedback Forum!

- Hosted in 2023 and, by popular demand, again in 2024
- To welcome new residents to the community, share resources, and collect input on housing



# Participation in WRVC efforts

Chair hosted a walking tour for representatives from ACCD, VHCB, and VHFA as part of a White River Valley “housing solutions tour” organized by Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation



Chair participated in a WRVC luncheon with the President of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and other FRBB staff as part of Pres. Collins' first visit to Vermont



# DIY Home Creators Brochure

- Created and distributed an informational brochure to encourage Rochester property owners to become home creators
- Four different types of home creation: Accessory dwelling units, conversion of structures into multiple rentals, rehabilitation, and HomeShare
- Also produced an accompanying contractors directory



## Accessory Dwelling Units

An "accessory dwelling unit", often referred to as an "in-law apartment", is a smaller rental unit on the same lot as ("accessory to") the main house. "ADUs" come in many forms: they can be created within the existing envelope of the house (such as in a walkout basement), built as an attached extension, built with a detached garage, or as a freestanding structure.

### Resources:

- The Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) ADU Grant Program offers grants up to \$50,000 for creating an ADU unit. Wingham and Wingham Housing offers information on the grant program and can also make a referral for residents of other counties. [info@wwhousing.org](mailto:info@wwhousing.org) or contact Paul Martorano, [pmartorano@wwhousing.org](mailto:pmartorano@wwhousing.org).
- Massena Bank home equity line of credit and home improvement loans can be used to build ADUs: contact Cody Dana at 802-451-0010 or [Cody.Dana@massena.com](mailto:Cody.Dana@massena.com).
- White River Valley Credit Union also offers a home equity line of credit that can finance improvements to someone's existing primary residence.
- If you are located within your town's designated village center, your project may be eligible for tax credits. Contact Cullen Smith at 802-255-3541 or [Cullen.Smith@vermont.gov](mailto:Cullen.Smith@vermont.gov) or 802-255-3541.
- Your town Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission can provide guidance on the permitting process. You can also find information via the Two Rivers-Champlain Regional Planning Commission: [trcpc.org](http://trcpc.org).
- Support for landlords includes the Vermont Landlord Association ([vlandlord.org](http://vlandlord.org)) and the VT State Housing Authority Landlord Relief Program ([landlordrelief.vt.gov](http://landlordrelief.vt.gov)).
- Vital Communities can provide referrals to further resources: contact John Huffer ([john@vitalcommunities.net](mailto:john@vitalcommunities.net)) or Ellen Huffer ([ellen@vitalcommunities.net](mailto:ellen@vitalcommunities.net)).
- The Rochester Area Housing Committee has compiled a list of contractor services in the area, available at [vitalcommunities.net/rochester-area-contractors-directory](http://vitalcommunities.net/rochester-area-contractors-directory).

## Division of structure into multiple units to rent

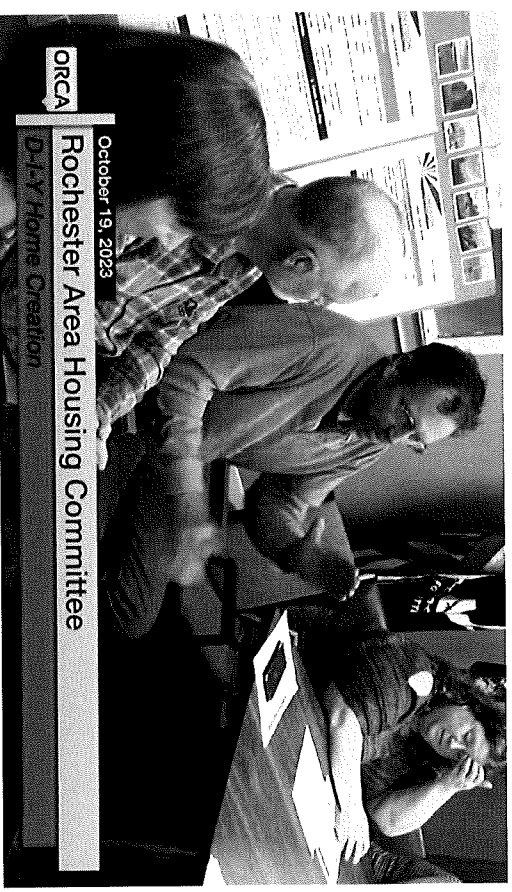
Some existing structures may be appropriate to divide into multiple rental units; for example a large single-family home that could be divided into a duplex or triplex could be turned into multiple buildings. This is a good way to create multiple new housing units without constructing a new building fully from scratch.

### Resources:

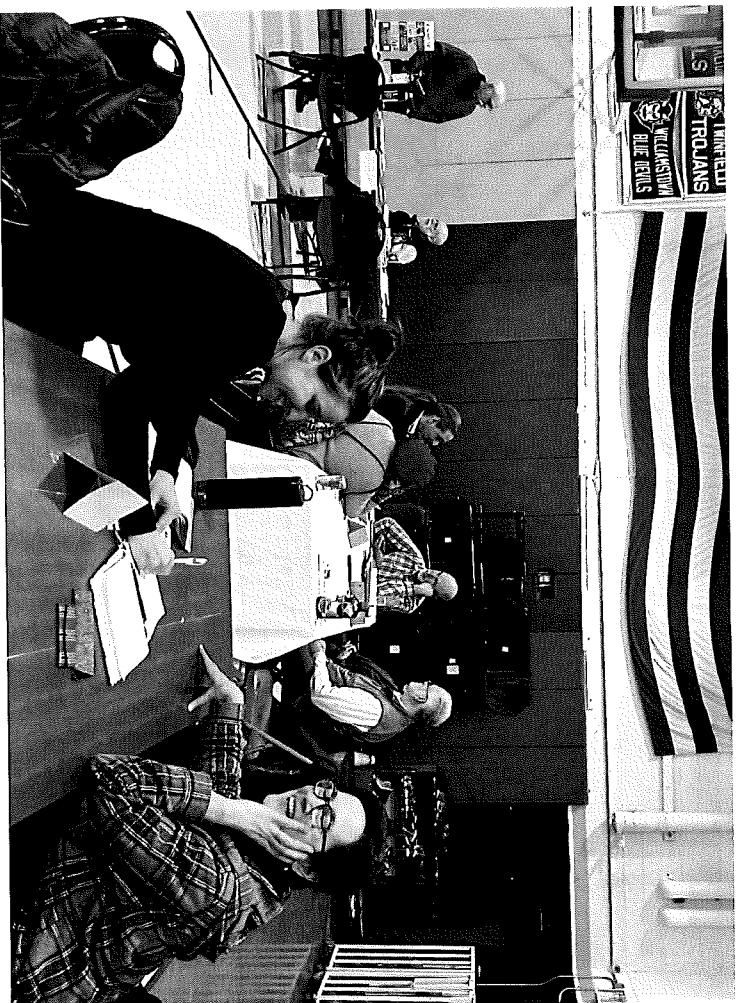
- The Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) Rental Rehabilitation Grant Program offers grants up to \$50,000 for creating new residential rental units. Wingham and Wingham Housing offers information on the grant program and can also make a referral for residents of other counties. [info@wwhousing.org](mailto:info@wwhousing.org) or contact Paul Martorano, [pmartorano@wwhousing.org](mailto:pmartorano@wwhousing.org).
- If you are located within your town's designated village center, your project may be eligible for tax credits. Contact Cullen Smith at 802-255-3541 or [Cullen.Smith@vermont.gov](mailto:Cullen.Smith@vermont.gov) or 802-255-3541.
- For a historic property, Preservation Trust of Vermont ([preservationtrustvt.org](http://preservationtrustvt.org)) may be able to help. Contact Jackson Evans, [jackson@preservationtrustvt.org](mailto:jackson@preservationtrustvt.org), and currently no preservation financial resources for owner-occupied private residences.
- Your town Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission can provide guidance on the permitting process. You can also find information via the Two Rivers-Champlain Regional Planning Commission: [trcpc.org](http://trcpc.org).
- Support for landlords includes the Vermont Landlord Association ([vlandlord.org](http://vlandlord.org)) and the VT State Housing Authority Landlord Relief Program ([landlordrelief.vt.gov](http://landlordrelief.vt.gov)).
- For general information on starting or managing a business, check out the information by the Vermont Small Business Development Center: [vsmallbiz.org](http://vsmallbiz.org).
- Vital Communities can provide referrals to further resources: contact John Huffer ([john@vitalcommunities.net](mailto:john@vitalcommunities.net)) or Ellen Huffer ([ellen@vitalcommunities.net](mailto:ellen@vitalcommunities.net)).
- The Rochester Area Housing Committee has compiled a list of contractor services in the area, available at [vitalcommunities.net/rochester-area-contractors-directory](http://vitalcommunities.net/rochester-area-contractors-directory).

# DIY Home Creators Panel Event

- Featuring speakers from neighboring communities who have successfully become DIY Home Creators (rehab and conversion of a house into multiunit) and support organizations (Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission, Capstone Community Action)
- Recorded by ORCA Media and still available online:  
<https://www.orcamedia.net/show/rochester-area-housing-committee-diy-home-creation-how-individuals-can-create-housing-help-our>



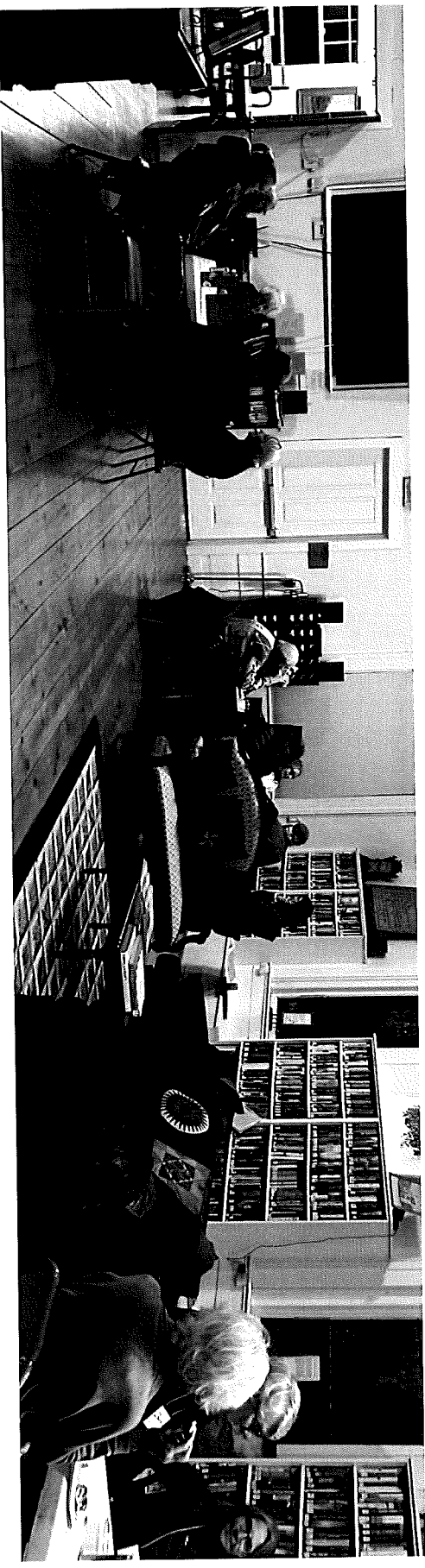
# DIY Home Creators Resource Fair



- Well-attended resource fair including 14 tableters ranging from contractors to planning/zoning to statewide resources like VT Housing Finance Agency and Homeshare VT

# Intergenerational Conversation

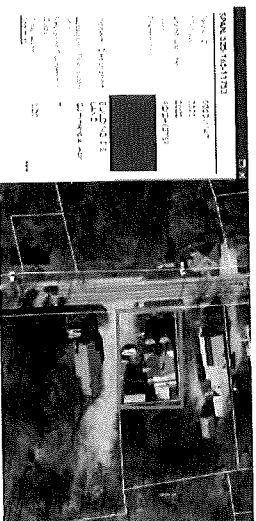
- Cross-generational storytelling and relationship-building around the question “what has been your experience making a home here?”



# Infill development

Let's Zoom in using Vermont's Parcel Viewer.

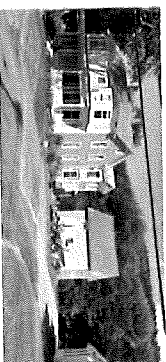
This parcel is within the designated village (has sewer and water) and is 2 acres. It also has an existing shed/garage that could be renovated.



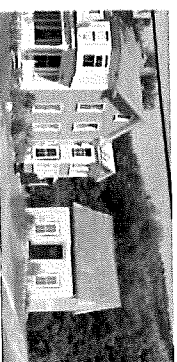
Source: Vermont Parcel Viewer



Before



After



Source: Google Maps

- worked with TRORC to create visualizations of potential housing infill in the village center, to use as a thought exercise for future community conversations
- Met with Royalton Planning Commission which is beginning to work on infill housing to compare notes & strategies

# What next?



# Takeaways on structure

- Meeting with the Royalton group highlighted the benefits to this work being led by a formal governmental body (in their case, the Planning Commission)
- Directly inspired by conversations at the intergenerational event, the Housing Committee would like to expand and diversify its membership. Attracting more, younger, busy people would be easier with a clear mandate from the Town
- The committee has done a lot of work providing people with the *information* for becoming home creators. Increasing the willingness/desire to become home creators would be helped by a stronger show of support from community leadership
- Individual DIY home creation is important but not sufficient, we also need to attract small-scale developers for “missing middle” infill development. The committee is interested in helping broker relationships between property owners and developers but doing so would be more appropriate if the committee had more formal authority

# Our Ask

- For the town government to re-affirm housing as a priority for this community
- A specific appointed individual/point of contact between Selectboard and the housing committee
- To provide formal recognition/authorization of the Housing Committee as being a liaison between the town government, the community, and housing partners