

Notes from Public meeting at United Church of Underhill on October 11, 2023

The meeting started at 7 in the United Church of Underhill and there were approximately 25-30 in attendance. A slide presentation of the Harvest Crossing was made by Sandy Wilmot. Following the presentation, Dan Manz, Dave Clift and David Mullin (from Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity) answered questions from the attendees. This is a synopsis of the questions.

Will the homes be protected from high water during rain storms?

The issue of stormwater accumulating during heavy rains was a concern to many. Some, who had homes near Harvest Crossing, told of problems of water entering their property. Many stormwater problems at neighboring homes appear to be caused by water run-off from higher elevations. They were concerned that this site would not be an ideal place to build homes.

It is a concern of this committee. Looking at this issue, it was advised from our engineer to build the homes on pads instead of building basements. The concrete pads will be placed at elevations above existing grade. The proposed building site behind the fire house has good soils for septic tanks. This area of the property is not in the designated wetland where building is not permitted by the State. The designated wetlands will be kept as open land, owned by the homeowners. Storm water runoff from the site will be controlled by a designed stormwater retention pond.

Can you build more homes?

The Town of Underhill has zoned the building site for one acre lots or one dwelling per acre. This zoning also allows clustering of homes together (away from the designated wetlands) leaving commonly owned open space owned by the homeowners. The proposed plan is consistent with Town zoning and consistent with the character of the surrounding neighbors.

Can you build more duplexes and no single family homes?

Dave Mullins explained that there are some projects in the works for Habitat in Chittenden County which include more multifamily units. Based on his experience however, potential homeowners have a much greater interest in single family homes. This project proposes six single family homes and one duplex.

Why do we need this project?

Susan Elliot from Vermont Futures Fshared their mission to support Vermont's economy towards a thriving future full of opportunity for all. It is difficult, without affordable housing, to help encourage new diverse communities to help build our state. As stated during the presentation, there is a current shortage of housing in the State and Town. The housing shortage is driving home prices higher and out of reach of low to middle income workers. Building affordable housing affordable housing is a way to help this situation on a local level.

How quickly after permitting can Habitat start building?

Dave Mullin stated that Green Mountain Habitat plans to start building right away after permitting is achieved.

Will there be a stop sign or a light at the entrance at Route 15?

That detail will be decided during the permitting phase.

Concern was expressed about use of Harvest Run during construction.

During construction the Route 15 entrance will be used, not Harvest Run.

Can a single person qualify for a Habitat home?

Yes.

Does a family apply for a specific place to live or does Habitat put a family wherever there is a spot?

A family will apply to a specific location and a specific home. The family will need to have support to travel to work or support of family living nearby. It is important that the family knows where they want to live before a home is started for them. Then the family will begin to work on the house and put in their hours to complete the house.

Does the family who lives in the duplex own half the house?

Yes. Dave explained that home equity is built during the time they live in the home, similar to single family homes. That equity is passed on to them as they move in to another place. Habitat will buy the home then sell the home to another family at an affordable price.

What is the expected timeline to start construction?

There are many unknowns with the permitting process but we hope to break ground some time in 2024.