



FDTC Monthly Newsletter, April 15, 2015

Megan English Braga, Chair, FDTC, introduced our two speakers, **Anne Van Vleck**, Executive Director, Cape Cod Young Professionals (CCYP) and **Christine Duren**, Executive Officer of the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Cape Cod. The main topic of discussion was the issue of affordable housing for those living on the Cape. The two took turns speaking about the goals and activities of their group and also responded to many questions and comments from the audience.



Anne Van Vleck

Anne Van Vleck outlined the problem: In the past 10 years in Barnstable County, there has been a 26% decline in the group of people aged 25-44 living and working on the Cape. That is a total of 15,000 people who have moved off the Cape. Her organization has the mission of retaining and recruiting this age group to work and live on Cape. CCYP seeks to connect emerging young leaders and engage them in the community. It provides gatherings where young professionals can meet, a job bank, and many helpful resources. CCYP is 10 years old and has a membership of 1000. The group commissioned a survey titled, *Shape the Cape*, to determine reasons for the decline in young people on Cape Cod.



Christine Duren

Christine Duren's group, *The Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Cape Cod*, was founded in 1950 and now represents 270 companies and building representatives on the Cape. The Association's mission is to support homeownership on Cape Cod and its trade members through: legislative, educational, business, and civic endeavors. Christine stated that there is a need for safe, affordable housing to keep people on the Cape. The organization pushes builders to earn continuing education credits and to educate politicians and others on codes and trends in the industry.

Both organizations are part of a larger one, *Smarter Cape Cod*, which connects groups dealing with the issue of creating a supportive atmosphere on Cape Cod for young people and businesses. The coalition hopes to use new technology infrastructure to improve quality of life on the Cape by making the way we do things "smarter." They are planning a Smarter Cape summit 5 on May 6, 2015 at the Cape Cod Resort and Conference Center in Hyannis.

Anne Van Vleck described some of the findings from the survey, *Shape the Cape*, which had 3000 returned surveys. The survey was conducted by the *Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy* at Northeastern University. It was sent to the age group mentioned with questions about how to help retain and recruit them to stay on the Cape. The survey found that 50% of those surveyed had multiple jobs. They were unable to make a living with just one job. In addition, 30% were burdened by paying too much, more than 35% of their salaries, for housing. There was also a lack of career professional development available. That is, no place for advancement within their chosen career on the Cape. There was an expressed need for mentoring and peer network development as well. The data showed that this age group does not know where to seek out civic opportunities and engagement in Cape wide issues such as water quality and transportation. The survey showed that what keeps people on the Cape is the water, family, and a history of spending the summer on the Cape. A smaller rental survey has shown that this age group has an average salary of \$65,000, that 72% have student loans, 60% will buy housing on the Cape but 40% are not happy with their rentals, which may be winter rentals only. The average person making \$65,000 on the Cape will qualify for a \$330,000 home. Finally 61% would like to live in units with accessory dwelling units. Overall, the survey showed the need to help this demographic form a community here, and *Shape the Cape* wants to assist with doing just that. More data will be published on the website: www.shapethecape.org.

Christine Duren was asked about the issues of housing the poor and young professionals on Cape Cod. She noted that everyone must try to work with town administrators to bring change. Builders cannot continue to build big homes on large parcels of land. There must be a smaller footprint for housing which will require changing zoning laws. It is not the lack of jobs, but the lack of housing that is an issue for business on the Cape. There is a need to ease the restrictions on accessory housing and that will require new model bylaws. We need to be sure that affordable housing is part of a broader conversation.

Editor's Note: Town Meeting on April 13, 2015 passed Article 16 as follows:

ARTICLE 16: *To see if the Town will vote to update the following Goals and Policies of the Local Comprehensive Plan dated April 2005:*

Goal for the *Housing Element*:

- Falmouth shall meet the housing needs of everyone in the community

Policies for the *Housing Element*:

- Falmouth shall allow for greater infill residential density where appropriate.

- Falmouth shall allow and encourage the market to create multiple housing opportunities that allow for more choices.

- Falmouth shall accept responsibility for providing housing for people at all stages of life, and all levels of income, regardless of mandatory state statutory requirements.

Or do or take any other action on this matter. On request of the Planning Board.

This Article would seem to reflect some of the concerns of our two speakers. It is unclear how this will be translated into action.

Submitted by Kirstin Moritz, photos by Martha Gillis

Calendar: Next monthly meeting: May 20, 2015 7 p.m. Gus Canty Center and please bring goods for the Falmouth Service Center donation.

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Please note that membership dues should now be submitted. Thank you.

Annual Membership Fiscal Year: April 1 to March 31, 2016

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Address and Telephone:

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