

V • A • L • L • E • Y F O R U M

Volume One, Number Five

V. HOUSING IN THE MAD RIVER VALLEY

Date: Tuesday, November 13, 7:00 P.M.
Place: Warren Town Hall, Warren Village

**Speakers: Doug Kennedy, Housing
Specialist, DJK Associates. Beth
Humstone, Planning Consultant,
Humstone Squires Associates**

T*his is the fifth in a series of six Valley
Forums sponsored by the Mad River
Valley Planning District to discuss relevant
issues affecting change in the Mad River
Valley. All forums are free and open to the
public, and are designed to provide
information and fresh perspectives on the
many issues challenging our future.*

In December, 1988, a group of concerned Mad River Valley residents and community leaders, troubled over the apparent housing crisis in the Valley, called a meeting to discuss housing issues. Induced by a conceptual proposal by a prominent developer to create a large number of affordable housing units off the Lincoln Gap Road, nearly one hundred people turned out to voice their concerns, frustrations and anxieties regarding the Valley's housing market. Many words were spoken at that meeting and many subsequent meetings. The initial energy soon dissipated as the difficulty of quantifying the Valley's housing problems became obvious, and the lack of accomplishments became discouraging. However, those meetings did yield a number of important results.

Largely due to the attention of the Valley Reporter, these meetings provided a focus on housing issues. This focus served to convince many people that the "theys" who were in need of affordable housing were not some faceless,

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shiftless threat to the community, but were our neighbors, friends and co-workers. With the assistance of many Valley residents and business's, a non-profit organization, the Mad River Valley Housing Coalition, was formed. The Coalition has continued to meet and, quietly, has been involved in a number of projects, including negotiation with the Farmers Home Administration to obtain assistance to create elderly housing in the Valley; active representation on the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission committee preparing the Regional Housing Plan; efforts to couple affordable housing with conservation efforts in the Valley; and working with the three towns comprising the Mad River Valley Planning District to secure funding from Sugarbush and the Vermont Community Development Program to conduct a Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Plan for the Valley.

The November 13 Forum will be an opportunity to discuss the Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Plan. Doug Kennedy, the consultant hired to conduct the needs assessment, will be on hand to present his preliminary findings. Kennedy has been gathering a range of data and information, and will discuss recent housing trends in the Valley, the current housing market, and the economic and demographic makeup of the Valley and how it relates to housing affordability. Kennedy will also offer some insights into the future outlook for housing in the Valley.

Also speaking at the November 13 Forum will be Beth Humstone, Partner in Humstone Squires Planning Consulting firm, who will be assisting in taking the Valley's Needs Assessment and developing a program of strategies for addressing those needs. She will

be presenting a range of alternative strategies and programs which might be appropriate for the Valley. This meeting will be an important opportunity for residents of the Mad River Valley to participate in planning for the Valley's future. A range of options exist for addressing the Valley's housing needs, and each of those options has different implications for Valley residents. By providing input and direction early in the planning process, we have an opportunity to decide on a set of policies and programs that are effective and acceptable to everyone concerned for the Valley's future.

These forums are designed to provide information and fresh perspectives on several issues of importance to the Valley. They provide Valley residents with an opportunity to gather and discuss specific issues of concern. Presentations and discussions will then be summarized and compiled in a single document which could serve as an agenda for future action, and as a source of information to assist with future decision making. All visitors and residents of the Mad River Valley are encouraged to attend.

The Mad River Valley Forum Series is made possible through a Special Planning Grant from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs