CENTRE COUNTY’s HOUSING CHALLENGES:

- Income/cost of housing gap keeps widening
- NIMBYism
- Availability and cost of land
- Land use barriers
- Lack of subsidies
MEETING
THE CHALLENGES

IT’S A TEAM EFFORT!!!
HOMOGENEOUS vs. HETEROGENEOUS
Centre County Affordable Housing Coalition consisted of the following members:

Human service agencies, housing providers, planners, government agencies, lenders, legal services, realtors, developers, builders, non-profits, faith based organizations, public transportation agency, economic development agencies, and citizens.
GETTING FOLKS to the TABLE

• Call and invite targeted organizations/persons to your meeting and explain why you are inviting them *(Note: Ask the organization to designate a representative)*

• Make sure that ‘housing code’ is explained during meetings
GETTING FOLKS to the TABLE

• Touch base with the invited persons after the meeting to thank them for attending and be sure to ask if any additional clarification is needed

• Foster relationships with invited persons, learn about their priorities and make them feel that their involvement is of value to the effort
GETTING FOLKS to the TABLE

• Encourage more than one representative of an organization/entity to be at the table so as not to lose momentum with turnover

• End meetings when you say they will end and if possible, follow-up with a bulleted, brief summary in a timely manner so that those who could not attend are in the loop
GETTING FOLKS to the TABLE

• Be professional
• Say thank you...
BROADENING THE MEMBERSHIP BASE-BENEFITS

✓ Expanded the scope of our work
✓ Fostered a greater awareness of affordable housing needs
✓ Increased our visibility
✓ Developed new partnerships
✓ Brought additional resources to the table which include:

- Leadership
- Advocacy
- Education
- Expertise
- Mentoring
- Alliances
- Financial
ENGAGING the COMMISSIONERS

• Engaged County Staff (Planning/Community Development, MH/ID/EI/D&A, Children and Youth Services, Adult Services, Aging)

• Established momentum through the media, community leaders, staff reports, speakers bureau

• Used small successes and documented housing need to our advantage

• Kept Commissioners apprised through staff meetings

• Invited the Chair of the Commissioners to speak at events
**SUCCESES**

- Implemented a Speakers Bureau
- Held several annual housing summits
- Produced two videos to increase awareness of affordable housing needs
- Kicked off a YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard) campaign
- Developed a good relationship with the media
- Held landlord, housing development, home buyer and renter education programs
- Collected data to document need and show trends
- Initiated the process for conducting a countywide affordable housing needs assessment
- Developed a [Homes within Reach Toolkit](#) for municipal officials and developers
Remember to celebrate your successes on an annual basis....no matter how small!
Doing so helps with morale when working in a challenging world.
CHALLENGES

• Defining affordable housing
• Avoiding burnout
• Addressing the education void
• Remembering to explain ‘housing code’
• Maintaining balanced representation at the table and recognizing/appreciating membership diversity
• Keeping an open mind and an open dialogue
• Discussing the possibility of non-profit status
• Defining advocacy
Addressing ADVOCACY

• Identify members of the Coalition who are in a position to advocate without constraints
• Disseminate information on affordable housing proposals/legislation to all members of the Coalition and encourage individuals/organizations to send a letter of support, if appropriate
STAYING on COURSE

• Be FAIR
• Treat everyone with RESPECT
• COMMUNICATE
• Foster COHESIVENESS
• GROW
• Take RISKS
• Stay INCLUSIVE
• Be FLEXIBLE
• Be EFFICIENT with meetings and RESPECT TIME
• Focus on what you ARE GOOD AT
• KEEP the finger on the PULSE of the organization and the members
• View challenges as OPPORTUNITIES
“It is not enough to take steps which may some day lead to a goal; each step must be itself a goal and a step likewise.”

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe
(1749-1832)
German poet and playwright
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