

STONINGTON TO HOST LISTENING SESSION ON HOUSING OPTIONS

Following on the winter's Talk of the Towns, an opportunity for community members to provide vision for the future

STONINGTON, ME, JUNE 10, 2024 –The Town of Stonington will host a community-wide, in-person listening session and workshop on housing on **Tuesday, June 25 at 6 pm** on the second floor of the Town Hall. This session will be facilitated by Jim Damicis and Robert O'Brien of Camoin Associates. Damicis is a co-founder and Senior Vice President for Camoin, the nation's only full-service economic development and business lead generation firm. Camoin has partnered with Stonington to author its 2023 Economic Resiliency Strategy, and with Island Workforce Housing in 2019 on a Housing Needs Analysis and Assessment. O'Brien is Camoin's Senior Housing Specialist.

The session will help to frame the local housing problem and highlight recent work, providing a menu of housing strategies and opportunities for participants to consider with a focus on capturing residents' visions for how to resolve this critical community challenge.

Camoin's analysis for Stonington's Economic Resiliency Strategy revealed a challenging future for the island economy, one that increasingly lacks the capacity to support year-round local workers, families, and essential services, including schools, healthcare, and businesses – a future driven in large part by a lack of housing for year-round residents to support workers' needs and consistent economic activity for businesses. These implications were consistent with those found in Stonington's 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The Plan's #1 goal is to retain and attract a year-round population and workers to support year-round business and economic opportunities.

"You can't retain and attract a year-round, working age population if there is no place for them to live," said Town Manager Kathleen Billings. "We've identified the need for a spectrum of types of housing, from trailer parks to single-family developments, and we need to know what the people here want in their community."

This workshop follows on the Town's March "Talk of the Towns" session, which convened a panel from around the region to discuss "Workforce Housing in Maine's Historic Coastal Downtowns."

What policies and actions can municipalities, nonprofits, and community members take to better balance market forces?

"We want to preserve our working waterfront, which requires available labor just as our schools require a student population," said Linda Nelson, the Town's Economic & Community Development Director. "As property values skyrocketed along the coast these past five years, housing has become further and further out of reach for workers and families. Now the bulk of those who work in Stonington commute from across the bridge."

For more information on the Town of Stonington, and a one-sheet on its Economic Resiliency Strategy created with nationally-recognized Camoin Associates, go to <https://www.stoningtonmaine.org/gov/economic-development.php>.

Jim Damicis and Robert O'Brien, of Camoin Associates, will facilitate a public workshop and listening session on housing on Tuesday, June 25 at 6 pm on the second floor of the Stonington Town Hall.