



community development partnership

Creating opportunities for people to live, work, and thrive on the Lower Cape

Advocacy Training

This past February 40 enthusiastic individuals participated in our Housing Advocacy Trainings held in Wellfleet and Harwich. The trainings provided participants with the skills and practice needed to be effective advocates for affordable housing, whether before a town regulatory board or at a neighborhood potluck dinner.

CAPE HOUSING ADVOCACY TRAINING

Learning how to speak effectively in public, address core issues calmly and without rancor, how to listen and answer the specific questions being asked, were among the topics covered in the training, according to Andrea Aldana, the CDP's Director of Housing Advocacy.

One of the biggest challenges we face on the Lower Cape is the issue of affordable housing in a housing market that struggles to support a diverse and vibrant community that serves all its people.

There are unfounded misconceptions about people who need housing that is affordable and those prejudices inform many of the decisions that negatively affect less fortunate members of our community. There have been numerous instances where people have expressed support for affordable housing – until it was planned to be put in their neighborhood.

Unfounded misconceptions and stereotypes about people who need affordable housing often lead to neighbors opposing proposals for affordable housing. Beliefs that crime, vandalism and property negligence are what neighbors of affordable housing units can expect, cause neighbors to oppose having such units in their communities. The facts are that a vast majority of the residents of affordable housing work full time but at wages that make market housing unaffordable. Other residents may be retired, living on a fixed income or have suffered from a devastating illness or injury that restricts their ability to have a steady income. We want these stories to be the ones people think of when they think of affordable housing.

People who care about the issue of housing often do so because it is an issue that has affected them personally. It is easy to become emotional or upset with people who make false or even accusatory claims, but our training helps people respond rationally in ways that can be supported by facts. Learning to assess your audience is one of the training topics and is important as it helps advocates frame the argument. Using positive stories of past successes helps listeners relate on a personal level. Another topic of the training addresses concerns about density and zoning issues.

3 Main Street Mercantile, Unit 7 Eastham, MA 02642
P 508.240.7873 F 508.240.5085 E contact@capecdp.org

www.capecdp.org



The training also stresses with participants the importance of continually building relationships within their communities, including those with local politicians and leaders. Attending town meetings and community events, where many people are present, as well as specific zoning or town planning meetings is key to effective long-term advocacy.

We cannot do this alone. We need your help. If you are interested in joining our growing team of advocates, please contact Andrea Aldana for more information about our next Advocacy Training sessions.