

## **For Immediate Release**

### **Sandwich Citizens Housing Committee - Who We Are**

The Sandwich Citizens' Housing Committee was formed in 2005, and became incorporated in 2006, by a group of individuals who are concerned about the high cost of land and housing in Sandwich and the impact the lack of affordable housing is having on the community. The decrease in enrollment at the Sandwich Central School is seen as evidence of the inability of young families to settle in town. Members are also responding to a need expressed by adult children of residents who want to live here but have had to move elsewhere due to affordability of housing. Statistics from the Lakes Region Planning Commission as well as other state information about the cost of housing in the region support the group's concern that Sandwich faces a significant challenge to sustain itself as a vibrant and diverse community.

Other communities around the nation have identified similar problems and taken various approaches to keeping their communities affordable to a diverse population. In February of 2005 John Abrams of South Mountain Company in Martha's Vineyard was invited by a group of concerned citizens to speak in Sandwich. He spoke of a similar situation on the Vineyard where the many of the native population with their significant multigenerational history on the island could no longer afford to live there. The essence of the community was at risk when people who serve the community such as fire fighters, police and teachers could no longer buy or build on the Vineyard. Abrams and others have worked on the Vineyard to develop multifaceted ways of responding to the housing need. His talk laid out a variety of creative solutions which have received widespread community support.

The SHC began its formal work following this talk, meeting monthly for the last two years, and it has adopted the following mission statement. "The mission of the Sandwich Housing Committee is to increase the availability of housing to meet the diverse needs of our community." The vision statement is as follows: "The community of Sandwich would maintain its small town rural character consisting of people of all ages, interests and incomes. Housing would be available to families of diverse occupations and incomes."