

Nancy T. comments on Affordable Housing bylaw draft

From: Nancy Tavernier

Sent: Monday, January 16, 2006 2:18 PM

To: Roland Bartl

Cc: Planning Board; Acton Community Housing Corporation

Subject: comments on Affordable Housing bylaw draft

HI Roland,

I pulled a copy of the first draft of the new Affordable housing bylaw off the Town website and would like to submit some initial comments. I would ask that ACHC be kept in the loop on this process. My over all comment is "so far so good". I know you are really just starting but I think it is definitely on the right track and certainly much simpler than the existing bylaw.

Here are some specific comments:

1. Neither the current bylaw nor this draft mentions ACHC at all. This might be a good time to add some of the policy language from the new 40B statement that folds ACHC into the review process somehow. As you know, we are generally the first board a developer will come to with a conceptual idea so we can talk through the affordability component and often design, unit size and income mix issues. This continues to be a logical first step for a developer. It really would not matter if it were a standard 40B or a local initiative produced by the bylaw. In fact, we would encourage any developer to first try to fit into the local bylaw process.
2. Because this new bylaw gives the special permit approval authority to the Planning Board and it is discretionary, it would be important to insure that should a developer get a denial from the PB, he would not then be blocked from filing a 40B. I know that rule applies to subdivisions that have been denied but I just want to be sure this would not trigger the 1 year delay for a 40B if denied.
3. Might this be a good time to try out the removal of the requirement of owner-occupancy in the Village areas for multifamily housing? That of course would only be if 25% of the units were affordable not to apply to the current village zoning that allows up to 4 attached dwellings with no requirement for affordable.
4. Might this also be a good time to try out some inclusionary zoning by requiring 25% of a multifamily unit in the village area to be affordable?
5. In the sections to be drafted, 9C,2 talks about ECHO units that would be allowed if affordable. How about allowing more than 1 detached dwelling, not just ECHO, as long as it was affordable in certain areas like village and 1/2 mile from village? This would have really helped with the willow/Central project.

I look forward to the ongoing development of this bylaw. Thanks for listening.

Nancy