

Real Estate

THE BOSTON GLOBE • SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 1993

A number of well-to-do communities became cognizant of the difficulty that their own workers — clerks, police officers, teachers — had buying homes in towns where real estate values soared during the mid- to late 1980s.

Low-cost housing in high-cost towns

By Mary Sit
GLOBE STAFF

Pat Barry, 48, can't afford to buy a house in the town where she works.

For 20 years, she has worked at the Acton-Boxboro Regional School district. When she was a teen-ager, she moved to Acton with her family and attended high school there. Today, she's a single mother with a college graduate daughter who lives with her.

"Acton is a great town to live in, it's a great town to work in," said Barry. "I'm in a lovely apartment ... but it's still not mine. There's no way I can afford to buy a house in Acton. You make do. But it's tough to rent."

Now there's a new effort to help Acton workers afford home ownership in a town that caters to upscale professionals. Deck House Inc., an Acton-based designer and manufacturer of custom housing has made a commitment to donate a two-bedroom, one-bath house to the town through the Acton Community Housing Corp., a private nonprofit group dedicated to helping the town of Acton find affordable housing.

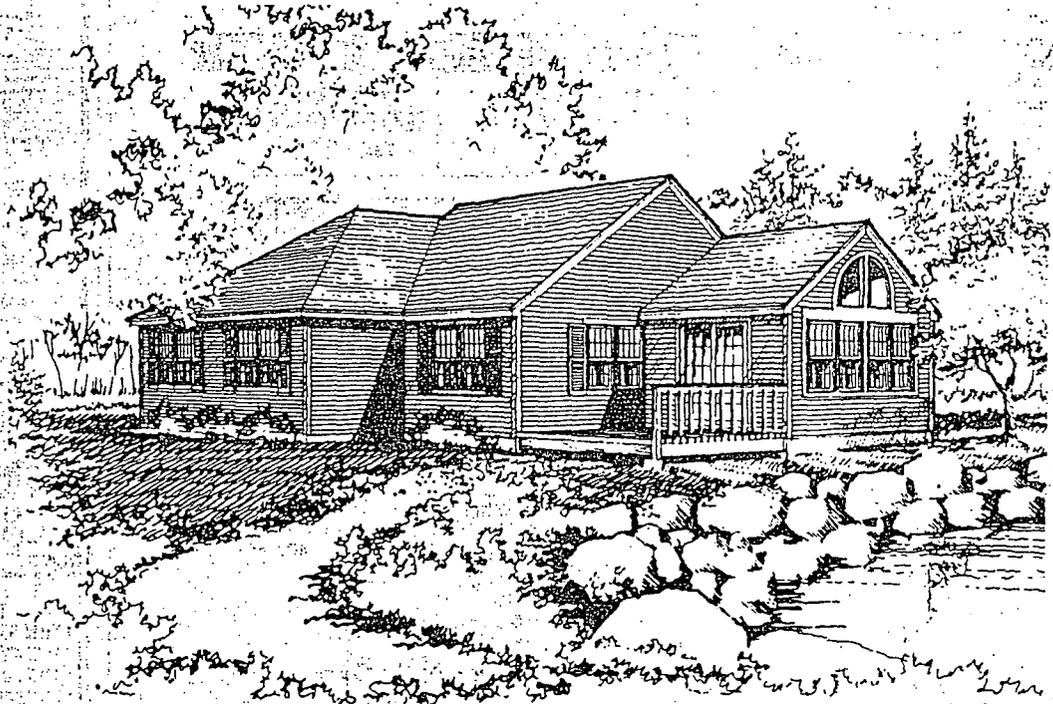
A number of well-to-do communities became cognizant of the difficulty that their own workers — clerks, police officers, teachers — had buying homes in towns where real estate values soared during the mid- to late 1980s.

That recognition drew attention to the fact that the Greater Boston area, with some of the highest priced housing in the country, is a difficult place not only for those with low incomes to buy into the American dream of home ownership, but for people of moderate income as well.

And, despite some housing price relief in the early 1990s, real estate in many towns remains out of the reach of local workers. Barry, for example, makes \$35,000 a year and the median price for a house in Acton is about \$230,000.

Other affluent suburban towns are also trying to increase their affordable housing stock. Community Builders Inc. in Boston is working with the town of Manchester-by-the-Sea to build a \$5.2 million limited-equity cooperative for low and moderate income families, said Jon Juhl, project manager at Community Builders.

Subsidized housing makes up 4.1 percent of the housing stock in Manchester-by-the-Sea. In Acton, 2.5 percent of all housing stock is subsidized, according to a



An architect's rendering of an affordable home designed and built by Deck House Inc.

1990 inventory list by the Executive Office of Community Development.

The Manchester project will consist of 40 two- and three-bedroom units on 9 acres of town-owned land. "It takes a tremendous amount of effort and cooperation to make a project like this work," said Juhl.

"We had tremendous support from the town. It's that commitment that has been a key for us to be able to move this project forward."

In Acton, the donated Deck House will be for a first time home buyer who is a town employee, an adult child of a current resident, or a resident who currently rents.

Nancy E. Tavernier, chairwoman of the Acton Board of Selectman, said although it may sound exclusionary to give children of residents a priority, that criterion resulted from a 1989 survey conducted when the town wrote its master plan.

"One of the concerns that came up over and over again was: My children are being forced out of the community. They

grew up here, may have gone away to college and want to come back and raise a family here."

The Acton Community Housing Corp. is hoping for a donation of land where the 1,000-square-foot house offered by Deck House can be built, said Steven R. Graham, a board member of the corporation. Otherwise, he said the corporation will find a way to buy a plot.

"There are not a lot of single-family homes at affordable prices in our community," he said. To make homes "affordable" in Acton, the group strives to sell houses at prices that range from \$80,000 to \$108,000 to buyers with incomes of between \$31,500 and \$38,000.

There are condominiums in town that, at foreclosure sales, can be had for around \$50,000. But Graham noted that it can be difficult to win mortgage approvals in some condo complexes and there remains reluctance on the part of even first-time buyers to put their equity into a condo.

Deck House, which normally produces contemporary, custom houses for \$200,000

and up, recently designed its "Core Collection" of low-cost houses for first-time home buyers — worth closer to \$100,000 — after winning a contract last year to ship low-cost, prefabricated houses to Israel.

Judith Berkes, market development coordinator for Deck House, saw an article in a local Acton newspaper describing the lack of low-cost housing in the town.

"We felt we really needed to address the affordable housing situation in this country," said Berkes, whose late husband founded the firm 32 years ago. "It was something with our expertise and our history that we felt we could do. We took this Core house (for Israel) and came up with a new design criteria to make it an affordable house for this country."

For Pat Barry, the school district worker, the wait to buy a house in her dream town, may soon be over. She's prepared with downpayment money to grab the next chance she gets to buy a house in Acton which she can afford.

"It's sort of a dream. That's how I look at it," said Barry.

Community Profile

Wellesley residents prefer to accent the town's positives

March 11, 1994

TO: Betty McManus, ACHC
FROM: Nancy Tavernier
SUBJECT: Adams St. information

Here are a few thoughts on the issue of tax bill vs. education or municipal costs. This appears to be the one issue that could take hold but we must put it in perspective.

1. If assessed on the selling price of \$94,500 the Adams St. houses would have had a tax bill in 1994 of \$1686 ($\$17.85 \times 94.5 = \1686).

2. The average residential tax bill (condos and single family homes) in 1994 is \$3101 (average assessed value of \$173,763). The average tax bill for single family homes in 1994 is \$3886.37 (ave. assessed value of \$217,724) .

3. One third of the households in Acton (total households = 6574) live in multi-family dwellings, either apartments, condos or 2-3 family homes. The average condominium assessed value for 1994 was \$78,272 and the average condo tax bill was \$1397. Renters, pay taxes through their rent.

4. Conclusions:

A. The Adams St. property owners will pay more taxes than the average condo owner.

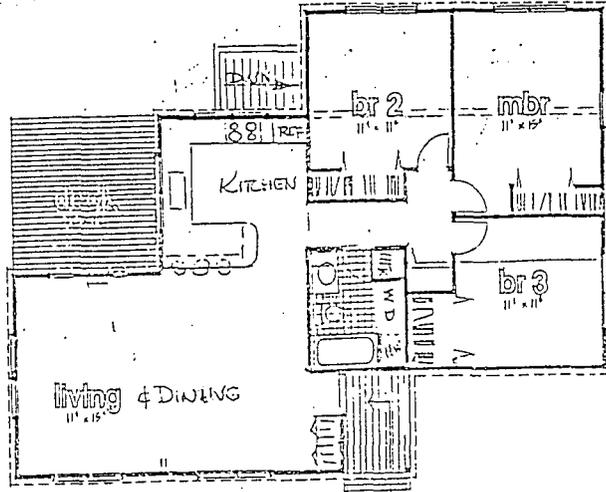
B. If we assume the 1994 per pupil education cost to be \$5500 then the vast majority of Acton taxpayers (Ave. residential bill \$3101) fail to cover the cost of even one child never mind the additional costs of Public Safety, Library, Highway, etc.

After a discussion with a League member, I was able to help her identify her core objection to this proposal. It is not a bias against affordable housing, it is instead a backlash toward residential growth in particular. This is the only opportunity that voters will have to say "no" to more

growth. They can express their frustration at Planning Board hearings but if every residential project meets the zoning requirements it cannot be denied, so there is really no way to stop residential building under the current zoning standards. Therefore, it is important that we do the profiles and particularly show those first time homebuyers who already live in Acton or who do not have or plan to have children as well as families with children new to the community.

We may not get a 2/3's vote at Town Meeting but we must fight to get at least a majority vote. That will still be a victory - to be able to say a minority of voters defeated affordable housing. I think the anti-residential growth feeling as it relates to ever increasing property taxes is a very real issue. The solution to mitigating local property tax increases lies with state government who must send more local aid to Acton, the solution is not to just stop people from living here.

Hopefully this will help in your debate at the LWV meeting on 3/15. It is my understanding that Lois Musser and Julian Horne will be the opponents present. Good luck!



DECK
HOUSE

model 1121

A long road led to Adams Street plan

(Editor's note: the following was submitted by the Acton Community Housing Corporation in response to statements made about a proposed housing plan on Adams Street.)

The members of the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) consider it important to understand the history leading up to the proposal to set aside four acres of town land on Adams Street for developing affordable housing. The proposal grew out of a lengthy, comprehensive planning process.

As far back as 1969, the legislature passed the Anti-Snob Zoning Act. The statute allows developers to apply to local zoning boards for comprehensive permits to build affordable housing. If the comprehensive permit is denied, a developer may appeal to the state's Housing Appeals Committee, which has the authority to override local zoning by-laws and order the town to approve the development. The state can override local zoning by-laws until 10% of a town's housing stock meets the criteria for "affordable housing." (Acton is currently at 2%)

Many local communities were understandably upset by the state approving developments which did not comply with local zoning criteria. To deal with this problem, towns formed local housing partnerships. These local

boards negotiate with developers proposing to build affordable housing in order to strike a balance between the concerns of developers and local communities.

In 1987, Acton town meeting authorized the formation of a public non-profit body to promote affordable housing. In August 1987, the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to have the ACHC act as the town's agent for affordable housing efforts; The state's Executive Office of Communities and Development has also approved the ACHC as Acton's local housing partnership. We are organized as a private non-profit corporation in order to take advantage of private funding opportunities. We are, however, accountable to the town. We all have lived in Acton for many years. We are committed to Acton's welfare.

In 1988, Acton formed a planning council to develop a long range Master Plan. The process for developing the Master Plan included community participation through surveys and meetings in every Acton neighborhood. After a two-year process, town meeting voted in 1990 to adopt the goals and objectives set forth in the Master Plan. The Master Plan specifically recognizes that promoting a wide range of economic diversity in housing enhances the public welfare of the

entire town. One means which the Master Plan approves for achieving the goal of economic diversity in housing is to identify town properties which are suitable for donation towards the development of affordable housing.

At a special town meeting in November, 1990, the Affordable Housing Incentives and Overlay District was added to Acton's zoning by-law by a 90% majority vote. The Affordable Housing Overlay District identifies areas throughout Acton which the town recognizes as appropriate sites for affordable housing developments. It was prepared by town planners utilizing a process which included community input and comments from all appropriate town boards.

The Adams Street site is included in Acton's Affordable Housing Overlay District. The site was not chosen by the ACHC but was selected by professionals in the town's planning department because it is in the overlay district and the soils are suitable for septic.

The Adams Street site is hardly an "absurd" choice. Rather, it is the result of a comprehensive planning process which was overwhelmingly approved by town meeting, as well as all the professional people who work on planning Acton's future. It would be the antithesis of good government and sound planning for a small group

with parochial interests to thwart the long range goals put in place for Acton through adoption of the Master Plan.

There is another reason for utilizing town-owned land to develop affordable housing. The state considers a town's efforts to develop affordable housing when reviewing appeals by developers seeking comprehensive permits. If the Master Plan's goal for increasing the supply of affordable housing remains a paper goal only, Acton may find that developers and the state will tell us where and what type of affordable housing will be located in our town, regardless of the requirements of our zoning bylaw.

We will address the issues of the site's proximity to the treatment plant in future letters. In short, the site has qualities which make it attractive for housing. Citizens should take the opportunity to drive by the site, located where Adams Street and Parker Street intersect. Again, we welcome your comments and ideas.

Peter Berry, Chairman
Acton Community Housing Corporation
Stephen Graham, Rev. William Heuss,
Kevin McManus, Naomi McManus,
Jana Mullin, Pam Shuttle, Roy Smith,
Nancy Tavernier, Bob Wiltse
ACHC Directors

ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION

**ADAMS STREET AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPOSAL
ARTICLE 34 - APRIL TOWN MEETING**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What action will be taken at Town Meeting on Article 34 - Affordable Housing - Adams Street?

Town Meeting voters are being asked to approve a change in use for 4 acres of town-owned land located on Adams St. in South Acton, from sewage disposal to affordable housing. These 4 acres are part of a 20 acre parcel that was purchased by the Town in 1967 for the purpose of building a sewage disposal plant. The Town has no plans to build that plant.

A positive vote at Town Meeting will convey the 4 acres to the Board of Selectmen who will then enter into a competitive bidding process, to procure a developer who will build up to 8 units of affordable housing. This land will not be conveyed to the Board of Selectmen until a qualified developer has been selected, detailed plans have been approved, cost estimates are finalized, and approvals have been obtained from all appropriate Town boards and departments. The Acton Community Housing Corporation plans to bid on the development along with other interested parties.

The successful developer must guarantee that the single family homes can be sold to persons whose income qualifies under state and local guidelines for affordable housing; that 70% of the homes will be sold to those persons who work for or in Acton, live in Acton, or are children of current Acton residents; and, that all local zoning and environmental standards will meet compliance.

2. Who is the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC)?

The Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC), established by the Acton Board of Selectmen in 1987, is a public, non-profit corporation which works to create affordable housing to low and moderate income families in Acton. The Town of Acton recognizes ACHC as its official representative in the affordable housing development process. The ten

volunteer members of the Board of Directors bring a rich variety of backgrounds and dedication to attaining the community goal of housing diversity. The ACHC works with private developers in the planning, development, and marketing stages of affordable homes. It is also the only organization that will monitor these homes to be sure that they remain affordable over the long term. In addition, the ACHC is charged with surveying town owned land, which would be suitable for housing development, and coordinates the eventual development of such land. The Adams St. plan is ACHC's first proposal for town-owned land.

3. What exactly is the plan for the Adams St. housing proposal?

The affordable housing proposal envisions the construction of up to eight 2 and 3 bedroom single family homes to be clustered on 4 acres of wooded land off of Adams St. near the intersection of Parker St. If the ACHC is the successful bidder, the homes will be constructed by Deck House, Inc., a distinguished Acton firm who has donated one home to the ACHC. If another developer is the successful bidder, they will still be required to construct no more than 8 homes and they must meet the affordability standards set out by the Board of Selectmen. The homes would have individual septic systems and would be tied into town water.

4. What is the selling price of these homes?

Local and State affordable housing guidelines set the price of these homes at \$94,500 to qualified First Time Homebuyers. These guidelines can be met through the use of town-owned land, there are no subsidies given to the home-owners. These are not subsidized homes. Any excess profit, generated by the difference between construction and selling prices, will be returned to the Town to be placed in a special fund used to create additional affordable housing opportunities in Acton. It is anticipated that this project will generate a profit which will be used to fund affordable housing in scattered sites around Acton.

5. Who will be eligible to buy these homes?

The ACHC is recommending that the Board of Selectmen use the state Local Initiative Program (LIP) which allows for local preference to be given to 70% of the qualified home owners. The ACHC has defined local preference as those persons who meet one of more of the following criteria: 1). employed by the Town of Acton, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, or the Acton Water District. 2). A current Acton resident. 3). A child of a current Acton resident. or 4). An employee

working in Acton. To be income eligible, a home buyer must have an annual household income of not more than \$40,000, be a first time home-buyer (no home ownership in last three years), and must be creditworthy. These homes will be pre-sold and the buyers will be pre-qualified by a local lender.

6. How much tax revenue will these homes generate?

While the selling price of the proposed homes is \$94,500, the assessed-taxable value of the homes will be determined by the Acton Board of Assessors. Some of the value of the land could be included in the total assessment. If the assessed value of the homes were \$94,500, then the Fiscal Year 1994 tax bill would be \$1686 for each home, based on the current residential tax rate of \$17.85 per \$1000 of assessed value. The town-owned Adams St. parcel currently generates no tax revenue.

7. If these homeowners have school-aged children, will their tax bill only cover a portion of the cost of educating their children?

Yes, and that is true for the majority of home owners in the Town of Acton. The average residential tax bill in Acton for 1994 is \$3101, including both condominiums and single family homes. The cost of educating one child in Acton is \$5600, however, state aid offsets 18.5% of that cost, bringing the total cost to \$4564 per pupil. Thirty-eight percent of the households in Acton have school-aged children. The cost of education in Acton is 66% of the total cost of local government. The property tax structure is designed to spread the cost of government over the entire tax base: residential, commercial, industrial, personal property and open space. Only homes assessed at \$255,000 or above, cover the cost of educating one pupil.

8. Why not sell the Adams St. land to a developer so that the proceeds could help fund the school override or other capital needs?

Selling any or all of the town-owned Adams St. land to a developer is outside the scope of the article at the April 1994 Town Meeting and such action is not under consideration by the ACHC or the Board of Selectmen. Theoretically, the land could be sold to a developer but would require a Town Meeting vote authorizing the sale, it would have to be competitively bid, and it would not necessarily be consistent with the

ACHC and Board of Selectmen's policy of creating affordable housing. There would be no guarantee that any affordable housing would be built by a successful bidder unless he desired to increase the density on the site.

The 1990 Town Meeting vote that created the Affordable Housing Overlay District designated the Adams St. parcel as appropriate for affordable housing. If a developer wanted to buy the 20 acres, he could increase the density allowed (1 per acre) by building 25 to 100 units as long as 15-40% of them were affordable. While that would be consistent with the ACHC's and Master Plan goal of providing more affordable housing, it would not be acceptable to the Adams St./Maillet Drive neighborhood, some of whom have stated they oppose any development of the area.

A one-time infusion of revenues, such as the proceeds from the sale of property, will not solve long term operating costs of the town. The Board of Selectmen are proposing to Town Meeting a fiscally sound method of paying for needed capital items that does not require the revenues that would be generated by the sale of town-owned land.

9. Why can't existing properties, especially condominiums, be used for affordable housing?

The Town of Acton, through its Master Plan Goals and Objectives voted at the 1990 Town Meeting, specifically recognizes that promoting a wide range of economic diversity in housing will enhance the public welfare of the entire town. Housing opportunities should be available to anyone and should not be restricted to multifamily dwellings or to a particular area of town. Equal access to housing is just that, equal access to any kind of housing that is affordable to any qualified individual. The average 1994 tax bill for condominiums in Acton is \$1397, which is nearly \$300 less tax revenue than the Adams St. proposed houses would generate.

10. Wouldn't it be more desirable to build affordable housing units in scattered sites around the town or to purchase and rehabilitate existing properties?

The ACHC agrees that this is a desirable goal and is working toward purchasing existing single or 2-family homes with the intention of placing deed restrictions on them to insure their permanent affordability. However, the ACHC and the Town of Acton currently have no funds to make these purchases. The Adams St. project is expected to generate approximately \$145,000 in "profit" which will be used as seed money to make such procurements as part of the ACHC's long range plan for

generating more affordable housing in Acton.

11. How was the Adams St. parcel selected?

At a special Town Meeting in November, 1990, the Affordable Housing Incentives and Overlay District was added to Acton's zoning bylaw with overwhelming support from Town Meeting voters. The Affordable Housing Overlay District identifies areas throughout Acton which the town recognizes as appropriate sites for affordable housing developments. The Adams Street site is included in Acton's Affordable Housing Overlay District. Because this land has remained unused for the past 27 years, the ACHC felt it was appropriate to make a portion of the land more productive for the town while satisfying a major town-wide goal of affordable housing. Preliminary tests have indicated that the soil is quite receptive to septic disposal and that it will have little environmental impact on the abutting neighborhood.

The only other town-owned parcel that was considered as part of the overlay district is a piece of land on Arlington St. that was purchased 20 years ago for the future expansion needs of the elementary schools. With continuing enrollment increases on the elementary level, it would not be advisable to take this land at this time. There is also concern by the Acton Health Department that the soil at the Arlington St. site is not as receptive to wastewater disposal as the Adams St. land.

12. Will this housing proposal have an adverse impact on the abutting neighborhoods?

The 4 acre portion of the Adams St. parcel is located at the far western section of Adams St. and only directly abuts two properties, both of which are across the street. The rest of the homes on Adams St. and Maillet Drive, and any nearby neighborhoods, will not be adversely effected by environmental or traffic changes. Some of these homeowners have stated that any trees that would be removed to make way for construction would have a detrimental effect on their homes due to the alleged existence of odors from the nearby Maynard Sewage Plant and its nighttime lighting.

A locus map will show that only two homes directly abut the proposed houses and the removal of trees could potentially affect them just as any development affects its adjoining neighborhood. The location of the proposed 8 houses is in a natural depression behind an embankment which blocks the treatment plant lights from them and the 2 neighbors

across the street. This embankment will not be disturbed. As for the issue of trees blocking odors, a survey of professional arborists has shown that this theory is simply not based in fact.

13. Is it true that the proposed houses will be located next to the Maynard Treatment plant?

The Maynard Treatment plant is located approximately 330 feet south of the closest proposed house on the site with heavy buffer of trees and undergrowth, as well as a naturally occurring embankment, in between. There are houses located on the Maynard side that are closer in proximity to the plant. A 50 ft. buffer of trees surrounding the housing site will be left intact to help mitigate any potential impacts generated by the treatment plant.

14. What are the potential negative impacts of locating the houses next to the Maynard Treatment plant?

It is true that the site is near an industrial use, the Maynard Treatment plant but the site is still marketable. There are many examples of homes located next to industrial sites in Acton. High-end market rate new homes are selling within sight of the W.R. Grace chemical company, high value homes are located near the Haartz Auto Fabric Company, and the entire up-scale housing development of Northbriar in North Acton is located across from a multi-use industrial area. All of these homes have held their value in spite of their location. The Adams St. houses will be pre-sold so if there is no market at that site, then the affordable housing project will not proceed.

There have been complaints about odors from the Maynard Treatment plant over the past 15 years, but few in the last 3 years. Some of the odor problems resulted from an accumulation of sludge in the Assabet River which was exposed several times in the past decade due to low water conditions brought on by a defective dam. The dam was repaired several years ago and now keeps the water at an appropriate level.

The Town of Maynard is under orders from the Department of Environmental Protection to upgrade their facility, adding state of the art equipment by 1996, which will decrease any existing odors substantially. The DEP will also insist that the sewage effluent should enter the Assabet River below the dam, in more turbulent water, which will further mitigate the odor problem. Any expansion of the facility will take place within the existing site and will not negatively impact the Adams St. houses.

Recently, current Adams St. residents have raised the issue of

nighttime lighting at the plant site. This lighting is only visible in the winter and should not affect the 8 proposed homes since they will be situated in a natural depression and will have an embankment between them and the treatment plant.

Prepared by Nancy Tavernier, Member
Acton Community Housing Corporation
Acton Board of Selectmen
3/21/94

ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION

PROPOSED AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT

ON

ADAMS STREET

ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS

FEBRUARY 25, 1994

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Overview

The Acton Community Housing Corporation ("ACHC") is proposing the development of a four-acre parcel of land in South Acton for up to eight (8) affordable housing units, which parcel is a portion of a twenty (20) acre parcel, more or less, acquired pursuant to a Warrant Article approved at the 1967 Annual Town Meeting.

The enclosed locus plan shows the relationship of the parcel in question to the Maynard Sewerage Treatment Plant and the neighbors in the immediate area. The ACHC proposes to submit a plan to the Planning Board for subdivision approval and a special PCRC special permit. The land in question is within Sub-District B as delineated on the Affordable Housing Overlay District Map of the Town of Acton, Map No. 4, November 28, 1990. Such submissions will be subject to all of the usual scrutiny, reviews and approvals by local departments and boards. The ACHC believes that the project, as proposed, will have a minimal, if any, impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

At the direction of the Board of Selectmen, the ACHC will provide local preference as provided in the Acton Zoning By-Laws or will meet the guidelines of the LIP program so that the affordable housing units will be counted against the Town's quota of 10% of affordable housing stock. Even if the Board of Selectmen directs the ACHC to comply with the LIP guidelines, it is the ACHC's feeling that, based upon the pool of prospective first-time home buyers, the majority, if not all, of the units will be purchased by first-time home buyers that meet the guidelines under the Acton Zoning By-Laws.

The enclosed budget and cash-flow projections have been prepared conservatively. It is anticipated that all of the units will be pre-sold to qualified, first-time home buyers and that the project will be built out in less than the six months projected. Deed restrictions will be imposed on each of the units to ensure the affordability of the units into the foreseeable future. If, under unusual circumstances, the units cannot be sold at affordable housing prices, any "excess" profit will be captured for the benefit of affordable housing in the Town. Either the recommended deed restrictions under the LIP program will be used or similar such restrictions based upon the Board of Selectmen's direction relative to local preference.

The members of the Board of Directors of the ACHC believe that the plan to provide affordable housing units for the Town is well conceived and has been thoroughly researched to date. Further refinement of the specifics of the development will continue to occur through the RFP process and through the application for subdivision approval and PCRC special permit. The ACHC respectfully requests that the Board of Selectmen recommend the passage of the Article at Town Meeting.

MAYNARD
TOWN LINE
ACTON

COMMON LAND
1.53 ± AC.

DEVELOPMENT AREA
2.47 ± AC.

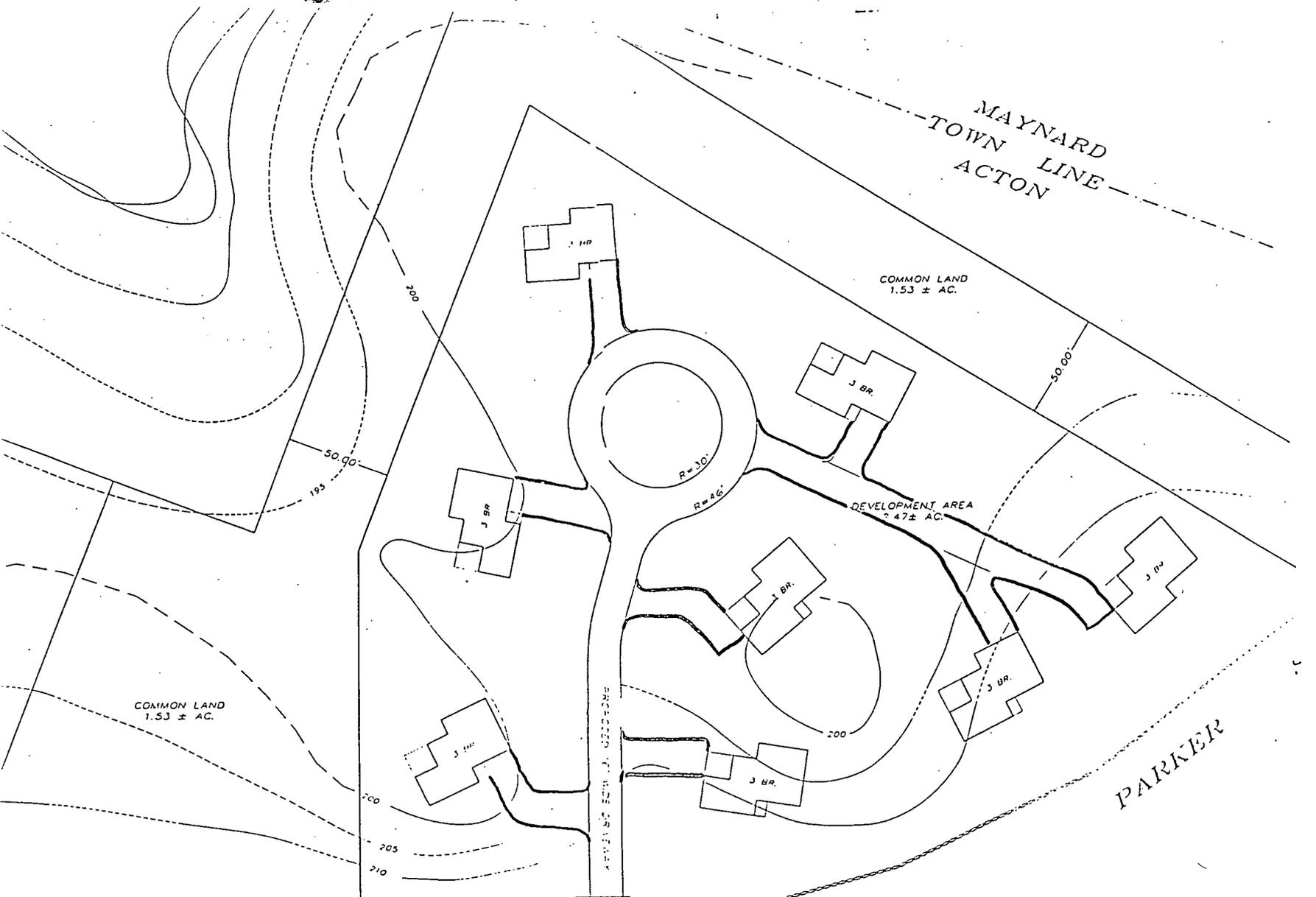
COMMON LAND
1.53 ± AC.

PARKER

ADAMS STREET

PROPOSED
SEWER

PROPOSED WATER MAIN EXTENSION



Draft of Proposed Warrant Article

Article _____. To see if the Town will authorize the Selectmen to convey a portion of a parcel of land in the Southerly part of the Town acquired by the Town for sewerage disposal purposes pursuant to Article 23 of the 1967 Annual Town Meeting, said parcel being shown as parcel 33, sheet J-3 of the Town Atlas, described as follows:

The portion being the most northwesterly 4.0 acres, more or less, bounded as follows:

NORTHERLY: by Parker Street and Adams Street about 690 feet, more or less;

EASTERLY: by remaining land of the Town of Acton;

SOUTHEASTERLY: by land of the Town of Maynard;

SOUTHWESTERLY: by land of Helen E. Newsham to Parker Street.

for the construction of up to eight (8) affordable dwelling units and the sale thereof to persons or households whose income qualifies under state or local guidelines for affordable housing, with preference to be given to persons employed by or within the Town, to current residents of the Town, and to children of Acton residents.

No conveyance shall occur until:

a) a qualified developer has been chosen based on a competitive selection process which will include detailed plans, well substantiated cost estimates, and guaranteed selling prices for the "affordable units"; and

b) the approval of the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Heath, Acton Water District and such other Town Boards or Departments, as appropriate, for areas within their respective jurisdictions has been obtained.

02/15/94

ADAMS STREET & PARKER STREET DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
(EIGHT (8) CLUSTERED SINGLE FAMILY HOMES)

9600

COST

DEVELOPMENT COSTS	TOTAL COSTS	PER UNIT COST	PER SQ.FT
HARD COSTS			
(A) SITE ACQUISITION	\$5,000	\$625	\$0.52
(B) SITE PREPARATION	\$16,000	\$2,000	\$1.67
CLEARING	\$16,000	\$2,000	\$1.67
UTILITIES			
WATER 850 FT. 8" MAIN	\$35,000	\$4,375	\$3.65
GAS	\$3,500	\$438	\$0.36
ELECTRIC	\$3,500	\$438	\$0.36
SEPTIC	\$20,000	\$2,500	\$2.08
PAVING 600 FT. 20' AVG.	\$14,000	\$1,750	\$1.46
(C) LANDSCAPING (NATURAL)	\$8,000	\$1,000	\$0.83
(D) RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION			
8 FOUNDATIONS	\$35,200	\$4,400	\$3.67
8 SLABS	\$24,000	\$3,000	\$2.50
8 MODULAR UNITS DELIVERED	\$134,400	\$16,800	\$14.00
*** FRAMING & ROOFING	\$26,400	\$3,300	\$2.75
*** SIDING	\$12,000	\$1,500	\$1.25
*** INSULATION	\$6,000	\$750	\$0.63
PLUMBING	\$32,800	\$4,100	\$3.42
HEATING	\$47,000	\$5,875	\$4.90
ELECTRICAL	\$19,600	\$2,450	\$2.04
*** DRYWALL	\$19,200	\$2,400	\$2.00
*** FINISH	\$4,800	\$600	\$0.50
PAINTING	\$21,600	\$2,700	\$2.25
(E) CONTINGENCY (5%)	\$6,050	\$756	\$0.63
(F) TOTAL HARD COSTS	\$510,050	\$63,756	\$53.13
SOFT COSTS			
(G) PERMITS/SURVEYS	\$4,000	\$500	\$0.42
WATER FEES	\$22,400	\$2,800	
(H) ARCHITECTECTUAL	\$0	\$0	\$0.00
(I) ENGINEERING	\$1,000	\$125	\$0.10
(J) LEGAL	\$4,000	\$500	\$0.42
(K) INSURANCE	\$1,500	\$188	\$0.16
(L) SECURITY	\$0	\$0	\$0.00
(M) DEVELOPERS FEE 5% HARD COSTS	\$25,503	\$3,188	\$2.66
(N) CONSTRUCTION MANAGER	\$15,000	\$1,875	\$1.56
(O) PROPERTY TAXES	\$0	\$0	\$0.00
(P) CONSTRUCTION INTEREST	\$10,000	\$1,250	\$1.04
(Q) FINANCING/APPLICATION FEES	\$12,000	\$1,500	\$1.25
(R) UTILITIES	\$1,000	\$125	\$0.10
(S) MAINTENANCE (UNSOLD UNITS)	\$0	\$0	\$0.00
(T) ACCOUNTING	\$500	\$63	\$0.05
(U) MARKETING	\$250	\$31	\$0.03
(V) COMMISSIONS	\$0	\$0	\$0.00
(W) CONTINGENCY (5%)	\$5,113	\$639	\$0.53
(X) TOTAL SOFT COSTS	\$102,266	\$12,783	\$10.65
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COSTS	\$612,316	\$76,539	\$63.78
SALES 8 UNITS	\$756,000	\$94,500	\$78.75
FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR FUTURE AFFORDABLE HOUSING EFFORTS	\$143,684		

ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION

PROJECTED CASH FLOW

ADAMS STREET PROJECT

	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TOTAL
FUNDS BEGINNING BALANCE	500	5500	5500	5500	5500	10000	9000	7500	58950	147450	500
SOURCES OF FUNDS											
CONSTRUCTION LOAN	50000	85000	110000	5500	0	0	0	0	0	0	250500
UNIT SALES	0	0	0	94500	94500	189000	189000	94500	94500	0	756000
TOTAL SOURCES	50500	90500	115500	105500	100000	199000	198000	102000	153450	147450	1007000
USE OF FUNDS											
CONSTRUCTION	35000	70000	95000	85000	80000	70000	55000	20050			510050
SUPPORT COSTS	10000	15000	15000	15000	10000	10000	10000	8000	6000	3266	102266
PAYMENT ON LOAN	0	0	0		0	110000	125500	15000	0	0	250500
TOTAL USES	45000	85000	110000	100000	90000	190000	190500	43050	6000	3266	862816
FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR FUTURE AFFORDABLE PROJECTS	5500	5500	5500	5500	10000	9000	7500	58950	147450	144184	144184

ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION
ILLUSTRATION OF HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

DESCRIPTION	INCOME @ 60% OF MEDIAN	INCOME @ 70% OF MEDIAN	INCOME @ 80% OF MEDIAN
INCOME	\$ 30,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 40,000
PRICE OF HOME	\$ 94,500	\$ 94,500	\$ 94,500
DOWN PAYMENT %	5 %	5 %	5 %
DOWN PAYMENT AMOUNT	\$ 4,725	\$ 4,725	\$ 4,725
MORTGAGE AMOUNT	\$ 89,775	\$ 89,775	\$ 89,775
INTEREST RATE	7.5 %	7.5 %	7.5 %
MONTHLY EXPENSES			
P & I	627.72	627.72	627.72
TAXES	140.57	140.57	140.57
INSURANCE	30.00	30.00	30.00
PMI	29.93	29.93	29.93
MONTHLY HOUSING	828.22	828.22	828.22
GROSS MONTHLY INCOME	2500.00	2916.67	3333.33
HOUSING EXPENSES AS A % OF INCOME	33	28	25

ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION

LOCAL PREFERENCE GUIDELINES

LOCAL PREFERENCE IS GIVEN TO PEOPLE WHO MEET ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

1. EMPLOYED BY THE TOWN OF ACTON, ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, OR ACTON WATER DISTRICT.
2. CURRENT ACTON RESIDENT
3. CHILD OF A CURRENT ACTON RESIDENT
4. EMPLOYEE WORKING IN ACTON

IN ALL CASES APPLICANTS MUST BE A FIRST TIME HOMEBUYER

ADAMS VILLAGE
AFFORDABILITY ANALYSIS

PRICE	\$94,500	\$94,500	\$94,500
INTEREST RATE	7.50%	7.50%	7.50%
DOWN PAYMENT %	5.00%	10.00%	20.00%
DOWN PAYMENT \$	\$4,725	\$9,450	\$18,900
MORTGAGE AMOUNT	\$89,775	\$85,050	\$75,600
MONTHLY EXPENSES			
P&I	627.72	594.68	528.61
TAXES	140.57	140.57	140.57
PMI	29.93	26.93	0.00
INSURANCE	30.00	30.00	30.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	828.22	792.18	699.18
YEAR END TAX BENEFIT	205.94	196.64	172.65
NET MONTHLY EXPENSE (COMPARED TO RENT)	622.28	595.54	526.53
MINIMUM INCOME REQUIRED	\$30,117	\$28,807	\$25,425

NOTES

ACTON TAX RATE = \$17.85 PER THOUSAND
TAX BENEFIT REDUCTION BASED ON 28% TAX BRACKET
MINIMUM INCOME BASED ON 33% HOUSING EXPENSE RATIO
A 20% DOWN PAYMENT WILL ELIMINATE A MONTHLY PMI EXPENSE
ALL VALUES ARE ESTIMATED

ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 681
ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS, 01720
(508)263-4776

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for requesting information about our new affordable housing currently under construction in Acton, Massachusetts-ADAMS VILLAGE. Enclosed please find all relevant information about the homes and the specifics of the Local Initiative Program (LIP) regarding pricing, financing and deed restrictions.

All eight beautiful Adams Village homes will be sold to qualified first-time home buyers by lottery through the local Initiative Program for only \$94,500. This is an incredible opportunity to own a new home in Acton. The homes are designed and manufactured by Deck House, Inc. typically feature 1260 square feet, three bedrooms, one bath, a fully applianced kitchen, a living/dining room, and a deck.

Upon your review of the enclosed information, if you are qualified and would like to participate in the lottery process please complete the enclosed application and forward it to:

Adams Village
% Acton Community Housing Corporation
P.O. Box 681
Acton, Ma. 01720

Please be advised that you must include a refundable \$500.00 deposit to participate in the lottery. If you are selected and decide to purchase a home this money will become part of your down payment, in any other circumstance this money will be refunded.

ALSO PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS OCTOBER 1, 1994. THE LOTTERY IS TO BE HELD OCTOBER 15, 1994.

If you have any questions please feel free to call me at 508-263-4776.

Sincerely,

Naomi E. McManus
Clerk, ACHC

THE LOCAL INITIATIVE PROGRAM
(LIP)

What is the LIP?

The Local Initiative Program is a partnership that uses state, local and private resources to provide quality, affordable homes to income-eligible, first-time home buyers.

What makes prospective buyers eligible for LIP?

Prospective buyers must:

- . Have an annual household income (family size 1-4) not exceeding \$40,000.00
- . Be a first-time home buyer
- . Be creditworthy

What are the benefits of the LIP to prospective buyers?

- . Reduced home prices
 - . Adams Village homes through LIP are priced from \$94,500
- . Variety of financing programs

Are there any restrictions?

Yes. Some deed restrictions are used to maintain the affordability for future buyers while permitting the owner and to share in the appreciation of the home. Specifically, the discount rate (percentage difference in price between the affordable LIP homes and the market-rate homes) will be maintained in perpetuity.

FOR EXAMPLE, a LIP home selling for \$94,500 is discounted approximately 30% from the same market-rate home priced at \$135,00. If the original buyer decides to sell the home in 10 years and the value of the homes are doubled, and is worth \$270,00; under the LIP this price would be discounted the same 30%, and the price would be set at \$189,000 and sold to an income eligible first-time homebuyer.

WHAT IS THE MINIMUM INCOME NECESSARY TO PURCHASE A HOME?

The minimum income required is based solely on the prospective buyers ability to obtain a mortgage. Based on the current interest rates of 7.50%, a home purchased for \$94,500 with a 5% down payment (\$4,725) would have a total monthly expense of approximately \$828.22. This would require a minimum annual salary of approximately \$30,000, this could be reduced further if a higher down payment is used.

IS THERE A SELECTION PROCESS?

Yes, the homes are distributed through a lottery, however, a preference is given to qualified "Acton Town Employees, Residents, Children of Residents, and People who Work in Acton".

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?

It is necessary for you to complete an application and make a refundable deposit of \$500.00. If selected this deposit will become part of the down payment, otherwise the deposit will be returned in full.

To obtain an application please call Betty McManus of the Acton Community Housing Corporation at 508-263-4776.

ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING

CORPORATION

ADAMS VILLAGE
APPLICATION

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Town: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone (H) _____ (W) _____ SS # _____

Do you or your spouse work for the Town of Acton _____ If so where? _____

Have you ever owned a home? _____ If so, when? _____

Have you ever been a resident of _____ ? _____ If so, when? _____

Do you have any family members currently residing in _____ ? _____ Who? _____

WORKSHEET

Borrower's Monthly Base Income _____

Other Income _____

Co-Borrower's Base Income _____

Other Income _____

TOTAL INCOME _____ (A)

Mortgage (P&I) "See Attached Page" _____

Real Estate Taxes _____

Private Mortgage Insurance _____

Homeowners Insurance _____

TOTAL MONTHLY HOUSING EXPENSE _____ (B)

Debts with more than 10 remaining
payments (Monthly amount) _____

Revolving Credit - 5% of balance due + _____

Additional Monthly debt = _____ (b1)

TOTAL MONTHLY OBLIGATIONS _____ (B+b1) (C)

Monthly Housing Expense/Income Ratio _____ (B) / (A) *

Total Obligations/Income Ratio _____ (C) / (A) **

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Employer: _____ Occupation: _____

Date of Hire _____ Annual Wage/Salary _____

*should not exceed 33% **should not exceed 38%

NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES BEING BUILT AT

ADAMS VILLAGE

8 HOMES WILL BE SOLD BY LOTTERY
FOR THE REDUCED PRICE OF

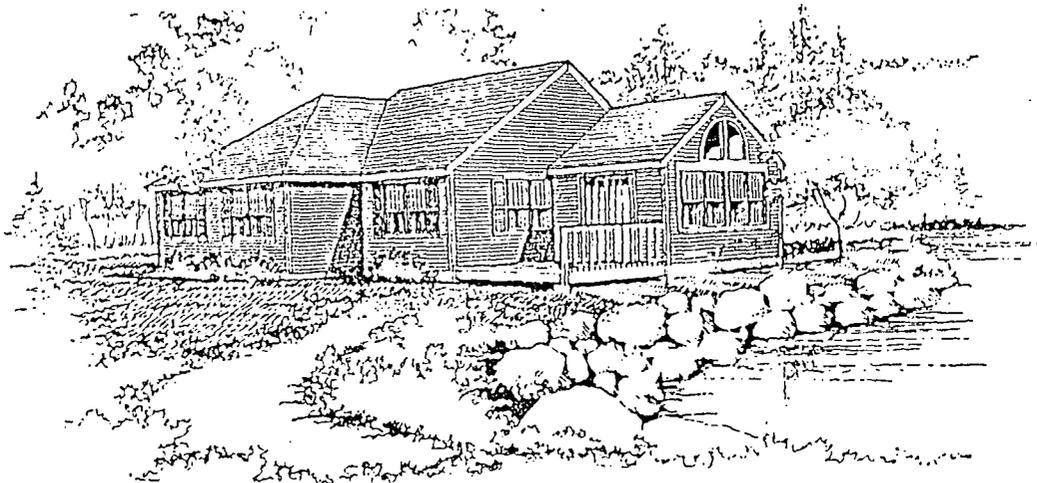
ONLY \$94,500

THESE HOMES TYPICALLY FEATURE:

- 3 BEDROOMS
- A FULL BATH
- 1260 SQ. FEET OF LIVING SPACE
- FULLY APPLIANCED KITCHENS
- EXPANDABLE DESIGN ALLOWS FOR THE PORTENTIAL OF AN ATTACHED GARAGE AND/OR BEDROOMS AND FAMILY ROOM

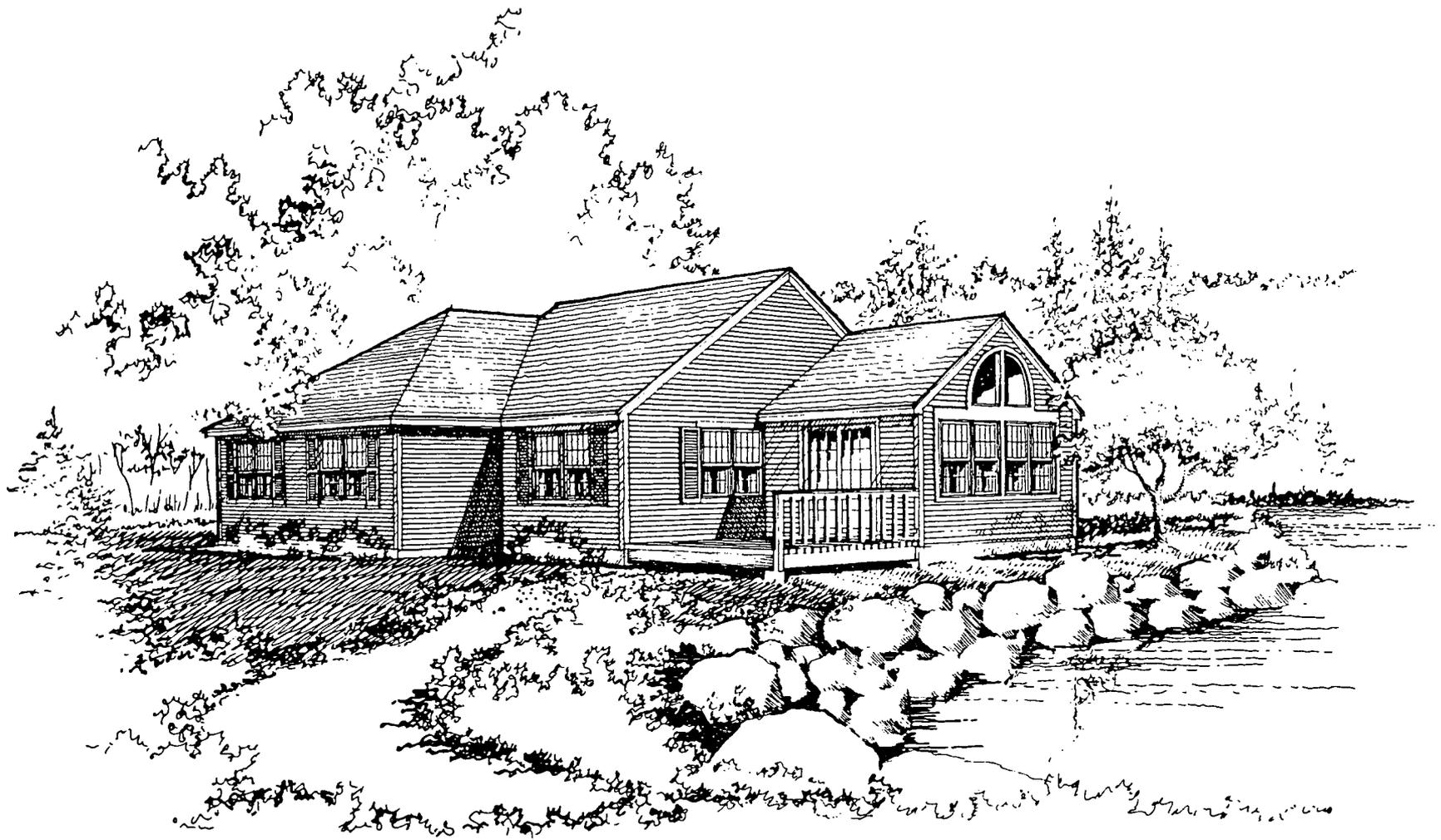
APPLICANTS MUST BE FIRST-TIME BUYER WITH A MAXIMUM HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF \$40,000. TO PARTICIPATE YOU MUST COMPLETE AND SUBMIT AN APPLICATION NO LATER THAN . THE LOTTERY FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE HOMES IS SCHEDULED FOR . AT THE ACTON TOWN HALL.

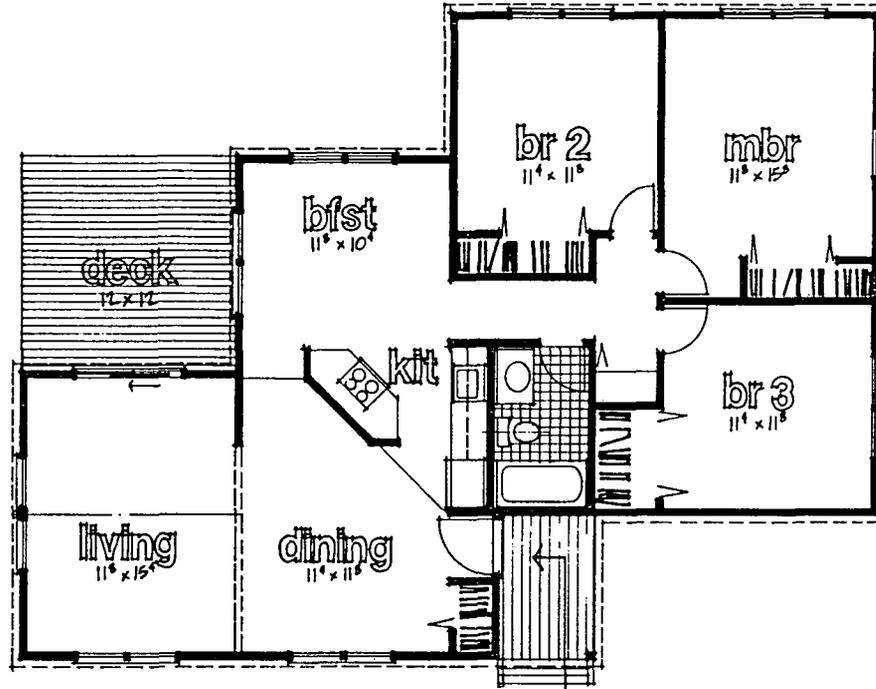
PLEASE CALL ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION AT 508 - 263 - 4776 TO OBTAIN INFORMATION AND AN APPLICATION.



**THIS IS THE BEST HOUSING OFFERING FOR
FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYERS IN THE AREA**

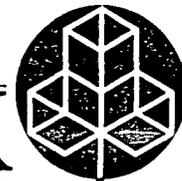
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY - CALL TODAY!





model 1121

DECK
HOUSE I



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF COMMUNITIES & DEVELOPMENT



William F. Weld, Governor
Argeo Paul Cellucci, Lt. Governor
Mary L. Padula, Cabinet Secretary

February 24, 1994

Ms. Betty McManus
Acton Housing Authority
P.O. Box 681
Acton, MA 01720

RE: Local Initiative Program Long Term Use Restrictions

Dear Ms. McManus:

I am writing to confirm recent conversations you have had with Bert Rodiger of the Private Housing staff regarding the form of long term use restrictions used in the Local Initiative Program. The long term affordability of the affordable units is protected through restrictions incorporated into EOCD's standard LIP deed rider. I believe a copy of the standard LIP deed rider was recently forwarded to you. As you will note on page 12 of that document, affordability is restricted for a term of 50 years, and the term is renewed each time the property changes ownership.

This deed rider is intended for use with condominium or fee simple forms of ownership. The standard LIP deed rider has been approved by the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae). Thus, mortgages originated with the LIP deed riders can be sold on the secondary mortgage market. This fact is of particular importance to originating lenders, since lenders typically want to sell the mortgages rather than hold them in portfolio.

While Local Initiative Program regulations do not prohibit the use of other forms of long term use restrictions, the legal costs incurred in developing different restrictions, as well as the costs associated with EOCD's review of such alternate forms of restriction, must be paid by the project sponsor. It is also important to note that alternative restrictions may not be acceptable to FNMA. For all of these reasons, the use of alternative long term deed restrictions is not recommended.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Bert Rodiger or me at 617-727-7824.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Catherine Racer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Catherine Racer, Director
Bureau of Private Housing

MOTION:

Mr. Mullin moves in the words of the article.

CONSENT MOTION CARRIES UNANIMOUSLY

**ARTICLE 33 USE OF FUNDS TO
REDUCE THE TAX RATE
(Majority Vote Required)**

To see if the Town will determine an amount of free cash which shall be used for the purpose of reducing the tax rate for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1994, or take any other action relative thereto.

MOTION:

Mrs. Tavernier moves to take no action.

MOTION CARRIES

MOTION:

Mr. Hunter moves to adjourn at 10:35 p.m. and to meet on Wednesday, April 6, 1994 at 7:30 p.m. at the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Auditorium.

MOTION CARRIES.

April 6, 1994

The Moderator called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

**ARTICLE 34 AFFORDABLE HOUSING
ADAMS STREET
(2/3 Vote Required)**

To see if the Town will authorize the Selectmen to convey a portion of a parcel of land in the Southerly part of the Town acquired by the town for sewage disposal purposes pursuant to Article 23 of the 1967 Annual Town Meeting, said parcel being shown as parcel 33, sheet J-3 of the Town Atlas, described as follows:

The portion being the most northwesterly 4.0 acres, more or less, bounded as follows:

- NORTHERLY:** by Parker Street and Adams Street about 690 feet, more or less;
- EASTERLY:** by remaining land of the Town of Acton;
- SOUTHEASTERLY:** by land of the Town of Maynard
- SOUTHWESTERLY:** by land of Helen E. Newsham to Parker Street.

for construction of up to eight (8) affordable dwelling units and the sale thereof to persons or households whose income qualifies under state or local guidelines for affordable housing, with preference to be given to persons employed by or within the Town, current residents of the Town, and to children of Acton residents.

No conveyance shall occur until:

- a) a qualified developer has been chosen based on a competitive selection process which will include detailed plans, well substantiated cost estimates, and guaranteed selling process for the "affordable units"; and
- b) the approval of the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Acton Water District and such other Town Boards or Departments, as appropriate, for areas within their respective jurisdictions has been obtained.

or take any other action relative thereto.

MOTION:

Mrs. Tavernier moves that the land described in the article be transferred to the Board of Selectmen for affordable housing purposes, and the Board of Se-

lectmen be authorized to convey such land to a developer for one dollar and on such other terms as they may deem advisable, including upon the terms and conditions set forth in this article.

MOTION LOST

Total Vote: 383 Yes: 171 No: 212

**ARTICLE 35* CEMETERY LAND
FUND TRANSFER
(Majority Vote Required)**

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate or transfer from the Cemetery Land Fund the sum of \$10,000, or any other sum, to be expended by the Town Manager for the design, development, landscaping, roadways, and drainage of new sections of Woodlawn Cemetery and Mount Hope Cemetery, or take any other action relative thereto.

MOTION:

Mr. Mullin moves that the Town appropriate \$10,000.00 to be expended by the Town Manager for the design, development, landscaping, roadways, and drainage of new sections of Woodlawn Cemetery and Mount Hope Cemetery, and to raise such amount \$10,000.00 be transferred from the Cemetery Land Fund.

CONSENT MOTION CARRIES UNANIMOUSLY

**ARTICLE 36* CHAPTER 90 HIGHWAY
REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM
(Majority Vote Required)**

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate or appropriate from available funds a sum of money for highway improvements under the authority of Chapter 90 of the General Laws and any other applicable law, or take any other action relative thereto.

MOTION:

Mrs. Tavernier moves the Selectmen are authorized to accept Highway funds from all sources and such funds are hereby appropriated for highway purposes.

CONSENT MOTION CARRIES UNANIMOUSLY

**ARTICLE 37* ACCEPTANCE OF
GIFTS OF LAND
(Majority Vote Required)**

To see if the Town will vote to accept as gift the following parcel of vacant land:

From LaSell Realty Corp., parcel of land consisting of 1.4 acres, more or less, located at 48 Conant Street Behind, Parcel 1-3, 127, for General Municipal Purposes, or take any other action relative thereto.

MOTION:

Mr. Lake moves in the words of the article.

CONSENT MOTION CARRIES UNANIMOUSLY

**ARTICLE 38* ACCEPTANCE OF GIFT OF LAND
AND RELATED EASEMENTS
HEARTHSTONE FARM SUBDIVISION
(Majority Vote Required)**

To see if the Town will vote to accept from Ronald B. Peabody, Trustee of Bowen Estate I Realty Trust, gift of vacant land for conservation purposes under MGL, Chapter 40, Section 8C, along with related access, parking lot, trail and sidewalk easements. The land, shown as Parcel A in the Hearthstone Farm Subdivision (off Strawberry Hill Road), contains 31.7 acres, more or less, and is a por-

COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION

In 1994, the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) continued our advocacy to create home ownership opportunities for moderate-income town employees and residents. Increasing home ownership opportunities for people who live or work in Acton, but who cannot afford expensive homes, goes beyond the need for our Town to live up to its social responsibilities. We all depend on services provided by Town employees and small businesses. The employees who provide these services, for reasons beyond their control, often do not receive enough income to purchase even the average-priced home in Acton. Our community will be better off by enabling people who work in Acton also to purchase homes here.

Much of the ACHC's efforts in 1994 was directed toward obtaining Town Meeting approval to develop Town-owned property on Adams Street with eight affordable homes. Ultimately, the Town Meeting vote fell short of the two-thirds majority required to designate the land for development. Nevertheless, we were encouraged to continue our efforts by the many people who supported the Adams Street proposal. Generating wider support for developing affordable homes requires a process of education. We feel that the debate generated by the Adams Street proposal will help shape future ideas for increasing the supply of affordable homes in Acton.

Our efforts have begun to bear fruit. In a joint venture with the Planning Board, the ACHC secured an agreement with Acorn Park Realty Trust to provide two affordable homes in conjunction with Acorn Park's planned unit development. The ACHC convinced the Planning Board that it would be more appropriate to provide these homes in existing Acton neighborhoods rather than in Acorn Park along with the development's higher priced new homes. The ACHC has located one home on Minuteman Road

which will be sold at a reduced price to a moderate-income Town employee or resident following a lottery selection process. We are working to locate and make available to moderate-income home buyers a second home through this cooperative effort with Acton's Planning Board and Acorn Park Realty Trust.

The Commonwealth's Executive Office of Communities and Development recently approved the ACHC's application for \$25,000 through EOCED's soft second-loan program. These funds will be used as mortgage assistance to allow moderate-income, first-time home buyers to purchase homes.

The ACHC continues to work with a developer to include affordable homes as part of a proposed development off Harris Street in North Acton.

The ACHC will also be proposing Home Rule legislation at the April Town Meeting which will designate the ACHC as a formal town board and give us broad powers to act, under the authority of the Selectmen, as the Town's agent for affordable housing development.

Peter Berry, Chair
Stephen Graham
Rev. William Heuss
Kevin McManus
Naomi McManus
Jana Mullin
Pam Shuttle
Roy Smith
Nancy Tavernier
Bob Wiltse



Boardman's Hill

Photo by Ann Ringwood.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT WHAT COST ?

We oppose the April 4 Town Meeting article to donate four acres of town-owned land on Adams and Parker Streets to the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) for the purpose of building low-cost, prefabricated subsidized housing for the following reasons:

INCREASED COST TO TAXPAYERS

ACHC has stated that building houses on this land would create revenue for Acton. But at what cost! The yearly taxes from the 8 houses priced at \$94,500 will meet only a fraction of the cost of town provided services. Since these units are subsidized housing, their future values will be capped; consequently, they will never generate enough taxes to pay the escalating costs of town services. Annual taxes from each house would be \$1,700 while the cost of educating one pupil in Acton is \$5,600 per year. Acton taxpayers will support an increased tax burden. The Adams Street land currently provides a valuable environmental function at no cost to the town.

ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ON NEIGHBORHOODS

The Adams Street land abuts the soon-to-be upgraded and expanded Maynard sewage plant and functions as a natural but narrow buffer between surrounding homes and the plant. The persistent sewage odor and industrial strength lighting are now blocked by the mature forest growth. Removal of any of this growth for any construction would increase detrimental effects to the neighbors and the new buyers. The varied terrain makes development of this parcel particularly sensitive to environmental changes. Locating new homes within clear sight and smell of the sewage plant is absurd. Many residents feel that it is inappropriate for the Town of Acton to locate subsidized housing on such an offensive site.

PROPERTIES ALREADY AVAILABLE IN ACTON

Between December 1992 and March 1, 1994, 65 condominiums priced from \$20,800 to \$100,000 were sold in Acton thus providing housing for low and moderate income families. One of every four housing units in Acton is a condominium with an average 1994 assessed valuation of \$78,272. Current State funding for affordable housing projects provides strong financial preference to rehabilitation with minimal dollars designated to new construction. ACHC has stated that they prefer new homes over resales to avoid repairs. They have also stated that they have a "mandate" from the Master Plan to create affordable housing. The Master Plan sets many goals including preservation of open space, clean air, protection of property values as well as affordable housing. We believe that the primary purpose of the Master Plan is to protect the interests of the citizens *currently* living in Acton.

"LOCAL PREFERENCE" MISSES TARGET BUYERS

ACHC plans to sell the houses to any financially qualified, first-time buyer who is: 1) a town employee, 2) a current Acton resident, 3) an adult child of an Acton resident or 4) any person working in Acton. The fact is that *anyone* who desires to live in Acton is eligible for a number of these houses. The Town of Lexington also had similar intentions with their recent subsidized housing project and were shocked to learn that they could not limit the housing to the targeted town buyers.

CONSTANTLY CHANGING PROPOSAL

ACHC is asking voters for a blank check. "The vote will not approve any particular development plan" (ACHC Letter to the Editor, March 10, 1994 Beacon). ACHC originally proposed 10 houses on 10 one-acre lots, but has changed to clustering 8 homes on one four-acre lot abutting the Maynard sewage plant. How can we as voters decide to donate this land without knowing what we will get in return? This blank check approach is scary. Once the check is signed, voters lose control of the development.

The Master Plan contains the "affordable housing overlay" that defines locations throughout the entire town available for affordable housing. It also grants blanket zoning variances to affordable housing projects for up to 5 units on one acre! ACHC has already shown their interest in a 10 acre parcel with their first proposal...a strong sign that many more houses may be built at this "shoe horn" density. *Is it conceivable that a total of 50 units could be clustered on that narrow strip of land?* Who knows with the frequency that ACHC changes their proposals what the final project will be. A *NO* vote on this article will preclude the writing of a blank check to ACHC.

After researching and evaluating this request of ACHC and walking the land, we can only arrive at the conclusion that this article is not in the best interest of Acton taxpayers, adjacent neighborhoods and potential buyers. *Vote NO* at the Town Meeting, April 4, 7:30 PM at the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School.

If you would like more information, please contact any of the following:

Ben V. Walker 897-5253
Laura and Julian Horn 897-6167

Mrs. William Jones 897-4611
Bruce and Barbara Hettick 897-5332

ACTON TOWN LAND GIVEAWAY AT WHAT COST!

Vote NO on Article 34 at the Acton Town Meeting on April 4, 7:30 PM at the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School.

Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC), a private corporation, wants voters to donate town-owned land on Adams and Parker Streets for the purpose of building low-cost, prefabricated subsidized housing. We are Acton residents who have researched and evaluated this article and we have walked the land. This article is not in the best interest of taxpayers, surrounding neighborhoods, and potential buyers.

Vote NO for the following reasons:

ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ON NEIGHBORHOODS

The Adams Street land abuts the soon-to-be upgraded and expanded Maynard sewage plant and functions as a natural but narrow buffer between surrounding homes and the plant. The persistent sewage odor and industrial strength lighting are now blocked by the mature forest growth. Removal of any of this growth for any construction would increase detrimental effects to the neighbors and the new buyers. Locating new homes within clear sight and smell of the sewage plant is absurd. Some homes will be sited within 100 feet of the plant. Many residents feel that it is inappropriate for the Town of Acton to locate subsidized housing on such an offensive site.

Acton is currently negotiating with Maynard to use the Maynard sewage plant to service problem septic areas in Acton. As septic systems age, more areas will need to hook up. Enlargement of the plant is inevitable. Maintaining the current narrow buffer of trees is critical. As the plant engineer says, "We ain't growing roses down here."

INCREASED COST TO TAXPAYERS

ACHC has stated that building houses on this land would create revenue for Acton. But at what cost! The yearly taxes from the 8 houses priced at \$94,500 will meet only a fraction of the cost of town provided services. Since these units are subsidized housing, their future values will be capped; consequently, they will never generate enough taxes to pay the escalating costs of town services. Annual taxes from each house would be \$1,700 while the cost of educating one pupil in Acton is \$5,600 per year. Acton taxpayers will support an increased tax burden. The Adams Street land currently provides a valuable environmental function at no cost to the town.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ACTON VOTERS

VOTE NO On Article 34

PROPERTIES ALREADY AVAILABLE IN ACTON

Between December 1992 and March 1, 1994, 65 condominiums priced from \$20,800 to \$100,000 were sold in Acton thus providing housing for low and moderate income families. One of every four housing units in Acton is a condominium with an average 1994 assessed valuation of \$78,272. Current State funding for affordable housing provides strong financial preference to rehabilitation with minimal dollars designated to new construction. ACHC has stated that they prefer new homes over resales to avoid repairs. They have also stated that they have a mandate from the Master Plan to create affordable housing. The Master Plan sets many goals including preservation of open space, clean air, protection of property values as well as affordable housing. We believe that the primary purpose of the Master Plan is to protect the interests of the citizens *currently* living in Acton.

"LOCAL PREFERENCE" MISSES TARGET BUYERS

ACHC plans to sell the houses to any financially qualified, first-time buyer who is: 1) a town employee, 2) a current Acton resident, 3) an adult child of an Acton resident or 4) any person working in Acton. The fact is that *anyone* who desires to live in Acton is eligible for a number of these houses.

NO GUARANTEES

ACHC is asking voters for a blank check. "The vote will not approve any particular development plan" (ACHC Letter to the Editor, March 10, 1994 Beacon). Article 34 states that the development plan must be approved by relevant town boards. However, there is no guarantee that the environmental concerns of surrounding neighborhoods will even be addressed. This blank check approach is scary. Once the check is signed, voters lose control of the development.

If you would like more information, please contact any of the following:

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Laura and Julian Horn — 897-6167

Mrs. William Jones — 897-4611

Bruce and Barbara Hettick — 897-5332