



Concord Housing Foundation, Inc.

Working to Preserve Concord's Housing Diversity

January 28, 2021

We would like to thank Chair Kristen Ferguson and the Planning Board for allowing the Concord Housing Foundation and the other Concord housing agencies an opportunity to discuss our work and hopes for affordable housing in Concord. We are very supportive of a comment made by one member of the public about the loss of smaller ("starter") homes that might be purchased, without subsidy, by those with incomes above the "affordability" level. When reviewing future developments, we hope the Zoning Board can use its powers to increase the number of smaller units constructed, since it appears that builders prefer to build the largest possible units in order to maximize profits.

Some of our Board members stayed on Zoom to hear the discussion of Zoning By-Law amendments which could be introduced at Town Meeting.

We would like to reiterate our support for the By-Law change, which would permit duplex housing "as of right" on lots within Residential Zone C. We hope that this might pass now so that affordable duplex housing could be constructed on lots reserved for possible purchase by the Town at the subdivision on 1440 Main Street---if the Town is able to purchase these from the developer.

We also recognize the complexity of the proposed changes for the rules affecting development in the Thoreau Depot district. As others have noted, there seems sufficient land there that is not on a current street, so that some solely residential multi-unit dwellings could be constructed. As a general principle, we believe that developers of all new "market rate" units should be required to provide some contribution towards affordable housing. In a new project at Thoreau Depot, if the number of units constructed is less than the number requiring inclusion of an affordable unit in the development, we believe the developer should be required to make a comparable "per unit" contribution to the Town's new Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Finally, we hope that the revised rules will consider ongoing changes in automobile use, with the likely reduction in car ownership by those who choose to live adjacent to the MBTA stop. In reviewing parking requirements, we hope the Planning Board can allow for the likelihood that spaces for residents within the zone who commute by car can be used during the day by retail patrons or office workers. By recognizing this potential for multiple use of a parking space, and by providing spaces for car-sharing services like ZipCar, it should be possible to use a larger percentage of the available land for housing or public open space.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our concerns with the Planning Board.

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President
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