



Town of Sharon, New Hampshire

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Draft Amendments to Zoning and Building Ordinance

Dear Neighbors:

Eighteen years ago, the New Hampshire Supreme Court determined that the state's planning and zoning statutes called for every municipality to provide a reasonable and realistic opportunity for the development of housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households, and particularly for the development of multi-family structures. Although a number of bills codifying the Court's ruling were subsequently introduced by the New Hampshire Legislature, none were passed until June 30, 2008, when Senate Bill 342, the Workforce Housing Law, was enacted.

This law amends the state's planning and zoning statutes to **require** all municipalities to allow workforce housing in the majority of land area where residential uses are permitted, and to allow multi-family housing (although not necessarily in a majority of such areas). This law provides an appeals mechanism, whereby developers proposing to create workforce housing that meets the statutory definitions may petition the superior court for prompt review if the local land use board denies the application or imposes conditions on it that would render the project financially unfeasible. The court will be able to order a "builder's remedy," allowing the developer to proceed without further local review. The Workforce Housing Law takes effect on January 1, 2010.

For the past eighteen months, the Planning Board has endeavored to compose a Workforce Housing Ordinance to provide opportunities for, and regulation of, affordable housing for the teachers, police officers, mechanics and other workers that we all depend on. The accompanying draft, subject to revision at the Board's January 5, 2010 meeting, is based upon review of neighboring towns' proposals, and the advice of the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority, the New Hampshire Local Government Center and Town Counsel.

The proposed amendment of Article VII of the Zoning and Building Ordinance (unrelated to Workforce Housing) is a clarification of the intent of Section B.1, specifying that no more than one residence shall be permitted on each lot.

We encourage you to attend the public hearing regarding these amendments at the Meeting House on Tuesday, January 12, 2010 at 7:00 P.M., and to vote affirmatively for their adoption on March 9, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Planning Board

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