

Housing Partnership Board Positions on Housing Related 2022 Fall Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Article 4 - Accessory Dwelling Units

The Housing Partnership Board is a co-sponsor of Article 4 and unanimously *supports approval* of the proposed By-Law to allow the creation of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Four members of the Housing Partnership Board (Felicity Tuttle, Diab Jerius, Cathy Boyle, and Michael Bettencourt) participated in the work of the Accessory Dwelling Unit Working Group.

Passage of this By-Law will provide economic security and social stability for two important Winchester population groups, seniors and persons with disabilities, thereby enabling these persons to continue to live in town.

Many Massachusetts communities have successfully adopted ADU provisions with no detrimental effects, including Lexington, Newton, Arlington, Brookline, Belmont, Acton, and Reading.

Article 5 - Citizen's Petition re. Provisions of the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act

While the Housing Partnership Board historically has supported adoption by the Town of Winchester of the provisions of the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (CPA), for the following reasons the Board voted 10-0 with one abstention and two members absent to recommend that Town Meeting consider *indefinitely postponing* this Article 6 citizen's petition.

- The Select Board has actively been working over the past several months on a plan and time schedule for Winchester's adoption of the Community Preservation Act. Rather than working independently of the Select Board, the Housing Partnership Board recommends that this group of citizens work collaboratively with the Select Board as well as with other Town Boards and organizations.
- An examination of the experience of the 189 Massachusetts communities that have adopted the CPA shows that a well organized collaborative and funded campaign extending over several months is desirable in achieving a supportive community vote. Such a campaign has not yet been organized.
- Tax override votes in support of rebuilding the Lynch Elementary School will occur next January. Many citizens will view a March 2023 vote on the CPA, only two months later, as an additional override.
- The success rate of a CPA vote held in conjunction with a Presidential election, as currently planned by the Select Board, is 86 percent, far higher than the success rate of a CPA vote held as part of a local election. Since Winchester previously has rejected adoption of the CPA, the Housing Partnership Board agrees with the Select Board plan of waiting until there will be a higher probability of success.

In summary, the Housing Partnership Board encourages a highly collaborative and well organized campaign for Winchester to adopt the Community Preservation Act that actively involves the full range of Town Boards, organizations, and interests; but before that occurs, it is premature for Town Meeting to schedule a community wide vote.

Articles 14 & 15 Development of the Washington and Swanton Land

The Housing Partnership Board unanimously *supports approval* of Articles 14 and 15, thereby enabling the proposed mixed-use, mixed-income development to proceed on the town acquired land located at the intersection of Washington and Swanton Streets. The Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) is satisfactory, and the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to support the development of income-restricted affordable housing is consistent with what many other Massachusetts communities have done.

The 60 rental residential units of this development will serve a mix of low, moderate, middle, and market rate households, providing a mix of one, two, and three bedroom units. It is consistent with all of Winchester's housing plans, including the Master Plan and the Housing Production Plan.

This long vacant site a blight on the neighborhood and an unattractive gateway entrance into the Winchester Center area. The proposed architectural design is consistent with that of the surrounding area; the commercial space located along Washington Street will provide economic vitality; adequate on-site parking will be provided; and the interior courtyard will represent valuable open space.

Votes taken in public meetings held on September 28, October 20, and November 2, 2023.

Members - John Suhrbier, Allan Rodgers, Felicity Tuttle, Naomi DeLairre, Marty Jones, Jifeng Liu, Diab Jerius (Planning Board), Micheal Bettencourt (Select Board), Lisa Matrundola (Disabilities Access Commission), Michelle Bergstrom (School Committee), David Miller (Conservation Commission), Phillip Bushey (Council on Aging), Cathy Boyle (Housing Authority)

Chair - John Suhrbier, jnsuhr@verizon.net