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Town Planner's Review
Wednesday, November 9, 2022

IX. **Housing Amendments.** Consideration of numerous amendments to the Zoning Ordinance proposed by the Durham Housing Task Force to enhance housing opportunities in Durham.

➤ I recommend that the board discuss the proposal and decide how to proceed.

The proposed amendments were developed by the Durham Housing Task Force. These are extensive amendments to the Zoning Ordinance intended to expand housing opportunities in Durham. They are shown here:

https://www.ci.durham.nh.us/boc_planning/housing-amendments

The task force started as a subcommittee of the Durham Economic Development Committee but is now a separate Town committee since the EDC was disbanded. Here is a link to the task force website: <https://www.ci.durham.nh.us/bc-housingtaskforce>

This is the mission of the task force, according to its charter from the Town Council: "The mission of the Durham Housing Committee is to identify, analyze, and advocate for a balanced and diverse supply of housing that meets the economic, social, and physical needs of the Durham community and its residents in order to maintain a vibrant community."

The members of the task force are Heather Grant, chair, Richard England, Tom Elliott, Charlotte Hitchcock, al Howland, Mimi Kell, and Sally Tobias. Nick Taylor, Director of the Workforce Housing Coalition, is the advisor to the committee. I work as staff to the task force. The task force developed the proposed amendments over the past two years. Heather Grant will present the proposal to the Planning Board.

Zoning amendments can be initiated only by the Planning Board, Town Council, or citizens by petition. Town committees and boards often develop proposed amendments (as did the Energy Committee for the earlier solar ordinance and the Agricultural Commission to promote agriculture). The task force could have presented the proposed to the Planning Board or the Town Council but I find that the board is usually a better place to start as the Planning Board can more readily devote the necessary time to evaluating the proposal.

The Planning Board can do whatever it deems appropriate with the draft: 1) reject it; 2) make changes and then hold a public hearing; or 3) hold a public hearing on the current draft. If the board ultimately initiates amendments (following a hearing) they will be forwarded to the Town Council for consideration. These amendments are extensive and significant. Thus, I recommend that the public hearing continue for more than one meeting.