

Housing—Wayland, MA

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Representing the Wayland Housing Partnership

For the Dudley Area Advisory Committee

October 6, 2011 (revised)

KEY POINTS

- 1) Wayland Housing Goals: The Town of Wayland, through various official documents, including the Master Plan Advisory Committee Report and the Housing Production Report, has repeatedly stated that a key goal is to provide a diverse array of housing opportunities.
- 2) Wayland Housing Needs: Many family members of current Town residents and Town employees cannot afford market-priced homes in Wayland. Some existing residents are struggling to maintain their homes and may be in need of more affordable options. Family members of Town residents need additional housing options in order to be able to live here.
- 3) Affordable housing development provides additional benefits to the Town: increased tax revenues; state or federal grants earmarked for affordable housing may help defray costs of other desired improvements, such as a septic treatment facility or recreation amenities. Affordable housing also promotes diversity.
- 4) The private unsubsidized housing market does not provide affordable housing opportunities.
- 5) According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, affordable housing is typically targeted to households who earn 80% or less of the area median income, paying no more than 30% of their income for housing.
- 6) Statewide Housing Goal: Since 1969 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has mandated an affordable housing goal for each city and town in the state totaling 10% of the city or town's year-round housing stock.
- 7) Wayland is not in compliance with this goal. According to the state's Department of Housing and Community Development, which publishes a Subsidized Housing Inventory, which details the percent of affordable housing in each city and town, Wayland currently has been credited as having 216 subsidized housing units, for a total of 4.4% of our overall housing stock.
- 8) 52 units that are counted as part of the 216 total have not yet been built.
- 9) According to Town Planner Sarkis Sarkisian, another 47 units that have received permits have not yet been credited by the state; the Town plans to file the necessary paperwork

shortly so that the additional units can be counted. This would bring the total number of actual or planned subsidized units in Wayland to 263 and would increase our percentage to 5.3%, still way below the state's 10% mandate.

- 10) Several other neighboring towns have better records in terms of meeting the state's 10% affordable housing goal. Concord, Lincoln and Lexington all exceed 10%; Westwood is very close at 9.2%.
- 11) If a city or town is not in compliance with the state's affordable housing mandate, it is vulnerable to "unfriendly Chapter 40B" development. Such a development may not be consistent with Town priorities and plans.
- 12) Under Chapter 40B, a developer can propose a development that may not conform to existing zoning, as long as at least 25% of the units are set aside as affordable and subsidized through one of several local, state, or federal programs or initiatives. If a local zoning board of appeals denies a builder a comprehensive permit, and if the city or town is not in compliance with the state mandate, the state-created Housing Appeals Committee may override the local zoning and permit the development at higher densities, or in other ways that do not conform to the local zoning act. All developments built through the 40B process must be in compliance with environmental, health and safety regulations and requirements.
- 13) As an alternative to meeting the 10% affordable housing goal, a city or town may be exempt from a state override of its zoning (e.g., immune from "unfriendly" Chapter 40B development) if progress is being made toward the affordable housing goal. [This is defined as $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% of the Town's housing stock, or 25 units per year. This is based on 2010 census figure of 4,957 year-round housing units in Wayland.]
- 14) All possible strategies must be pursued for increasing affordable housing in Wayland.
 - a) Locate and develop vacant land. If not owned by the Town, the land must be purchased. If land is owned by the Town, permission must be granted to transfer or sell to private developer, either for-profit or nonprofit (e.g.; Habitat for Humanity). Development can then proceed, likely using 40B process.
 - b) Inclusionary affordable housing as part of market rate developments. Inclusionary zoning by-law was adopted by the Town, May 3, 2005. For every 6 units built in a single development, an additional 1 must be set aside as affordable. However, this statute was enacted after major developments in Town had already been completed. Only 5 affordable units have been created under the inclusionary zoning by-law.
 - c) Purchase existing low cost homes and sell to low-income households. There are very few houses for sale under \$200K; or even \$300K; many homes in lower price ranges need significant repairs, thereby boosting total cost considerably. The Town would have to provide at least \$100K, from Community Preservation Act

- funds, or elsewhere, to make the units affordable to households earning < 80% area median income.
- d) Purchase existing low cost homes, with management by the Town of Wayland or a nonprofit organization; rent to very low income households. However, under such an arrangement the rental units would need to be self-supporting, since no state or federal subsidies to cover operating expenses would be available.
 - e) Create a Housing Trust Fund, which could be capitalized with money from the Town's Community Preservation Act account. Such a fund could assist with providing the Town the ability to purchase land or existing housing that could serve as affordable housing.
- 15) A number of research studies have found that if housing is well designed, fits in with the surrounding neighborhood, and managed well, there are no negative impacts of affordable housing on the property values of neighboring single family homes.