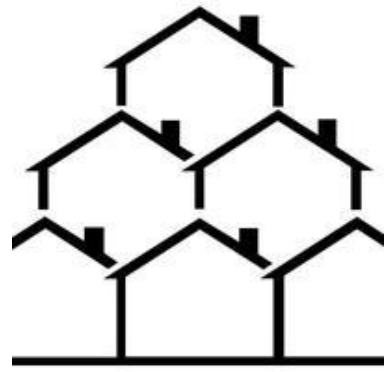


Developing Affordable Housing In Lincoln



Chapter 40B, the Massachusetts' affordable housing production law, addresses the systemic roots of economic and social inequity by requiring that 10% of a municipality's housing qualifies as affordable. In any municipality that does not meet the 10% requirement, a developer can override local building permit approval processes, local zoning and other restrictions without Town Meeting approval. For example, the Town and neighbors would have no recourse or control over the density or height of the project. Chapter 40B, cannot create a built environment that will sustain Lincoln's core vision. For Lincoln to sustain its small town character, open spaces and conservation policies, Lincoln must control development.

Unlike other Massachusetts towns, Lincoln has taken a unique approach to planning by encouraging the development of affordable housing, thus achieving the state's 10% affordable housing goal without ever having to issue a Chapter 40B comprehensive permit. Lincoln has provided affordable housing entirely through its own local initiatives: by adopting zoning incentives, granting special permits, investing local revenues and Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds.

Since 1972, Lincoln has created 211 (of 238) units of affordable housing through zoning initiatives passed at Town Meeting. Battle Road Farm was created through zoning after the Town of Lincoln purchased the land for \$3,000,000 to create 48 affordable condos.

Since the infusion of Community Preservation Funds and the inception of the Affordable Housing Trust, Lincoln has created 7 units of affordable housing at a cost of \$1,315,000 (\$187,857/unit). In addition, Lincoln paid \$750,000 to preserve the affordability of 3 group homes (14 units of affordable housing at \$53,571/unit).

To preserve Lincoln Woods' affordability and seven condominiums at Battle Road Farm, Lincoln has spent additional \$580,000 of Community Preservation Funds (preserving 132 units of affordable housing).

Although the vast majority of Lincoln's zoning is dedicated to single family residences, Lincoln has been most successful in creating affordable housing and multi-family housing (401 condominiums) through planning and zoning changes approved at Town Meeting. For this reason, Lincoln has avoided construction of 40B developments that overrule local zoning without Town Meeting approval. Lincoln's ability to strategically provide multi-family housing preserves Lincoln's small town character, open spaces and conservation policies, while meeting Chapter 40B's 10% requirement.

For Lincoln to maintain its status over 10%, the town must add 10 units of affordable housing each decade to keep pace with new housing development. Since 2010, Lincoln has only added 2 units of affordable housing. To address this deficit, the Housing Coalition has met regularly to discuss various locations to create affordable housing including: partnering with group home providers, Drumlin Farm properties on Route 117, properties within the South Lincoln Station Area and Farrington Memorial. The Housing Coalition also considered the property on Mary's Way. The seller priced the property for multi-unit development, which would require a

zoning change. The expenditure of town money on property that is beyond its assessed value and dependent on a zoning change is too risky for the Affordable Housing Trust.

Since September of 2016, various 40B Developers have approached the Town to pursue a “friendly 40B” on the Mary’s Way property. A process where the Town would issue a 40B Comprehensive Permit without input from Town Meeting. To make the project profitable, the density of these projects ranged from 125 units to 250 units on the 6 acre parcel. Lincoln was able to turn these developers away because the Town’s SHI remains over 10% and the Housing Coalition believes that Town Meeting is the appropriate venue to discuss zoning amendments.

Lincoln’s Subsidized Housing Inventory will fall below 10% in 2020; thus making Lincoln vulnerable to 40B development. Please see [SHI: Step by Step](#), located on the Housing Commission web page.

In October, the HOW Group met with CIVICO Development to discuss their plans for the Mary’s Way property: to build a 60 unit apartment development, 3 ½ stories high and 12 townhouses. CIVICO received feedback on density, height, arrangements of buildings and natural screening for the neighbors on Mary’s Way and The Commons. The HOW Group informed CIVICO that since a zoning change would be required, the project would have to go before Town Meeting in March and the developer would have to provide affordable housing or they would certainly fail at Town Meeting.

In November, CIVICO met with the Affordable Housing Trust to discuss their revised plans: reduction in density to 60 apartments; elimination of townhouses; reduction in height; design changes to the roof, siting of buildings and additional screening. The project would offer 15 affordable units, since 25% of the units would be affordable, all 60 units would count toward Lincoln’s Subsidized Housing Inventory.

In December, the Affordable Housing Trust and the Housing Commission met to discuss the value of a permanent deed restriction and CIVICO’s request for a \$1,000,000 interest free loan. The addition of 60 units to the SHI would mean that Lincoln would be protected from unwelcome 40B developments for three or four decades and the agreement would permanently secure 60 units of affordable housing with a deed restriction at a cost of \$16,666 per unit.

The Housing Coalition agreed to the loan and is working with CIVICO Development to secure a 2/3 vote at Town Meeting to amend the zoning to make the project possible. We have planned several community meetings for the residents to meet CIVICO, learn about the project, ask questions and make suggestions. Please see: [Important Dates](#) on the Housing Commission web page under the heading of Oriole Landing. For more information about the project visit the Planning Board web page and the Housing Commission web page. Another source of information and dialogue with other residents and CIVICO is at <https://courbanize.com/projects/oriolelanding/information>.

If you would rather talk to someone, please call Pamela Gallup, at 781-259-0393 or email at pamgallup@gmail.com; or the Planning Department at 781-259-2610.

**Lincoln Housing Coalition
Town of Lincoln
Equal Housing Opportunity**