

DRAFT
December 8, 2023 v1

Peaked Hill Affordable and Community Housing RFP
Issues for Review by Select Board

Issue 1: Total Number of Rental Units

The warrant article providing approval in concept for the affordable and community housing project describes it as 10 rental units of not more than 20 bedrooms. It also states that the overall project including the four home site lots should occupy six to eight acres of the approximately 16 acres owned by the Town. Under Section 6.10 of the zoning bylaws, the density of affordable rental housing is limited to two units per three acres, thus only nine units can be sited under existing law.

The Committee believes that the Select Board has the options summarized below to reconcile the limitation in the zoning bylaws with the number of rental units described in the warrant article:

Option 1:

Limit scope of rental portion of the project to nine units.

Option 2:

Authorize ten units and seek to cure the conflict with the existing bylaw, which in concept could be achieved through a variety of mechanisms. These include: a) amending the bylaw at Town meeting as part of the approval of the project; b) seeking relief from the Section 6.10 through a variance; and c) petitioning to designate the project under the state's "40B" process that allows overruling local bylaws affecting affordable housing developments.

Recommendation:

The Committee recommends Option 1. If the Select Board wishes to pursue 10 units through available legal mechanisms, the Committee is prepared to explore the options and report back.

Issue 2: Developer Participation in Affordable Homesite Construction

The warrant article stipulated that two of the four affordable homesite lots would be made available as “turnkey” completed homes constructed by the developer of the rental units.

The Committee believes that the Select Board has the options summarized below to provide maximum flexibility to homesite recipients while maintaining the intent of the warrant article:

Option 1:

Identify two home site lots for the “turnkey” homes and include construction of two houses as part of the RFP for the rental units. The Town would need to provide guidance to the developer on the general parameters such as number of bedrooms and square footage. When the town conducts its process for awarding the homesite lots, two would be offered as turnkey and two would be offered as buildable lots on which the recipients would have responsibility for design and construction.

Option 2:

The Select Board would follow its prior procedures for awarding the homesite lots as soon as practicable after selection of the rental unit developer. The Developer would be given the opportunity to submit a proposal to construct homes on the homesite lots, which would be made available to qualified participants in the homesite lottery. In the course of the lottery process, applicants who are awarded a lot would be given the option of accepting the developer’s proposal to construct a house on their lot. Thus the number of turnkey houses could be as few as zero or as many as four.

Recommendation:

The Committee recommends Option 2.

Issue 3: Infrastructure Considerations

There are significant infrastructure costs associated with the overall project that at this point are not well defined. In particular, the electric service has not been evaluated by a qualified professional to determine whether the existing line on Pasture Road can reliably service an additional fourteen housing units. As has been noted previously, the cost of upgrading or replacing the underground service from Tabor House could be substantial.

Key infrastructure elements include:

- Provision of electric service to the rental units and home site lots;
- Construction/extension of the access road to rental units and homesite lots using the existing access road to the highway department facility;
- Management of the large dirt piles on the site;
- Provision of wells and septic systems for the rental units and homesites
- Landscaping buffer areas along Pasture Road and between the rental unit site and the homesite lots.

The Committee believes the Select Board has the options summarized below to clarify responsibility for various aspects of the infrastructure:

Option 1:

Assign sole responsibility for the above infrastructure to the Developer.

Option 2:

The Town would retain overall responsibility for project site infrastructure.

Recommendation:

The Committee recommends Option 1.