



**TOWN OF
BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
PLANNING BOARD**

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Dear Brookline Residents:

The Planning Board would like to take this opportunity to offer a brief explanation of a Workforce Housing warrant article that you will be asked to vote on in March.

In 2008, the NH Legislature determined the state “is experiencing a shortage of housing that is affordable to the average working household” and thus created a new law entitled Workforce Housing Opportunities (NH RSA 674:58 – 61, inclusive). The law requires Towns to provide “reasonable and realistic opportunities” to builders for the development of workforce housing, which in Brookline means housing in the \$270,000 sales range for single family homes, along with options for multi-family rental housing. “Working households” include teachers, police officers, trades people and the like. Currently, most new homes have sales prices well beyond the means of the average working households. The reasonable and realistic opportunity clause in the law allows the Town opportunity to create an amendment defining conditions for workforce housing developments in the community. The Planning Board would like to thank the Workforce Housing Steering Committee, comprised of two Planning Board members, Planning Board Staff, several Town residents, our Consultant and a representative from the Greatest Nashua Workforce Housing, as well as all the interested residents and non-residents who were able to attend the various information sessions and contributed their ideas that helped create the proposed amendment that will be presented for the voters’ consideration as a warrant article this coming election. The proposed amendment, in its entirety, can be found in the 2008 Town Report.

Some of the ways the proposed amendment addresses Workforce Housing are as follows:

- The minimum parcel size for a workforce housing development would be 10 acres.
- There would be a required 50 foot vegetated buffer around all workforce housing developments.
- The maximum size of a home in this development would be 1500 square feet and be limited to a maximum of 2 bedrooms.
- For a period of 30 years, no additional square footage (with the exception of a deck) could be added to these homes.
- Multi-family units (3 to 5 units) would be restricted to the RT 13 corridor.

- Relaxation of the Town's Growth Ordinance.

In the absence of a zoning amendment, a builder could present a plan that far exceeds the restrictions of this amendment. The Planning Board would have no grounds to reject the plan other than the reasonability clause in the law. The law as written offers the builder an appeal process that states the Superior Court could grant a developer an expedited favorable review and allow the construction of workforce housing without planning board approval. With town acceptance of this proposed zoning amendment, the town will show due diligence in acknowledging the new RSA and in our efforts to address the new requirements while causing minimal impact from the RSA. It is the opinion of the Planning Board that without an amendment the Town is left vulnerable to the possibility of extreme workforce housing developments, such as large rental complexes, anywhere in town.

The Workforce Housing Opportunities (NH RSA 674:58 – 61, inclusive) is scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2009. It appears that a bill has been submitted to extend this date one year out. It is the intent that this ordinance will only become effective when and if the workforce housing enabling statutes, (RSA 674:58-61), become effective.

Thanks for taking the time to read this letter. If you have any further questions regarding this warrant article feel free to contact Brookline Town Planner, Valérie Maurer.

See you at Town Meeting!

The Planning Board

Reference: RSA - Revised Statutes Annotated

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/LXIV/674/674-58.htm>

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<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/LXIV/674/674-61.htm>

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