

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Board  
FROM: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner  
DATE: March 25, 2021  
SUBJECT: Affordable Housing lot size analysis in the RC District

### Introduction

As part of the Planning Board's discussion of the Town Center Affordable Housing Amendments, board members asked about the potential for locating affordable housing in residential areas. A high level analysis of potential lots in the RC District follows. Most of the lots identified are private property and this evaluation in no way curtails the ability of private property owners to choose not to develop their property.

### RC District

#### **Purpose**

The Residence C District includes lands that are within the built-up areas of Cape Elizabeth, are sewered or can be easily served by public sewer, are identified in the Comprehensive Plan as part of the Town's growth areas, are not presently in agricultural or woodland uses, and are not considered to be valuable, large-scale open space with valued scenery or wildlife habitat. The purpose of the district is to provide for areas of compact development that can foster cohesive neighborhoods that are close to community services.

The RC District requires a minimum lot size of 5 acres for multi-family housing. The maximum density in the RC District is 1 lot/unit per 20,000 sq. ft. or 15,000 sq. ft in an open space zoning subdivision.

### Affordable Housing barriers

The Metro Coalition Multifamily Housing and Zoning Regulation study, which was presented to the Planning Board at the February 16th workshop, identified a density lower than 1 unit/5,000 sq. ft. as a barrier, as well as minimum lot sizes exceeding 1/2 acre.

### Affordable Housing in a residential district

The RC District has potential for affordable housing because public sewer and water utilities are available. Using assessing data, gis data layers and knowledge of properties from other planning work, I performed a high-level evaluation. Lots were grouped by size into: 1 acre to less than 3 acres, 3 acres to less than 5 acres and 5 acres or more.

To the extent practicable, the evaluation included the following criteria:

- All lots which are known to be preserved as open space (by deed) were eliminated.
- Lots that were known to be significantly limited by wetlands were eliminated.
- Lots that have already been/proposed to be developed with multifamily housing were eliminated.

The remaining lots still have limitations, such as wetlands, lack of road frontage, farmland support, school, or potential incompatible uses (for example, a municipal pump station). Generally, if a lot might have adequate non-wetland area for a 5,000 sq. ft. building footprint with parking, it was not eliminated due to wetlands. (To help visualize, the Cottage Farms Condominium located at 51 Woodland Rd is a good example, with a 5,300 sq. ft building footprint and 9,300 sq. ft. parking area.) Most of the lots are private property and this evaluation in no way curtails the ability of private property owners to choose not to develop their property.

For lots of 1 acre to less than 3 acres in size, only vacant lots were considered, although lots which are developed with homes might be redeveloped as multifamily housing. For lots of 3 acres or more in size, vacant and developed lots were included. Currently, multifamily housing would only be allowed on lots of 5 acres or more in size.

The evaluation identified 5 lots in the 1 acre to <3 acre size, 16 lots in the 3 acre to <5 acre size, and 5 lots in the 5+ acre size, the only lots currently allowed to apply for multifamily housing approval. Three of these lots are farmland related.

[illegible]

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