

Article 61 Housing Land Transfer Fact Sheet

Harwich Town Meeting, May 6, 2019

Goals of Article 61 - Land Transfer Article:

- Provide more housing options while maintaining the community character.
- Provide more year round housing at a reasonable rate.
- Save open space and continue to protect the water supply.
- Support our local economy by providing options for workforce housing.

Article 61 - Land Transfer Key Points:

- **Purpose:** *This article is presented by the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT). The purpose of the AHT is to provide a public benefit and suitable living environment by increasing access to and availability of safe and decent affordable housing to Harwich residents, while maintaining the quality of life for all. Additionally, the AHT provides for the creation and preservation of affordable housing in municipalities for the benefit of low and moderate-income households.*
- **Identified Properties:** *The AHT started meeting in November of 2018 and identified the five town-owned properties that can be used to advance the Town's housing production goals as laid out in the housing production plan, resulting in Article 61.*
- **Approach:** *The town is using the Scattered Site Approach which is an effective strategy that works well in the community of Harwich to ensure that affordable housing is not concentrated in one area. The 2003 Housing Production Plan is the Town's plan to address housing needs. It identified use of Town-owned land as a key strategy for housing production to address the shortage of year-round housing options available to young singles, couples, families and seniors. Depot Road was recommended as an ideal site for housing in the Housing Production Plan.*
- **Benefits:** *There are many benefits to developing housing on Town land. (1) It will be more responsive to the needs and interests of the community, (2) it attracts high quality design by making it economically feasible for the developer.*
- **Review and Recommendations:** *The AHT presented to various Boards and Committees for review and recommendation for Town Meeting. Boards and Committees include: Real Estate and Open Space Committee, Community Preservation Committee, Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee.*
- **The next step:** *If Article 61 passes, a Pre-development phase will begin which involves gathering technical information such as site evaluation and engineering tasks. In addition, the AHT will facilitate a community input process to incorporate feedback from residents.*
- **Property Value:** *Numerous studies have been conducted to study the impacts of affordable housing on property values in a wide variety of circumstances. The vast majority of studies have found that affordable housing does not depress neighboring property values. Sample source: "Don't Put it Here!": Does Affordable Housing Cause Nearby Property Values to Decline?. Insights from Housing Policy Research, The Center for Housing Policy.*
- **Traffic:** *Housing options helps reduce the number of cars on the road by allowing working people to live near their jobs. Conducting peer-reviewed traffic studies are a standard practice when designing housing.*

- **The following properties are included in Article 61:** *Any development on these properties will meet all State Wetlands Protection Regulations.*
 - **Oak Street:** *These properties are outside of Zone 2 (Zone of Contribution to a well) and therefore not restricted to 10,000 s.f. per bedroom. Any development on this property will meet all State Wetlands Protection regulations.*
 - **Sisson Road:** *This property is within MR-L Zoning District and is not within Zone 2. This site houses the Junior Harwich Theater which will remain the Junior Harwich Theater and a portion of the property, based on the lease, was to be utilized for affordable housing.*
 - **Depot Road:** *This property consists of 5 parcels totaling to 28.11 acres. The entire property is located within Zone 2. The southern property falls within MA Endangered Species Program jurisdiction and cannot be built on. There are isolated wetland vernal pools within Parcel J3 that cannot be built on. If feasibility studies and preliminary engineering conclude this site is suitable to, building on this property will be concentrated on the northern portion. Though the Town will only build on the northern portion, the entire acreage is needed in order to calculate the number of bedrooms that can be supported.*
 - **Depot Street:** *This property is 43,560 s.f. This property is not located within Zone 2. MA State Wetland Regulations will be met.*
 - **Main Street:** *This property currently houses the Youth Counselor for the Town. The Albro House shares a septic system with Town Hall at 732 Main Street. The parking for Town Hall is located in both Town Hall property (3 separate parcels) and the Albro House property. The Town plans to lease the building for housing for one family.*

For more information:

Contact Christopher Clark, Town Administrator at cclark@town.harwich.ma.us, Phone: (508) 430-7513

Or Pelinda Deegan, Housing Coordinator, at pdeegan@town.harwich.ma.us, Phone: (508) 240-7873x15