

**COMMITTEE ON ORDINANCES, CHARTER AND RULES
NOVEMBER 13, 2017 AT 7:31 PM
COMMITTEE ROOM
WOBURN CITY HALL**

Voting Members:

Attending: Chair Michael Anderson,
Alderman Darlene Mercer-Bruen,
Alderman Lindsay Higgins, Alderman Michael Concannon. Absent Alderman Mark Gaffney

Non-Voting Members:

Attending: Alderman Joanne Campbell, Alderman Richard Gately
Alderman Edward Tedesco, President Richard Haggerty

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On the Order to amend Woburn Zoning Ordinances by amending Section 11.11.1 relative to affordable housing requirement in dwelling units above first floor commercial structure; Order to amend Woburn Zoning Ordinances by amending Section 11.11.1 by amending requirement for affordable housing units from 10% to 25%; and Order to amend Woburn Zoning Ordinances by amending Sections 11.11.3, 11.11.4 and 11.11.5 by deleting off-site affordable housing option, by renumbering section, and by changing calculation of fractional unit of affordable housing by rounding up to nearest whole number: Chairman Anderson said the matters remain before the Planning Board. Alderman Campbell said the Planning Board has continued its public hearing until November 28, and that the feedback thus far has been very favorable. Alderman Campbell said the city's affordable housing stock quotient is currently 8.74-percent, and even though the city is in a safe harbor situation due to the implementation of a housing production plan, the goal is to get to the 10 percent threshold that would prohibit developers from filing 40B applications. She said the city remains vulnerable until it gets to the 10 percent threshold. Alderman Campbell acknowledged the 25-percent requirement is aggressive, but at a lesser percentage the city is just holding steady instead of making progress toward the 10 percent figure. Alderman Campbell warned the new census in 2020 may also impact the affordable housing situation. Alderman Campbell sited the potential for 150 units under a 40B at the older Verizon site in West Woburn, while the city zoning would allow for only 44 units, if the city reaches the 10 percent threshold. Alderman Tedesco said the current 10 percent affordable housing requirement has to change, but said he worries if the city adopts the zoning amendments there may be an influx of 40B filings until the city reaches the 10 percent requirement. Alderman Campbell said it is better to be vulnerable for a year and a half until the threshold is reached, at which point the city is no longer vulnerable, than keep the affordable housing quotient at 10 percent and never reach the threshold. President Haggerty agreed the goal is to get to 10 percent, but the question is how to get there. He said he certainly agrees the percentage requirement should be raised, but added that 25 percent is too aggressive for him. President Haggerty distributed a handout with a tiered schedule as follows: Up to 15 units, 10 percent affordability; 16-50 units, 15 percent affordability; 51-plus units, 20 percent affordability. He said a tiered structure would not discourage developers of smaller projects, while at the same time it would allow the city to continue to reach the 10 percent threshold via

the larger projects. Motion made by Alderman Concannon and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to receive and place on file President Haggerty's document; approved, 4-0. Chairman Anderson also referenced a memo from Mayor Scott Galvin to the Committee regarding the affordable housing orders. Motion made by Alderman Concannon and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to receive and place on file a memorandum from Mayor Galvin addressing the proposed changes to the affordable housing requirements; approved, 4-0. President Haggerty suggested the Council could examine different rates of affordability for owner-occupied units and rental units. Alderman Campbell said if the council goes to a tiered structure, it could be along the lines of 15 percent for developments under 10 units, 20 percent for developments between 10-20 units, and 25 percent for 21-plus units. She also said it is important for Woburn residents to have preference for affordable units. Alderman Concannon said he expects the affordable housing conversation to last a little while, and there is no urgency to pass the zoning amendments. Alderman Concannon said he is offended by the notion that Beacon Hill gets to tell communities what their housing priorities are, and how many affordable units a community should have. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said the voters approved a referendum question that was paid for by huge developers, and the communities didn't have a chance. Alderman Concannon said he likes President Haggerty's idea of a tiered approach. Alderman Campbell said the Planning Board hopes to have a joint meeting with the Council where they will be able to sit around and talk about affordable housing requirements. Alderman Anderson said it is important to get the Planning Board's input, and that their comments should reflect what they think, not what they think the Council wants to hear. Alderman Mercer-Bruen suggested asking the Planning Board to send its recommendation to the Council, which will use it as a guide during deliberations. Alderman Campbell said the median income for Woburn is now \$78,750 per household. Alderman Gately said he agrees with Alderman Concannon in that the state doesn't understand the city's demographics. Alderman Gately asked if Kimball Court's affordable units will no longer be counted toward the city's total. President Haggerty said there are only three developments with units that are coming off-line – the Pilgrim building with four units in 2018, a project on Main Street with three units in 2024, and Salem Place with five units in 2056. President Haggerty said there are currently 16,237 housing units in the city, 1,419 of which are affordable. Alderman Gately said he likes the tiered approach, as it does not hurt a small developer who is going to put up 4-5 units. Alderman Concannon asked if there are any creative ways to deal with 40B regulations. President Haggerty asked if the city is able to exclude 40B filings by meeting the land mass threshold. Alderman Higgins said the Planning Dept. was unable to provide an answer to the land mass question because it was unable to get figures from the state. Alderman Concannon asked if it is correct that the city cannot count federal Section 8 units as affordable. Alderman Campbell said Section 8 units are not counted as affordable because the state pays the difference and the landlords are collecting market rate rent. Alderman Concannon asked if the goal is to have lower-income people in the community, why wouldn't Section 8 units be counted. President Haggerty said he hopes the Planning Board could send a recommendation so the Council can act expeditiously, because he would like to see the Council vote on the amendments by the end of the calendar year. Motion made by Alderman Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Alderman Concannon to send a communication to Planning Director Tina Cassidy to ask her to prepare information about land use data as it applies to affordable housing, currently and as permitted for future development; approved, 4-0. Alderman Gately said former Planning Director John Cashell has those figures once, and agreed the Committee ought to determine how much of the city's land mass is devoted to affordable housing. Alderman

Mercer-Bruen said the council needs to understand how Open Space counts toward the land mass quotient. Alderman Gately said he believes the land mass quotient is 2 percent, and if the council reaches it, the 10 percent housing stock threshold doesn't matter. Alderman Campbell said it is not her intention to apply the zoning amendments to any project currently in the process of approval, and that she has already gotten calls from developers who are concerned about same.

Motion made by Alderman Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Alderman Higgins to adjourn.
Chairman Anderson adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST

Gordon Vincent
Clerk of Committees