



Town of Stow
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February 2, 2022

Stow Select Board
380 Great Road
Stow, MA 01775

Dear Ms. Sturgis and Members of the Select Board,

We are writing on behalf of the Stow Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and Municipal Affordable Housing Trust to formally recommend the Stow Select Board vote to send a letter of support to the Department of Housing and Community Development, regarding the three *Residences at Stow Acres* Local Initiative Applications submitted by MCO Housing & Associates.

Over the previous 18 months, the Town of Stow, had led a diverse planning team, that has advanced an intensive, multi-disciplinary effort to create a shared housing, conservation, and recreation vision for the future of the North and South courses of Stow Acres. As part of this process, an assessment occurred of the most appropriate portions of the site for development and this is the area now proposed for development in these LIP applications. The town has voted overwhelmingly to set aside the remainder of the land for municipal conservation and recreation purposes. This collaborative effort has already resulted in the recording of a permanent Conservation Restriction on the entire South Course of Stow Acres, as well as an affirmative Town Meeting vote to acquire and preserve the majority of the North Course. The purpose of this letter is to reaffirm the Town's ongoing support for the project and to recommend that the Select Board formally support the three Local Initiative Program (LIP) Applications described in this letter. The LIP Applications represent the first formal step toward advancing the 189 units of mixed-income housing that has served as the key financial component to ensuring the viability of the entire project for all partners.

LIP Application Process

The Local Initiative Program of the Department of Housing and Community Development provides technical assistance to communities and developers for the creation of affordably priced housing units. Utilizing the Local Initiative Program process, the Town of Stow is able to ensure that the units constructed will count toward the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory.

Overview of Submittal

MCO Housing and Associates has submitted three separate LIP Applications, each detailing the composition and Affirmative Fair Market Housing Plan for the specific type of unit. The three Applications detail the following unit types:

- 124 Single Family Homes with 31 Affordable Units;

- 40 Rental Cottages with 10 Affordable Units*;
 - 25 Rental Apartments for older adults aged 62+, with 5 Affordable Units*
- *The Local Initiative Program allows all rentals created under the Program to count toward the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory.*

In total, the Town of Stow will generate 96 units of affordable housing to count towards its Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). The addition of these affordable units on Stow's SHI will bring the Town from its current percentage of 6.6% to 10.1%, meeting the State's requirement that Town's provide 10% of their housing stock as affordable, and providing a powerful tool for shaping future Comprehensive Permit projects.

Review of Applications

To date, the Stow Planning Department and the Town's shared housing consultant, MetroWest Collaborative Development, have reviewed the three LIP Applications and provided comments to MCO Housing & Associates, to clarify the intent. The Applications align with the overall vision for mixed income housing at the site, designed in accordance with the principles of a traditional New England village. The Conservation Commission will need to review the portions of the project that are in or near wetland resources, and that process has already begun.

The LIP Applications describe a development that conforms to many of the key components of the Select Board's Comprehensive Permit Policy, adopted in November of 2013 for the purpose of vetting Comprehensive Permit proposals. In summary, the LIP Applications indicate a forthcoming Comprehensive Permit Application that meets the following Policy goals:

- Diversity of housing designs, occupancy ranges, and tenancy, including ownership and rental units;
- Variety of income and demographic targets;
- Range of public benefits, in addition to housing affordability;
- Village style architectural design program, and;
- Local preference program for affordable units.

On behalf of the Stow Acres Project Team, the Conservation Commission, Planning Board and Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust, we are pleased to recommend the Select Board's support of the project to the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Sincerely,



Kathy Sferra | Conservation Director

Jesse Steadman | Town Planner

Mike Kopczynski | Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust

Cc: Stow Planning Board
 Stow Conservation Commission
 Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust
 Mark O'Hagan | MCO Housing and Associates