

TOWN OF BURRILLVILLE

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Burrillville Town Council Resolution In Opposition to Legislation Regarding Housing and Land Use

WHEREAS, the Town of Burrillville understands that there is a critical shortage of affordable housing in the State; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Burrillville joins other municipalities in their concerns relative to legislation that seemingly targets that shortage, but increasingly overrides local regulations and management rights. Each municipality has unique needs, priorities and visions for land use planning and zoning; and

WHEREAS, while the shortage of affordable housing may be an issue statewide, the solutions proposed that work in one community do not necessarily work in smaller, less densely populated communities; and

WHEREAS, city and town councils, supported by their professional planning and zoning departments, and local planning and economic development boards, are the ones best equipped to determine what works in their own communities; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Burrillville has identified a few bills that may have great impact on our community, they are as follows:

Senate Bill 2632 and House Bill 7958 would require higher density development in residentially zoned areas of towns who meet the population threshold. This bill impacts local control. This type of change is only acceptable if they are optional and not mandatory; and

House Bill 7951 places an arbitrary time limit on a community's ability to temporarily stop development to correct a problem. This bill proposes a limit of 60 days on any moratorium a municipality would like to put in place. Our own experience with developing new ordinances show that would not be enough time for every possible situation. By way of example, if a sewer or water treatment plant is out of compliance (code) or needs upgrades, 60 days would not be enough time to complete the needs analysis, never mind the improvements. No arbitrary time limit should be placed on a community. This takes away local control and decision making; and

House Bill 7980 would allow mobile homes on any lot that is buildable in a community. This bill diminishes local control a community has on the siting of mobile homes. Many years ago, towns in Rhode Island decided to limit where mobile homes are allowed. This decision had to do with maintaining property values and quality of life. This bill would erode local control and diminish property values; and

House Bill 7981 would allow the establishment of residential uses within existing commercial and industrial zones. Since most towns have a limited amount of commercial and industrial zoned land, this is not a benefit to a community. This bill runs counterintuitive to the reason to separate uses. Truck traffic, noise, odors and dust are many times associated with heavy industrial uses and some commercial uses. By allowing residential uses in these zones, public health, safety and welfare could be in jeopardy. We do not support this bill in any form; and

House Bill 7986 involves providing the state with a list of abandoned properties, and gives priority sale for low- and moderate-income units in areas of the municipality where they are not consistent with a comprehensive plan or affordable housing plan. This bill will further erode local control. Communities currently can work with property owners and developers to bring properties back to use. We feel this is a local community's responsibility and should remain so.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council of the Town of Burrillville does hereby oppose the aforementioned legislation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Council of the Town of Burrillville respectfully requests Burrillville legislators, the Rhode Island General Assembly, and the Rhode Island cities and towns to oppose this legislation.

Passed as a resolution of the Burrillville Town Council this 10th day of April 2024.



Donald A. Fox, President
Burrillville Town Council

ATTEST:



Vicki Martin, Town Clerk

