



**TOWN OF MORRISTOWN HOUSING COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTICE & AGENDA
COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM OF THE OLD TEGU THEATER
43 Portland Street in Morrisville, VT 05661
5:00 PM Thursday, January 23, 2025**

[Join Zoom Meeting](#) or by phone join via conference call (audio only): 1 (646) 558-8656 | Meeting ID: [810 342 4528](#) |
Passcode 05661
The meeting will be live-streamed on the Town of Morrystown's website:
<https://www.morrystownvt.gov/community/page/meetings-agendas-minutes>

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVE MINUTES

- P. 2-3* 1. December 12, 2024
- P. 4* 2. December 19, 2024

DISCUSS

- P. 5-10* 1. Affordable Housing letter sent to Planning Council
- 2. Joint meeting with Stowe Housing Committee

Morrisville/Morristown Housing Committee

PO Box 748, Morrisville, VT 05661

Phone (802) 888-6373

Meeting Minutes of Thursday 12 December 2024

Committee Members present: Judy Bickford, Bob Bortree, Josh Goldstein

Committee Members absent: Yvette Mason, Donna Sherlaw

Guests present: Town Manager Brent Raymond, Grace & Seth Costa

Staff: Planning/Zoning Director Todd Thomas, A/V Operator Ally Olsen

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Town Offices, 43 Portland Street in Morrisville, at approximately 5:05 P.M.

Vote: Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Bickford moved to approve the November 14th meeting minutes. A vote of 3-0 affirmed the motion.

Discuss: Audio / Visual for meetings – After a brief discussion, the Housing Committee decided to try having full hybrid meetings. Member Bortree said that if the online interaction becomes problematic, the Board could always revert to the current livestream format.

Discuss: Meet with local builders of smaller and more affordable homes – Grace & Seth Costa appeared before the Housing Committee as requested to speak about the biggest challenges they face as developers of smaller and more affordable housing within our community. They said while they enjoy working with the Zoning Administrator, the zoning in Morrisville is their biggest obstacle to creating small, affordable, owned housing. They said that they would like the Zoning Administrator to be given more discretion/authority as the carrying cost of waiting for DRB hearings and appeal periods to expire only further exacerbates the cost of the housing they can build. They added that Morrisville's 2 acre minimum lot size in rural areas seems large and unnecessary, as they are used to 1 house per acre in the surrounding rural communities without zoning that they sometimes work in (Johnson, Waterville, etc.). Speaking of their recent Home Acre Street subdivision, they said that the infrastructure cost of the subdivision process was very expensive (\$200,000 invested in just underground improvements for the 4 lots). Ms. Costa clarified that the \$200,000 spent on infrastructure did not include the sewer hook-up cost of \$4,000 per house. Mr. Costa added that their cost of materials for the single-family homes they build approaches \$175 per square foot before they even pay themselves. They said that their most avoidable expense with their subdivision was the current zoning prohibition on architectural repetition, which creates tens of thousands of dollars in extra cost for both architectural services and construction. Member Goldstein successfully clarified with Planning/Zoning Director Thomas that changes could still be made to the architectural repetition requirements at the Planning Council's zoning change public hearing on January 14th because Section 206 was warned. Mr. Thomas said that this was correct,

but any contemplated changes to reduce the engineering and construction costs driven by subdivision road design rules (such as increasing the trigger for “road” construction requirements from 3 to 5 houses) would have to wait until a future warned change of the Zoning Bylaws.

Discuss: Result of affordable housing letters sent to each Legislative Body – Mr. Thomas shared that the Village Trustees voted to take no action regarding the Housing Committee’s letter asking to share infrastructure costs for developments that were 20% or more affordable. Member Bortree expressed disappointment in this result but expressed some optimism that the Selectboard seemed inclined to grant some tax stabilization to encourage affordable housing, even if that Board asked for more information before doing so.

Discuss: Draft affordable housing letter for Planning Council – The Council decided that due to the Costa Family’s testimony, that additional edits must be made to the draft letter to the Planning Council, especially to advocate for changes to the existing architectural repetition rule. It was decided to hold an additional Housing Committee meeting on December 19th to review the agreed upon revisions before the letter was signed and sent to the Planning Council.

Discuss: Mutual Assistance discussion with Stowe Housing Committee – The Committee decided to discuss what topics should be broached with the Stowe Housing Committee at the next scheduled Housing Committee meeting on December 19th.

*The Housing Committee will meet next at 5pm on Thursday December 19th.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning/Zoning Director

Morrisville/Morristown Housing Committee

PO Box 748, Morrisville, VT 05661

Phone (802) 888-6373

Meeting Minutes of Thursday 19 December 2024

Committee Members present: Judy Bickford, Bob Bortree, Josh Goldstein, Donna Sherlaw (attended electronically but could not participate due to technological issues)

Committee Members absent: Yvette Mason

Guests present: Town Manager Brent Raymond, Jerry Throne

Staff: Planning/Zoning Director Todd Thomas, A/V Operator Ally Olsen

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Town Offices, 43 Portland Street in Morrisville, at approximately 5:05 P.M.

Vote: Approve prior meeting minutes – Approval of the December 12th minutes was tabled as the Committee waited for cost information from Grace & Seth Costa.

Discuss: Draft affordable housing letter for Planning Council – The Housing Committee reviewed the additional edits made to the draft letter to the Planning Council that resulted from Grace & Seth Costa's testimony at its prior meeting. The Committee was amenable to the new 3rd bullet point therein that asked for changes to the Zoning Bylaw's Section 206 architectural repetition rule. The Committee, however, spent most of its time reevaluating the letter's 1st bullet point, which spoke to expanding Low Density Residential Zone along Morristown Corners, Stagecoach Road, & Cadys Falls Road. Member Bortree noted concerns expressed by Members Mason & Sherlaw regarding this topic via email but said that he developed hesitation regarding this item independently. Member Bortree moved to revise the letter's 1st bullet point to call out connecting the LDR 4 & 5 Zones only (which would exclude Morristown Corners Road from the suggested zoning change). The motion failed by a vote of 1-2. Member Goldstein moved to approve the letter to the Planning Council as drafted. A vote of 2-1 affirmed the motion (of members known to be attending the meeting at that time).

Discuss: Mutual Assistance discussion with Stowe Housing Committee – The Committee discussed what topics should be broached with the Stowe Housing Committee at what was hoped to be a joint meeting of both Boards. After some discussion, the agreed upon topics for this meeting were as follows:

1. Compare vision statements /
2. Employee housing /
3. Housing issues within each community /
4. Housing affordability across all income spectrums /
5. Missing middle housing /
6. How to promote more housing inventory /
7. Short term rental registry /
8. How can Stowe & Morrisville work together

*The Housing Committee will meet next at 5pm on Thursday January 23rd.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning/Zoning Director



Housing Committee
PO Box 748
Morrisville, VT 05661

(802) 888-6373
Fax: (802) 851-7251

19 December 2024

Re: Request to connect Future Land Use Map's LDR Zones, adopt affordably housing density bonus & remove or revise architectural repetition zoning restriction

Dear Planning Council Members,

The cost of purchasing a home in our community has grown exponentially in recent years. According to page 132 of the recently updated Lamoille County Regional Housing Assessment, the median for-sale price of a single-family home in March of 2024 was \$699,000 and per page 131 of that report, a typical household (2 people) earning 120% of the "area median income" can only afford a maximum home price of \$324,000. This huge \$375,000 affordability gap creates a plethora of negative consequences that ripple through the local economy and our community, including hampered business growth due to the difficulty of attracting and retaining workers, reduced consumer spending, increased homelessness, strains on public services, and wider income inequality. Page 141 of the Lamoille County Regional Housing Assessment (included beneath this letter and labeled as Attachment A), offers ways to combat local housing affordability issues. From these suggestions, we ask that the Planning Council evaluate the following 3 suggestions that are within its power to act on or change.

1. The Lamoille County Regional Housing Assessment suggests rezoning areas that can accommodate housing development on smaller and more affordable lots. The Housing Committee agrees and would like to see more single-family homes and duplexes developed, especially if it creates opportunities for home ownership. We therefore ask that the Planning Council act on the Low Density Residential Zone (LDR) expansion areas shown on the Town Plan's Future Land Use Map (included beneath this letter and labeled as Attachment B). The Morristown Corners and Cadys Falls areas called out on this map, given the municipal water service available therein, can easily accommodate these more affordable 1/3 acre to 1/2 acre lots.
2. Page 88 of the Lamoille County Regional Housing Assessment shows that 24% of rents paid in our county are classified as unaffordable (paying 40% or more of income towards rent). Unfortunately, 123 families in our town are almost unbelievably paying more than 50% of their income towards rent. While a good amount of new rental housing has been built in our town in recent years, the Housing Committee would like to see the Zoning Bylaws updated to offer a density bonus to incentivize new rental housing development that include a 20% affordability component. An example of such a density bonus from the Zoning Bylaws of a Vermont town is included beneath this letter and labeled as Attachment C. The Housing Committee hopes that this density bonus, tailored to local needs, can be included as part of a future zoning change.
3. The Housing Committee received testimony from local builders that the Zoning Bylaw's §206 Architectural Repetition rule is adding significant cost to new housing construction. While we understand the intent of this restriction, we do not believe that the end justifies the means. We therefore ask that the Planning Council revise this specific rule (perhaps so it only regulates townhouses) before it approves the pending zoning change for §206 Design Review Criteria.

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Housing developers face significant restrictions and costly delays due to the Town's zoning and permit process. The Planning Council plays a key role in addressing the significant housing supply and affordability issues that currently plague nearly every aspect of our community. Simply put, the Housing Committee cannot make these needed zoning changes on its own. Therefore, we are very thankful for whatever time and attention the Planning Council can give to this letter and the 3 zoning change suggestions included therein. If desired, members of the Housing Committee will be happy to attend the Planning Council meeting when this letter is discussed.

Sincerely,

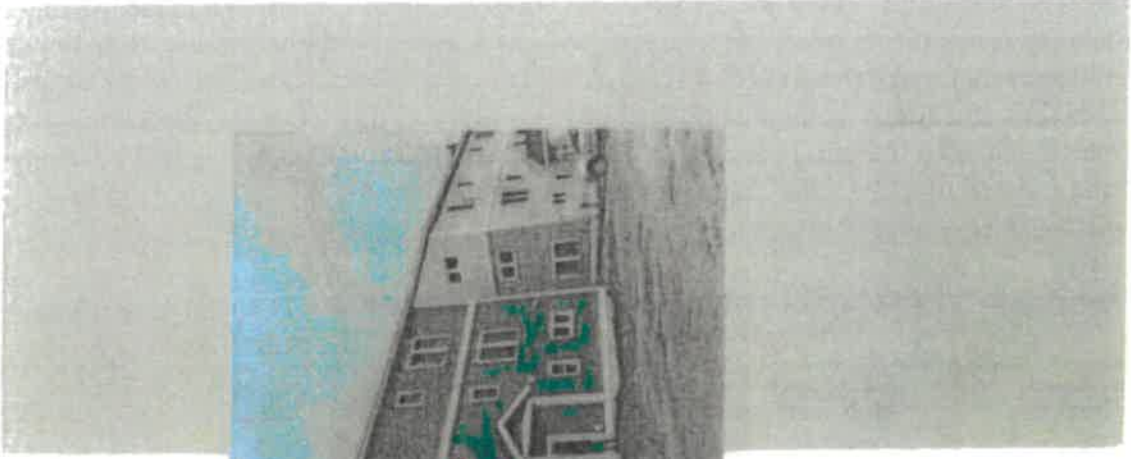
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Todd Thomas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Todd Thomas
On behalf of the Morristown Housing Committee

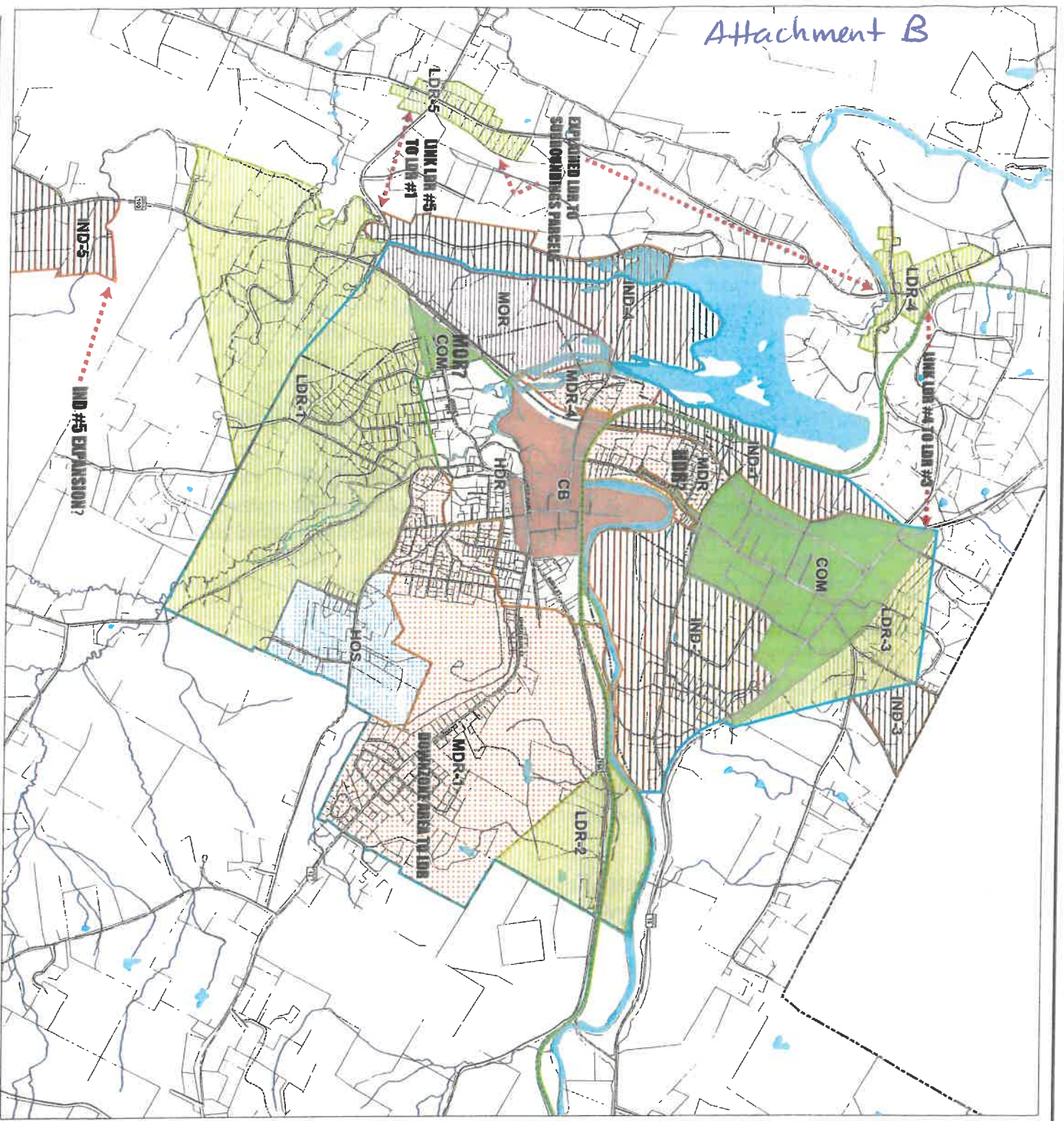
Households that qualify for affordable/tax credit rents typically can't find a quality housing option in the open market.

- Work to diversify housing availability in the region, from rental/ownership, pricing and form of housing perspectives – with the goal of providing more opportunities for younger and moderate income households to find housing. The study region as a whole has the advantage of available land and, in most communities, a positive perspective on new residential development. However, the absence of readily available infrastructure (water, sewer, utilities) is often a cost prohibitive element of land development. Communities should be encouraged to partner with the development community in providing support infrastructure for new residential development, such as:

- o Altering regulations (zoning, etc.) to permit housing at density/scale that achieves economic feasibility to the private sector,
- o In identified areas, ease the regulatory framework to lighten the cost burden of securing entitlements and providing a rapid indication of project acceptability;
- o Cost sharing with respect to critical project infrastructure – road, sewer, water utility systems;
- o Easing infrastructure connection fees for projects that meet certain criteria – density, affordability, etc;
- o Tax stabilization agreements;



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Morristown Zoning Map Village Zoning 2019

Zoning Districts

- CB Central Business
- COM Commercial
- HDR High Density Residential
- HOS Hospital
- IND Industrial
- LDR Low Density Residential
- MDR Medium Density Residential
- MOR Mixed Office Residential
- RRA Rural Residential with Agriculture

- Morristown
- Morristown Boundary
- Sewer Service Management Area
- Lamolle Valley Rail Trail
- Parcel Boundaries

Zoning Districts

CB	Central Business
COM	Commercial
HDR	High Density Residential
HOS	Hospital
IND	Industrial
LDR	Low Density Residential
MDR	Medium Density Residential
MOR	Mixed Office Residential
RRA	Rural Residential with Agriculture

Data Sources
 Zoning: 2017 Morristown data, Provided by Lamolle County Planning Commission for Planning Purpose, Updated 2018 by Fitzgerald Environmental Associates, LLC
 Sewer Service District Boundary: 2015 Morristown data, Provided by Lamolle County Planning Commission for Planning Purpose, Updated 2018 by Fitzgerald Environmental Associates, LLC
 Parcel: Morristown data, 2017, by CA Technologies
 Political Waters: VCGI for VHD-USGS, 2001
 Political Boundaries: VCGI, 1991



Fitzgerald Environmental Associates, LLC
 16 Sawnee Court, Suite 203
 Columbia, VA 22624
 Telephone: 802.674.7776
 Fax: 802.674.7776
 Email: info@fitzgeraldenv.com
 Map Date: June 5, 2019

New Haven, VT Zoning excerpt

ARTICLE IV: REQUIRED REGULATIONS

Section 400: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A. Intent: The provisions of this Section are intended to:

- 1) provide incentives for residential development that meets the needs of New Haven's population, including housing for low- and moderate-income individuals and families, in accordance with V.S.A. §4412(1), 4417(a)(2) and(d);
- 2) increase opportunities for home ownership and rental units;
- 3) allow for the development of a variety of affordable housing types including single- and two-family dwellings, and multi-family units;
- 4) ensure that affordable housing units will remain affordable and available into the future; and,
- 5) encourage mixed-income development.

B. General Standard: For a proposed development to qualify for the incentives in this Section, at least 20% of the residential units in the development must qualify as "affordable housing units" as defined in Article X.

C. Application Requirements:

Applications that seek to qualify for the incentives under this Section shall be reviewed by the Development Review Board, either in association with subdivision review where applicable (subdivisions and planned unit developments), or as a conditional use for development that does not require subdivision review (e.g., development, conversions, or adaptive re-uses on existing lots).

The applicant shall provide legal documentation to be approved by the Town's counsel, including, at minimum, the proposed deed restrictions or covenants that will ensure that the affordable housing units in the development will satisfy the requirements of this Section and the definition in Article X.

D. Density Bonus Incentives for Affordable Housing:

- 1) A development that meets the requirements of Section B above, and includes fewer than 5 affordable housing units will qualify for a 50% density bonus. As such, the standard minimum acreage requirement per development unit that would otherwise apply under Section 223 will be reduced by 50%.
- 2) A development that meets the requirements of Section B above, and includes between 5 and 9 affordable housing units will qualify for a 67% density bonus. As such, the standard minimum acreage requirement per development unit that would otherwise apply under Section 223 will be reduced by 67%.
- 3) A development unit that meets the requirements of Section B above, and includes 10 or more affordable housing units will qualify for a 75% density bonus. As such, the standard minimum acreage requirement per development unit that would otherwise apply under Section 223 will be reduced by 75%.

E. Modifications of Waivers for Affordable Housing:

The Development Review Board, upon written request of the applicant, may modify or

per
Peggy
in New Haven
this is a new
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permit
condition for
the developer
to deal with

waive any of the following requirements for a project that meets the requirements of Section B, if it finds that the modification or waiver is necessary to improve the financial feasibility of the affordable housing component of the project, and that public health, safety, and welfare will not be jeopardized:

- 1) access requirements;
- 2) parking requirements;
- 3) subdivision standards including, but not limited to, applicable road standards;
- 4) minimum lot size, frontage, setback, coverage, and open space requirements, as allowed for planned unit developments.

Section 410: ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Accessory Dwelling Units are a permitted use in all districts and must be in compliance with all of the following:

1. The property must have sufficient wastewater capacity to accommodate both the primary dwelling and the accessory dwelling unit.
2. The unit must not exceed 900 square feet or 30% of the total habitable floor area of the primary dwelling unit, whichever is greater.
3. All setback, lot coverage and parking conditions are met for the zone in which it is proposed.

Section 420: ACCESSORY USES AND BUILDINGS

1. An accessory use or building must conform to lot setback, lot coverage, and building height requirements for the district in which it is located.
2. An accessory use or building that is associated with a residential use shall be required to conform to the residential yard setback, lot coverage and building height requirements for the district in which it is located.

Section 421: EXISTING SMALL LOTS

Any lot in individual and separate and non-affiliated ownership from surrounding properties in existence on the effective date of these Regulations, March 7, 1972, may be developed for the purposes permitted in the district in which it is located, even though not conforming to minimum lot size requirements if such lot is not less than 1/8 acre in area with a minimum width or depth dimension of 40 feet.

Section 422: FRONTAGE ON, OR ACCESS TO, PUBLIC ROADS OR PUBLIC WATERS

No land development may be permitted on lots which do not meet the minimum frontage on public roads or public waters as stated in the Zoning Districts Table (page 9), or accessed by a right-of-way (ROW) of at least 20 feet in width, or with the approval of the Development Review Board. Additional width may be necessary to meet B-71 Standards for Residential-Commercial Drives (see Appendix).