

Moratorium on Two-Family Unit Construction

Regarding our residential zones, Falmouth has been a town of single-family homes with a short period of denser housing being permitted. Times have changed and more diverse types of housing are needed as was noted in the 2013 Comp Plan and the 2013 Economic Development Plan. To that end, in 2016, Falmouth Town Council adopted zoning ordinances in our residential growth areas to allow 2-family and multi-family housing with increased densities, in addition to the well-known single-family dwelling.

Responding to the need for more housing, developers are bringing forward and building projects with more diversity, but showing, in some cases, a strong preference for the two-family type, to the exclusion of other types in the residential growth zones. (Consider the 16 two-family unit development off Brook Rd. and the proposals for two-family developments on Falmouth and Middle Rds.). The proportion and number of two-family dwellings being developed was not foreseen and was not intended. This proportion and number of two-family units is not consistent with our community vision.

I think it's enough of an issue that we should address it now. Staff has pointed out that adjustments to ordinance language, such as that in the RCZO, will mitigate the incentive to develop two-family to the exclusion of other types. As Staff and Council members work on ordinance amendments, I think we should consider an additional measure to address this issue, a temporary moratorium, a stop, on two-family housing development until the ordinance satisfactorily meets our goals regarding the balance of diverse housing types in the residential growth area. The moratorium will allow us time to make an ordinance correction which, I hope, will result in a housing mix appropriate for our town.

Thanks,

Claudia King
Town Councilor
Thursday, September 7, 2017