

Resolution of the Hopkinton Town Council

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING SPECIFIC LAND USE LEGISLATION PROPOSED IN THE RHODE ISLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

WHEREAS, the Town of Hopkinton is a community committed to responsible growth, preserving local control over land use decisions, and ensuring that development aligns with the best interests of the community; and

WHEREAS, the Rhode Island General Assembly is currently considering several land use bills that could significantly alter local zoning practices, the development review process, and municipal control over land use decisions; and

WHEREAS, these proposed amendments may undermine local authority, create ambiguity in the regulatory framework, and impose unrealistic development requirements that could harm the character, infrastructure, environment, and sustainability of our community; and

WHEREAS, these proposed amendments are designed as a one size fits all approach, which are not context sensitive, not in the best interests of the Town of Hopkinton for land development

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Hopkinton Town Council respectfully requests the Rhode Island General Assembly not support the following bills, as they clearly violate the Town's authority and ability to determine land development policy at the local level:

1. Opposition to Bill H 5794 Sub A – Subdivision Enabling Act Amendments

The Town of Hopkinton opposes Bill H 5794 Sub A, which proposes significant amendments to subdivision processes. These amendments would allow for the administrative approval of subdivision plans without public hearings or abutter notification, limiting community input and transparency. The removal of pre-application meetings for major subdivisions and land development applications is also a step backward in maintaining a collaborative, transparent planning process that is essential for managing growth effectively.

2. Opposition to Bill H 5796 - Mandates Multi-Family Zoning within the Urban Services Boundary (USB)

The Town of Hopkinton opposes Bill H 5796, which mandates the inclusion of multi-family housing within the Urban Services Boundary (USB). This bill introduces ambiguity regarding the precise definition and boundaries of the USB, leading to potential conflicts between municipal and state interpretations. Furthermore, it fails to adequately consider local infrastructure capacities, including water and sewer availability, and may place undue strain on Hopkinton's resources.

3. Opposition to Bill H 5799 Sub A - Oversized Lot Subdivision

The Town of Hopkinton opposes Bill H 5799 Sub A, which would permit the subdivision of oversized lots even when doing so would result in non-compliant lot sizes, reducing setbacks, and creating substandard development conditions. This bill weakens local zoning authority and increases the risk of unsustainable development, particularly in areas where infrastructure is not designed to support such subdivisions.

4. Opposition to Bill H 5958 - Mixed-Use Overlay Requirement

The Town of Hopkinton opposes Bill H 5958, which mandates that at least 30% of commercial zoning districts include mixed-use overlay districts. This requirement would override local zoning plans and impose significant changes to established commercial zones without adequately considering the needs of the community or its infrastructure. The proposed changes would result in forced residential development in areas not adequately equipped for such growth, which could disrupt local economic stability.

5. Opposition to Bill H 5963 - Oversized Lot Subdivision by Administrative Subdivision

The Town of Hopkinton opposes Bill H 5963, which establishes the creation of oversized lot subdivisions through an administrative process using GIS data, without the need for traditional survey methods or public hearings. This legislation undermines the established process of ensuring that subdivisions meet local requirements and permits the creation of non-compliant lots without adequate review or input from affected residents.

6. Opposition to Bill H 5801 - Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Act Amendments

The Town of Hopkinton opposes Bill H 5801, which significantly limits local authority regarding comprehensive permits for affordable housing projects. This bill reduces the ability of municipalities to deny comprehensive permit applications based on inconsistency with the comprehensive plan. This weakens local control and could lead to an imbalance in housing development that does not align with community interests.

7. Opposition to Bill H 5802 Sub A - State-Owned Land Development

The Town of Hopkinton opposes Bill H 5802 Sub A, which allows the state to develop housing projects on state-owned land, even if such developments do not conform to local zoning ordinances or comprehensive plans. This bill undermines local authority by permitting state-level developments without local consultation, and it could lead to the development of housing projects that are incompatible with Hopkinton's long-term planning goals.

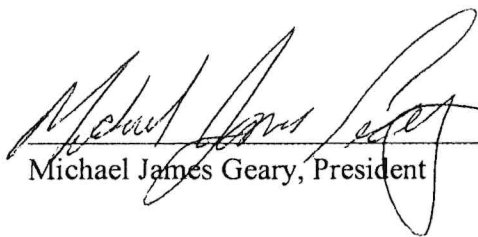
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Hopkinton Town Council respectfully urges the Rhode Island General Assembly to reconsider these proposed bills and to work with local municipalities to develop legislation that supports both affordable housing goals and the preservation of local control over land use and development decisions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to every Rhode Island municipality, the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, State Senators, State Representatives, and the Governor for their consideration.

ADOPTED this 21st of April, 2025.


Michael James Geary, President



ATTEST:


Marita D. Murray, CMC
Town/Council Clerk