

February 14, 2013

Dear Representative Fawcett,

Please accept this email as testimony for the upcoming public hearing on the 8-30g Affordable Housing Statute.

Thank you for the opportunity to give testimony on 8-30 G. As a 7 year member of the Fairfield Town Plan and Zoning commission and an advocate for affordable housing, I have witnessed the shortcomings of 8-30 G. As most of you know, Fairfield has recently opened a new train station. As part of the redevelopment of this area, the zoning commission created an overlay zone, which required an affordable element, mixed-use buildings and allowed for higher density within walking distance of the new train station as a part of transit oriented development. Through zoning, we have taken an industrial area and tried to create a mixed-use, walkable, affordable and vibrant community. This is the kind of redevelopment that is good for everyone.

I have had experience with proposals that were filed under 8-30g which highlight the problems with the statute. Developers appear to use the statute for sites which would not otherwise be appropriate for development. It appears they use the statute to supersede zoning. The problem is that the appeals standards and process do not allow the appropriate consideration of public health and safety considerations such as flooding and traffic safety. Thus, I believe that these serious issues should be given more weight in the appeals process.

We need affordable housing in Fairfield to meet the needs of an ever-changing and diverse population. Done correctly, mixed-use affordable housing can make our community stronger. Smart growth principles should also be considered since it appears that 8-30g can supersede local zoning. It seems preferable to have such development near the shops, transportation and services needed similar to Fairfield's new overlay zone. 8-30 G must be amended.

Thank you

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