



## CITY OF BELFAST, MAINE 04915

131 Church Street

**PLANNING AND CODES DEPARTMENT**

Phone: (207) 338-3370 ext. 125

Fax: (207) 338-2419

Email:

[planningandcodes@cityofbelfast.org](mailto:planningandcodes@cityofbelfast.org)

### **NOTE TO BELFAST PLANNING BOARD**

**OCTOBER 2, 2024**

#### **UPCOMING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT WORKSHOP REGARDING POTENTIAL RESIDENTIAL 5 AND RESIDENTIAL 6 ZONING DISTRICT MAP ADJUSTMENT TO ACCOMMODATE INCREASED HOUSING FROM BUB FOURNIER, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND CODES DEPARTMENT**

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### **RESIDENTIAL 5 AND RESIDENTIAL 6 ZONING DISTRICTS BACKGROUND**

The Residential 5 and Residential 6 zoning districts were created in 2022 as part of the comprehensive Outside Rural Ordinance Amendment package that the Belfast Planning Board worked on for much of 2021 into 2022. Previously, the Residential 5 zoning district was comprised of areas along the water side of Robbins Road being part of the General Purpose A zoning district and areas on the east side of Robbins Road being part of the Protection Rural II zoning district. The current Residential 6 zoning district was entirely part of the former Protection Rural II zoning district.

In 2022, the Board had been looking at ways to increase housing opportunities and identified the area along Robbins Road as having the potential for additional housing because it was served by City sewer and was already made up of many fairly smaller lots. The Board identified the potential for increased housing, including multi-family dwellings, in this area with the creation of the Residential 5 zoning district with a minimum lot size of 10,000 sqft for one- two-family homes on sewered lots, and the additional allowance at 20,000sqft of 3 and 4 unit multi-family dwellings and flex housing options. The Board proposed and the City Council adopted the new multi-family and flex housing standards for the east side (away from the water) of Robbins Road only due to Shoreland Zoning restrictions.

Regarding the Residential 6 zoning district, in 2022 the Board proposed, and the City Council adopted, no changes for multi-family or flex housing development. The adopted Ordinance changes continued the prohibition on multi-family housing in this area. This approach was in keeping with the history of the Protection Rural II zoning district being created by a citizen's initiative in 2000 in response to the 24-unit multi-family development owned and operated by

Penquis at 2 East Avenue completed in 2001. At the time, citizen's from the neighborhood brought a proposal to rezone the area to include the current dimensional requirements and prohibit new multi-family dwellings. The current minimum lot size for Residential 6 zoning district is a half-acre (21,780 sqft) on sewer and an acre (43,560 sqft) on a subsurface wastewater system.

## **RESIDENTIAL 5 AND RESIDENTIAL 6 ZONING DISTRICTS PROPOSAL**

Staff is bringing the current proposal to the Planning Board after discussions with the subject property owner in regard to increasing housing opportunities. The proposal includes a minor reconfiguration of the Residential 5 and 6 zoning districts to facilitate increased housing opportunities. In the proposal, 3 parcels identified as Map 18 Lots 48, 49, and 50, would be rezoned from Residential 5 (formerly Protection Rural II) to Residential 6. This proposed map amendment would allow the potential for additional housing in the form of either multi-family housing or a "flex housing" approach. Please refer to the enclosed map that shows the proposed changes which would affect approx. 2.6 acres of land.

It's important to note that Residential 5 multi-family dwellings are limited to 3-4 unit structures, which is the same limit for "flex housing". According to the property owner of the affected lots, connection to the gravity private sewer line serving the multi-family dwelling facility at 2 East Avenue is allowed in their deed. When the idea of this proposal was briefly brought up at a recent Board meeting, members asked staff to reach out to the Wastewater Treatment Plant operator Olver Associates Inc regarding nearby infrastructure capacity to serve additional housing in the area. The proposal would represent an increase in housing opportunity for the subject lots from approx. 10 dwellings to potentially 22 via "flex housing" or multi-family dwellings. There are currently only 4 dwellings on these lots. Please see the attached correspondence with Asst. Operations Manager at the sewer plant, Travis Jones of Olver Associates, Inc.

In City's most recently adopted Comprehensive Plan, housing is a common theme with several sections dedicated to the critical need for additional housing opportunities in the City. The proposal represents a minor adjustment to the City's Chapter 102 Zoning Ordinance to facilitate such an opportunity through increased utilization of existing infrastructure. This may be a great representation of smart growth as we continue to look for ways to generate more housing options in Belfast.

At your upcoming meeting on October 9, 2024, the Board will have an opportunity to discuss this proposal and direct staff regarding next steps for a potential Ordinance Amendment. I look forward to the discussion as we continue to look for increased housing opportunities.