

## **For Immediate Release**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

The Town of Lincoln's Planner Albert V. Ranaldi, Jr. and Zoning Enforcement Officer Russell Hervieux announce the completion of draft zoning ordinance revisions. The Town and a special Zoning Ordinance Sub-Committee, made up of the Chairman of the Planning Board, Zoning Board, the Town Solicitor and the Town Council president, worked diligently for over nine months to develop the proposed revisions. The revisions are based on changes in State law and the updated local Comprehensive Plan. More specifically, the proposed revisions address the recently adopted Town of Lincoln's Affordable Housing Production Plan and the requirements outlined in the Rhode Island Low and Moderate Income Housing Act – General Law § 45-53. The zoning revisions were also developed to comply with the principles presented in the recently adopted 20-year land use development plan for Rhode Island called "Land Use: 2025".

While the proposed zoning ordinance may look different when compared to the existing ordinance, Ranaldi points out that one of the changes to the ordinance was to provide a user friendly edition to the public. This was achieved by using a simplified numbering system and

rearranging sections. All application forms and instructions are included at the end of the document.

Ranaldi added that the majority of the revisions are proposed to refine, simplify or correct existing policies. The proposed zoning revisions do not represent sweeping changes. According to Ranaldi, “the proposed revisions are based on the Town’s experiences in working with the current Zoning Ordinance over the last five years. Many of the proposed revisions have been suggested by residents within Town.” For example, one of the most requested revisions to the ordinance was the section addressing accessory family dwelling units or in-law apartments as they are commonly referred to by homeowners. Zoning Enforcement Officer Hervieux explained that the current zoning ordinance does not permit the typical in-law apartment unit which is commonly allowed in other communities. According to Hervieux, “our zoning ordinance only allows an in-law apartment with no kitchen facility or separate entrance. We allow an additional bedroom suite for in-laws, but do not allow for the typical in-law apartment with its own kitchen facility, bathroom and entrance separate from the main house. Many residents are looking to develop in-law apartments that will allow independent living parents or grown children.” Other simple changes, like expanding the use table to include newer business uses, are proposed in the draft document.

Several new sections are proposed in the document. Many of these sections were developed and included in the draft document in order to make the zoning ordinance consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Affordable Housing Production Plan. The four most noteworthy sections proposed are: Inclusionary Zoning, Village Commercial Mixed Use zones, Rural Flexible Zoning Overlay district, and the Mill Conversion Overlay district. According to Ranaldi, “the inclusionary zoning section is a new zoning tool for the Town to encourage and

direct the development of more affordable housing units within Town. The other new zoning tools were developed to promote better residential and commercial developments within the villages.” Town Administrator Sue P. Sheppard had great praise for the sub-committee for their efforts. Sheppard added, “Thanks to the members of the sub-committee, the Town Planner and the Zoning Enforcement Officer, who worked for so many months, the residents and business community of Lincoln will have a user friendly and straight forward zoning ordinance to work with. The next step is for the Town Council to review the proposed revisions and implement them in a timely manner.”

The Town encourages residents to review the draft document. Any suggestions can be given to their Town Councilor, at a public hearing or by e-mail. The proposed zoning revisions are available on the Town’s web site – [www.Lincolnri.org](http://www.Lincolnri.org). A printed copy can be viewed at the Town Hall in the Building Department during regular Town Hall hours. The first work session to discuss the zoning revisions is scheduled for May 25, 2006 at 7:00 PM at Town Hall. The work session will be held jointly by the Town Council and Planning Board and is open to the public.

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