

# PLANNING COMMISSION GROUP SUMMARY

**Issue:**

The town of Northbury is reviewing its zoning. There is an understanding that over the last two decades, development has largely occurred outside of the village (designated growth area). This sprawl pattern of development has increased costs to the town in maintaining dispersed infrastructure (roads, school bus service, emergency response services). The Planning Commission wishes to update its zoning districts to incentivize development in the village centers and maintain a working landscape of farms and woodlots as a buffer to larger continuous forests on the outskirts.

**Talking Points:** This must be included in your presentation but said in your own words.

- Concerned about sprawl and escalating costs for the town
- 36% of the homes built in Northbury in the last two decades were built in the Agricultural or Conservation Districts.
- Only 7% of these homes were built in the village
- Propose change of single family homes from Administrative Review to Conditional Use to reduce development in these areas
- Propose change of maximum building envelopes to make for smaller cleared areas
- Our proposals are moderate (not extreme) and won't adversely impact the character of our town
- Our proposals will lesson sprawl in outlying districts

Note: Perhaps you don't want to mention this in your presentation, but you should know: Northbury doesn't have a central septic system in the village center. Existing units in village center are mostly historic and all have their own septic systems. Because of the water table and soil properties of the area, potential for **increasing number of septic systems in the village is limited**. Proposals to put up a bond for work on a centralized septic system have been consistently rejected by the voters (who mostly live in rural residential areas). You see the current zoning proposal as one good step forward towards fixing your towns problems, but you know that this septic problem in the village is going to have to be dealt with soon if we actually want to see growth there. Still, you can't change everything all at once, and you think, "one step at a time."

## PROPOSED CHANGES TO NORTHBURY ZONING

### **In the Agricultural District AND in the Conservation and Forestry Districts:**

- Single and two family dwellings will change from *Administrative Review* to *Conditional Use*. (In other words, there will be a somewhat heightened level of review for new single or two family dwellings.)
- The maximum building envelope size will change from 2 acres to ½ acre.