

On 01/29/2024 9:06 AM EST Christopher Olney <olneyc@manchester.ma.us> wrote:

Good morning Lorraine,

In general, a response to letters sent to the Task Force requires authorization by the members, which can only happen at a regular meeting.

However, requests that public documents or correspondence be posted are legitimate and do not need approval, and I believe that Gail has taken appropriate steps as you requested.

You have also specifically asked that I provide you with the number of existing multifamily units in the General District and the Residential D-1 and D-2 districts. I presume you are requesting an exact count, and not an estimate.

It seems like a simple request, and it is indeed public information that you can research yourself by going to the town website and clicking on each relevant parcel to obtain the property card which lists the number of units.

It would be a significant project, and would require a large amount of time by town staff or the town's consultant. More importantly, this data would not be particularly helpful to the work of the Task Force. The state zoning mandate is not tied to the number of existing multifamily units. It only is concerned with multifamily units allowed by right under zoning. Since multifamily is not an expressly allowed use in Manchester in any district, our current zoning bylaw does not comply with the state requirement and would have to be changed. There is of course the exception that in the General District, an existing structure may be converted to a 3-family building, provided that there is no expansion to the area of the building. It is not at all clear what buildings would qualify, as they would have to provide adequate off-street parking. The consultant has done some modelling to see if this concept could be used in and outside the downtown to put us into compliance.

Why do you need data for the entire districts? We don't think it would be wise to change zoning requirements to the entire General or D districts. We only need to create 59 acres of a zoning district or districts, and thus we believe smaller overlay districts offer a much more concise and efficient solution with the least impact on the town. As we focus in on these smaller districts, it will be much easier to collect data such as the number of units and existing density of each. The Task Force has reiterated its position that it wants to advocate for the alternatives that do not exceed the minimum requirements to be compliant.

final point: the number of existing residential units in a new district, whether single family or multifamily, is significant. These existing units would determine the number of additional new units that would be allowed by right as a result of the state mandate.

Perhaps if you could share your thinking in counting just multifamily housing in the districts you have targeted, we might be able to address your interest and concerns without spending valuable time and resources.

Thank you for your interest.

Chris