

June 27, 2016



Chairman Gary Bousquet
Clinton Planning & Zoning Commission
54 East Main Street
Clinton, CT 06413




**RE: Petition of Amend Zoning Regulations and Map, Clinton Housing, Inc.
(Addition of new Floating Zone in Section 21.3.2, Affordable Housing
District-1)**

Architecture
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Chairman Bousquet and PZC Members,

Please accept this letter as part of your consideration of the proposal to amend the Zoning Regulations to create the second floating zone enabled by Section 21, this one entitled "Affordable Housing District-1." I have reviewed these proposed amendments for internal consistency and also for consistency with the recently-adopted 2015-2025 Plan of Conservation & Development (PoCD), and have the following comments:

- 1) There is no question that the PoCD is strongly supportive of increasing opportunities for affordable and mixed-income housing throughout Clinton. The Housing chapter (p. 91-100) highlights this support;
- 2) The focus for increased density of housing opportunities is intended to be in the Route 1 corridor, particularly near the train station, transit, civic, and shopping opportunities;
- 3) The development of multi-family housing should support existing neighborhood character from a design and visual impact standpoint;
- 4) The proposed AHD-1 floating zone is targeted to existing residential areas of Clinton, presumably for infill and increased density within existing residential neighborhoods, as opposed to the commercial- or mixed-use districts along Route 1;
- 5) The initial procedure described in proposed 21.3.2.a appears to be relatively straightforward and tracks with the previously-approved floating zone regulations;
- 6) This proposal appears to be a hybrid of the as-of-right nature of the Town's status subject to the Affordable Housing Appeals Act (CGS §8-30g) and an attempt to provide some parameters and limitation to this sort of multi-family housing development;

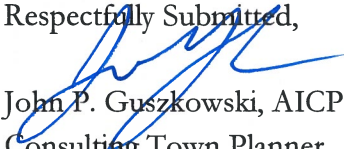
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- 7) While the limitation to five acres of development area (buildings, driveways, parking, etc.) in Section 21.3.2.a.4.ii and the maximum ground coverage of 25% in Section 21.3.2.c.3.i do provide some potential assurance that these potential developments will not overwhelm their neighborhoods, it is not clear if these regulations are enforceable;
- 8) If an affordable housing application (filed under CGS §8-30g) was sought for either the proposed “landing” site of 8 Liberty Place or in any other residential area in Clinton, it is not clear to me that these proposed regulations would need to be followed in any of its restrictions (to acreage, lot coverage, bedroom limits, parking standards, etc.). The State statute would tend to over-ride local regulations where there is a conflict;
- 9) Given that, it is not obvious to me what the purpose of this proposed amendment is. If the amendment is motivated by a desire to both promote affordable housing development in Clinton and to exert somewhat more control of its location, there may be a better approach;
- 10) The State established the Incentive Housing Zone program (CGS §8-13n-w) several years ago to help municipalities accomplish both of those goals (more affordable housing with more local control), and it is largely through this process that a Town can target specific locations for affordable housing suitability and develop enforceable design standards and parameters for development. The Commission has undertaken some exploration of this program, but has not yet taken any definitive action.

In summary, it seems clear that the applicant wishes to undertake an affordable housing development at 8 Liberty Place and is proposing to voluntarily subject themselves to a set of regulatory standards that are harmonious with the PoCD and should help the proposed development “fit” better in its neighborhood context. There is no evident reason that the Commission should deny their offer to take this step. That said, should the Commission choose to deny this proposed amendment and forego a floating zone dealing with Affordable Housing at this time, the applicant (Clinton Housing, Inc.) could very easily apply for and receive Site Plan approval for this exact development by invoking CGS §8-30g at any time.

Please contact me if you have any questions about these comments. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,


John P. Guskowski, AICP
Consulting Town Planner