

January 25, 2021

Dear Housing Committee,

First: thank you for serving on this committee.

As long time member of P&Z, I was pleased we could do something to help this area of need, but regret not doing more. Our greatest success came with liberalizing accessory apartments. Perhaps our greatest failure was not approving an Incentive Housing Zone when we had the chance.

At this point, my sense of largest potential for significant impact fall into two categories: Incentive Housing Zones, and/or zoning changes. As everyone knows, Cornwall's potential for development is constrained by our topography. To help show areas more suitable for development, from a septic point of view, P&Z included Development Suitability mapping in the POCD.

Incentive Housing Zones

Not much to mention here, except, of course, a major blockage to this is the ownership/availability of good land. I'm recalling that the NHCOC in their regional 10 year Plan highlighted the region roughly in the area of the School, including the Town owned gravel bank for increased housing? I don't know the Town's long term plans for the gravel bank, but wonder if it could be considered, someday, for an IHZ?

Zoning Changes

I feel changing the zoning for all of Cornwall is a big reach, there would certainly be major push-back. But maybe changing the zoning for one targeted area would work. My choice would be Cornwall Village, due to it's current density and good land for septic. If this was considered, I would ask: what would be better and/or easier to implement: reducing the minimum acreage from 1 acre to ½ acre; or adopting two-family zoning? My hunch is two family zoning might be the better bet, guessing a two-family unit might need only one septic?

If this notion is considered and thought a good idea by your committee, I would suggest approaching the selling of it very carefully with a long time horizon. Informational meetings, time for questions and answers. Time for the residents to absorb what it means and why its a good idea for the Town and for them. No quick fix, but might have significant long-term results.

That's my two cents. Hope its helpful and again, thanks for your work.

Dave Colbert