

Proposed Conservation Subdivision Amendment to Zoning Ordinance

By ballot vote during polling hours

Andover Planning Board

I. Purpose

The Town of Andover Master Plan (2011) emphasizes and prioritizes the inclusion of Conservation Subdivisions as an appropriate approach to town zoning. The 2011 Master Plan notes, "Conservation Subdivision can lower public infrastructure development and maintenance costs in addition to protecting community-defined resources of importance" and can potentially "aid Andover in achieving the goal of maintaining large blocks of land in very low-density areas of town."

A Conservation Subdivision is a residential subdivision in which a portion of the site remains as permanently protected open space. Homes are located on a predetermined portion of the remaining lot. Under this approach, the Planning Board works with the applicant to fit the development into the newly defined landscape to maximize the protection of important natural features and to maintain the character of the zoning district.

II. Objective

To maintain the rural character of Andover, preserve its farmland and forests, and maintain its rural viewscapes:

A. To preserve those areas of the site that have the highest ecological value, including, for example, large unfragmented blocks of undeveloped land, wildlife habitat corridors, and hunting game lands, "Highest Ranked Wildlife Habitat" as assessed by the NH Fish and Game Department's Wildlife Action Plan, and water resources (especially drinking water supply areas and watersheds, wetlands, streams, and rivers).

B. To locate buildings and structures on those portions of the site that are the most appropriate for development and not on portions ill-suited for development, including, for example, areas with poor soil conditions, a high water table, vulnerability to frequent flooding, or excessively steep slopes.

C. To preserve historic, archeological, and cultural features located on the site.

D. To create a contiguous network of open spaces or "greenways" by linking

the site's open spaces both within the subdivision and to open spaces on adjoining lands wherever possible.

E. To reduce the impacts on water resources by minimizing land disturbance, creation of impervious surfaces, and stormwater runoff.

F. To reduce the extent of roads, sidewalks, and stormwater management structures that must be built and maintained.

G. To minimize the deleterious impact of residential development on the municipality, its neighboring properties, and the natural environment.

III. Requirements

A. Conservation Subdivisions shall comply with all provisions of this Ordinance and the Andover Subdivision Regulations. Where regulations are in conflict, the provisions of this Ordinance shall apply.

B. Conservation Subdivisions are allowed in all zoning districts except Forest and Agriculture zone (FA), provided that the subdivisions are consistent with the predominant character of the district in which they are located.

C. Conservation Subdivisions may be established with either of the two types of ownership included herein. The ownership of homestead sites shall be established at the creation of the Conservation Subdivision:

1. Individual lots and separate ownership for each residential building site. Each building lot will be identified with a property line and dwelling envelope which shows where any building and any well and septic will be placed. The envelopes will be spaced to provide for adequate separation between structures. The lots and envelopes will be designed to enhance the privacy of each dwelling.

2. Land owned by one entity with individual dwelling units owned by others. Each dwelling unit will have an identifiable dwelling envelope indicating the location for each building and any well and septic but will not have separate property lines. The dwelling envelopes will be planned to provide for adequate separation between structures.

The full text of the proposed amendment is on the Town's website and available in the Town Office.

Conservation Subdivision Ordinance Would Expand Housing Options

Ordinance included on ballot for March 8

Andover Planning Board

A new Conservation Subdivision ordinance will be on the ballot before Andover voters on Tuesday, March 8. The Andover Planning Board and the Andover Conservation Commission both recommend a "yes" vote to adopt the new ordinance. (See selected text from the proposed ordinance, left.)

The new Conservation Subdivision ordinance aims to protect Andover's open spaces and wild areas from "suburban sprawl," while also creating more options for building the types of attractive housing that are in high demand today. The new ordinance encourages the construction of quality housing with

low heating and upkeep costs, while empowering the Planning Board to reject the types of structures that would be out of keeping in Andover.

The wording of the ordinance was carefully chosen by the Planning Board after nearly two years of research and discussion. It was then reviewed by citizens at two public hearings held in January.

Voting "yes" to accept the new Conservation Subdivision will protect Andover's "rural New England town character" while encouraging the creation of attractive, high-quality housing that will meet our community's needs and desires into the future.

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