

## Planning Board Recommends Accessory Dwelling Units

Art Urie, For the Planning Board

Accessory Dwelling Unit is a very complicated title for a simple idea. An Accessory Dwelling Unit is a separate living space within what looks like a single-family home. Traditionally such units have always existed and have been identified as “mother-in-law apartments” or “granny flats” or “au-pair suites.” Calling them Accessory Dwelling Units makes clear that their existence as separate living spaces does not depend upon the family connections or employment of the occupants.

Our current Zoning Ordinance makes no provision for Accessory Dwelling Units. If someone wants to create a separate living space in the family home for a recent graduate who just started employment or for any other person, our ordinance requires applying for and receiving a special exception from the Zoning Board of Adjustment before applying for a Building Permit.

Providing for Accessory Dwelling units would make the process much easier for those who want to create such living spaces. Having this provision will increase the supply of afford-

able housing without the need for more infrastructure or further land development. It will be useful to existing homeowners with more living space in the house than needed, provides opportunity for single parents, care-givers, and differently abled persons. It provides an easy way to integrate affordable housing into the community with minimal negative impact.

A recent change in New Hampshire State Law, which becomes effective June 1, 2017, provides that Accessory Dwelling Units shall be allowed in all zones that permit single family dwellings. The Planning Board thinks it wise for Andover to provide for Accessory Dwelling Units in a way that supports Andover’s small town and rural character.

This issue of the Beacon includes the Warrant Article for the March 2017 Town Meeting which would add Accessory Dwelling Units to Our Zoning Ordinance. If you have questions, any member of the Planning Board will be glad to answer them or send your questions to the Chair of the Planning Board: Nancy Teach nanceteach@gmail.com.

## The Town Offices Energy Upgrade Warrant Articles – Part 2

Saving energy and money for the town

Randall Costa  
Andover Energy Group

In the last Beacon issue we described the high-efficiency upgrade program underway for Andover’s Town Offices building, including the library. We previewed warrant articles to complete this program through improvement of the building’s heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and through solar.

Here are the details of the warrant articles. All the costs will be funded from existing capital reserves and will require no new taxes.

As the prior article explained, the Town Offices HVAC needs to be upgraded. The heating is uneven and difficult to control, the air quality needs improvement, and the air conditioning is inadequate and inefficient. After comparing numerous options, the AEG with support of our Town’s leadership recommends that high efficiency air-based heat pumps be installed to serve as the primary source of heat and do all the air conditioning. The existing oil-fired boiler and hot water radiators would be retained for supplemental or back-up heat.

The heat pump system will cost \$15,000. This cost will be reduced by a \$3,669 energy efficiency rebate from the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative (NHEC), so the net cost to the Town will be \$11,331. The heat pumps require virtually no maintenance, just cleaning, and have over a 15-year service life. The heat pumps should pay for themselves in 7 to 9 years and save approximately \$1,000 per year for the Town after that.

Heat pumps powered by solar are the lowest cost HVAC available – up to four times more efficient than oil. Together with the HVAC upgrade, the AEG and Town leadership also recommend that solar panels be installed on the roof of the Town Offices. These panels will generate the power used for the heat pumps and nearly all of the power used for the rest of the building.

To avoid paying the cost of the panels (\$59,081) the Town will enter into an agreement with ReVision Energy of Maine under which ReVision installs, owns and maintains the panels, gives the Town a guaranteed reduced cost for all the electricity generated, starting at 71% of the current NHEC rate,

and gives the Town the option of buying the panels after six years for the greatly reduced price of \$17,724. The Town will have to pay a one-time fee of up to \$2,000 to the NHEC to connect the solar system to the electric grid.

The panels are warranted for 25 years and are projected to last over 40 years. The system requires no maintenance except the replacement of inverters at the 18 to 20 year mark. Taking into account this inverter replacement, the purchase cost, all other costs related to the system, and the slow reduction of panel efficiency over time, the solar panels are expected to save the Town more than \$50,000 over the life of the panels.

To implement these two linked projects there are four warrant articles: Articles 10 through 13. Article 10 funds the purchase of the HVAC. Articles 11, 12, and 13 are for the solar panels and all go together. Article 11 authorizes the Select Board to finalize the agreement with ReVision to install and operate the panels and give the Town the discounted power the panels produce; this is referred to as a Power Purchase Agreement. Article 12 authorizes an allowance of \$2,000 from the Town Building Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund to cover the NHEC charges. Article 13 sets up a dedicated fund to accumulate six yearly installments of \$2,954 from reserves for the optional purchase of the system.

NO NEW TAXES will be raised to complete these projects. Funding will come from the previously established Town Building Capital Reserve Fund and the Unassigned Fund Balance. As you can see, the savings are impressive, and the outcome will be a healthy, comfortable, controllable heating and air condition system in the Town offices.

For all these reasons, these warrant articles are endorsed by the Budget Committee and the Select Board. Also the Capital Improvements Committee endorsed our earlier HVAC proposal as part of its long-term capital plan for the Town, and now this proposal is for even less total expenditure and includes solar as well as HVAC. We very much hope you will join us at Town Meeting on March 14 in voting for the warrant articles that will make these upgrades a reality!

For those interested in further detail, please see the invitation accompanying this article to an AEG Open House at the Town Offices on Saturday, March 11.



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