

**Town of North Haven  
16 Town Office Square  
Post Office Box 400  
North Haven, Maine 04853  
207.867.4433**

November 19, 2021

**Re: North Haven Zoning and Housing**

Dear Community Members,

We are writing for two reasons: (1) to share our thoughts on how North Haven's Land Use Ordinance and our Shoreland Zone Ordinance might be changed to help address the shortage of year-round housing; and (2) to ask you to complete a short survey so we know how you feel about possibly changing these two ordinances.

We are in the middle of developing a Community Vision. The community is definitely supporting this process and we thank everyone who has helped us so far. In addition to creating the vision statement itself, we are asking everyone who has gotten involved what they view as the challenges facing our island. Using this information, we will develop a list of priorities to address. With that list in hand, we will prepare concrete plans with concrete timelines to get things done.

One thing that is already clear from the Community Vision process: we do not have enough year-round rental or home ownership opportunities available to meet demand. Young people who would live, work, and put their children in school here are unable to find places to live. Our concern is that waiting months or even another year to address zoning might simply be too late.

Our Land Use Ordinance and Shoreland Zone Ordinance establish minimum lot sizes in our various zoning districts. As we work through possible changes to the existing ordinances, we are considering recommending that voters approve reducing these minimums. Reduced minimum lot sizes might encourage people to make smaller parcels of land available to year-round renters and homeowners.

Here are the changes we are considering bringing to the Town's voters:

- Village District lot size would decrease from 20,000 square feet (about 1/2 acre) to 8,000 square feet (about 1/5 acre)
- Rural District lot size would decrease from 2 acres to 1 acre
- Shoreland Zone lot size would decrease in two ways:
  - o From 3 acres in the Village District to the State minimum, 30,000 square feet, which is about 2/3 of an acre

- o From 3 acres in the Rural District to 2 acres

[You should also know that State regulations allow Commercial Fisheries and Maritime activities in the Shoreland Zone without minimum lot sizes or minimum shore frontage requirements.]

We recognize our current zoning rules are not the only problem. But they are a part of the problem. Any comprehensive solution must include zoning concepts that would support – not impede or prohibit – the availability of affordable year-round housing.

We also recognize that reducing minimum zoning requirements could lead to more seasonal and vacation homes without helping to ease the shortage of year-round homes. This is a risk the community might want to take in a comprehensive effort to ease the housing crisis.

Concurrently with these proposed zoning changes, we will talk with applicable federal, state, and local entities (such as the Maine State Housing Authority and North Haven Sustainable Housing), explore solutions used by other communities, and talk with current landowners about possible ways in which they might help.

Finally, we want to assure you that the attached survey is not a substitute for the process we must follow under Maine law to enact an ordinance. The survey will not be binding on the Planning Board, the Select Board, or the Town's voters. We simply want to gauge your interest in making any changes to minimum lot sizes. If we decide the best option is to formally recommend reducing the minimum lot sizes, we will distribute the proposed ordinances, hold the required public hearings, and put the final decision to the Town's voters.

Please help us by completing this survey. You can mail in your response or complete the survey online as noted on the survey itself.

Thank you for your help.

On behalf of the Select Board and the Planning Board,

Rick Lattimer  
Town Administrator