

ARTICLE 5 - COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICIES

Section 5.1 - Community Services Donation Funds

5.1.1 - Creation

There are hereby created two donation funds within the Department of Community Services. These shall be kept separate and distinct. They are as follows:

1. General Elder Residents Assistance Fund - Elder /Human Services Division
2. General Resident Assistance Fund – Elder/Human Services Division

5.1.2 - Purpose

These funds are established as follows:

Fund No. 1 - to assist the elderly in times of need and when no other resources are available. Examples may include: helping to meet transportation expenses, or extraordinary repairs to property. This fund is set up so that in many instances, loans can be repaid and the moneys made available again.

Fund No. 2 - similar to Fund No. 1, this fund is established to assist any resident of the Town in time of need, and when no other resources are available. Some elements of this fund may be set up on a loan basis, with repayment to go back into the fund.

5.1.3 - Procedures

The following procedures are approved for the administration of these funds by the Board of Selectmen:

1. The funds are hereby established by the Board of Selectmen for the purposes stated.
2. When moneys are received, they will be deposited through the Treasurer-Collector, and a notation made in the appropriate monthly report. Gifts will be accepted for a particular fund, but with no other restrictions unless such restrictions are approved by the Board of Selectmen.
3. To expend moneys, the Department will use the normal Town bill-paying process, with prior approval required from the Elder/Human Services Administrator for funds Number 1, and 2. The Town Manager shall also sign for expenditures from all funds. This will provide adequate checks and balances.
4. In the monthly report of the appropriate department or division, mention will be made as to each circumstance of expenditure from the funds (omitting mention of the name of the individual recipient).
5. Annually, a summary report will be made to the Town in the Annual Report. The summary report will include the names (unless withheld at the donor's request) and amount of donations, and the purposes for which each expenditure was made.

This system is initiated to keep the necessary confidentiality, to provide the appropriate checks and balances, and to provide for the operation of these funds in an efficient and expeditious manner, since much of the need is often emergency in nature.

Adopted: September 13, 1988, amended 12-13-9, amended November 1, 2005; amended 3-27-12

Section - 5.2 Local Initiative Program (LIP) Regulations

5.2.1 Purpose

The Local Initiative Program (“LIP”) is a state housing program that was established to give cities and towns significantly more flexibility in their efforts to provide low and moderate income housing by permitting the Town to provide non-financial assistance. Projects undertaken through the LIP must, as part of the application to Department of Housing and Community Development (“DHCD”), have the written endorsement of the Board of Selectmen as the “chief elected official” of the Town.

In a LIP project, the Town becomes a partner and proponent of the project. Therefore, the Board of Selectmen needs to be assured that its participation in the project fully meets the Board’s expectation for the production of low and moderate income housing in the Town of Reading and is consistent with the Town’s Housing Plan, Master Plan, and Open Space Plan.

It is the intent of the Board of Selectmen to encourage applications for affordable housing under the LIP program and in order to give the Board of Selectmen and the Community an opportunity to have early input into affordable housing developments, these regulations are hereby established to set forth the substantive and procedural requirements for review of LIP applications submitted to the Board of Selectmen.

5.2.2 Review Process

Upon notification by an applicant that it would like to propose an affordable housing project under LIP, the Board of Selectmen shall refer the applicant to the Town Planner who will coordinate review of the project and shall at the completion thereof, bring forward a report for the Board of Selectmen’s consideration. This review process is intended as a preliminary review to assist the Board of Selectmen in deciding whether to endorse the project by issuing a letter of support to be filed with the LIP application to DHCD.

The review process is not intended to either extend or delay the time frames otherwise allowed for a LIP or Comprehensive Permit process and will not prejudice the formal comprehensive permit process.

The review process shall begin with the submittal of 20 copies of the preliminary or concept plan depicting the design of the project to allow for early review thereof while its design is still flexible. To facilitate this preliminary review, the Town Planner shall have the authority to request that the applicant meet at least once with the Town of Reading Development Review Team (DRT), and, if needed, with the following entities, boards and commissions in order to obtain their preliminary comments:

- a. Community Planning and Development Commission;
- b. Conservation Commission;
- c. Board of Health;

- d. Police and Fire Departments;
- e. Engineering Division;
- f. any other board of department that the Town Planner believes would provide assistance in the preliminary review; and
- g. abutters to the project.

Materials to submit for DRT and Board of Selectmen Review must include owner name, applicant name, certified plot plan, site plan showing the contours of the site and the footprint of all proposed buildings, roads, and parking, wetlands delineation, open space, front and rear elevations for each building, a description of the proposed units, number of units, and proposed rental or sales prices

Prior to any DRT meeting, the Town Planner will send a written request to each such board or commission directly that it review the preliminary design and concept of the project and provide written comments. The scope of review at these meetings is intended to be a review of the preliminary design and concept of the project and is not intended to be viewed as a final approval of the project by any board or commission.

The Town Planner shall compile the comments and work with the applicant to develop a design concept for presentation to the Board of Selectmen which concept shall include a discussion of the following:

- a. fiscal impact of the project on Town Services;
- b. public benefits of the project;
- c. number of affordable units to be provided and restrictions to be instituted for long term affordability;
- d. site design and engineering issues;
- e. traffic issues;
- f. the infrastructure necessary to support the project;
- g. off-site improvements; and
- h. scale and size of proposed development

At a time or times to be mutually arranged by the Town Manager and the Applicant, a presentation of the LIP conceptual plan shall be made to the Board of Selectmen for review and consideration. The Board of Selectmen may request from the applicant or town board or commission any other information which it deems necessary in order to review and evaluate the project. The Board of Selectmen shall then determine whether to endorse the project and issue a written letter of support.

5.2.3 No Waiver

This process in no way relieves the applicant, upon receiving a site eligibility letter, from then having to submit an application to the Zoning Board of Appeals (“ZBA”) for a comprehensive permit pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 40B, §§21-23. This process also does not prohibit the ZBA from soliciting its own comments from other town boards, commissions and committees nor from undertaking its own review process.

5.2.4 Owner Occupancy Requirements

All affordable units sold under a home ownership LIP program shall be owner-occupied.

5.2.5 Affordable Unit Design, Location, Access, Timing

The affordable units shall be indistinguishable from the market-rate units and shall be comparable in initial construction quality and exterior design to the market-rate units. The affordable units must have access to all on-site amenities. Affordable units shall be dispersed throughout the project. All affordable units must be constructed and occupied not later than concurrently with construction and occupation of the market-rate units, and affordable units in phased development projects shall be constructed and occupied in proportion to number of units in each phase of the project. The total number of bedrooms in the affordable units must be in the same proportion to the number of units in each phase of the project.

5.2.6 Local Preference

The maximum number of affordable units allowed by law and the applicable subsidy program, but no more than seventy percent (70%) of the Affordable Units, shall be reserved for sale to persons or families who satisfy all of the eligibility requirements, and who are either Reading residents; parents or children of Reading residents; employees of the Town of Reading or its school system, including the Northeast Regional Vocational Technical School; employees of Reading businesses; and veterans.

Adopted July 22, 2003, amended November 1, 2005, amended July 13, 2010

Section 5.3 - Local Preference for Affordable Housing

The following shall constitute the Town of Reading policy regarding the local preference for affordable housing. This policy shall apply to LIP applications, and shall apply in any and all other situations where there is a production of affordable housing within the Town of Reading, and for which a local preference is available. The following criteria are to be considered equal in value:

- Current residents – A household in which one or more members is living in the Town of Reading at the time of application. Documentation of residency must be provided which may include appearance on the Town Census, rent receipts, utility bills, or voter registration.
- Family of current residents – Close relatives of current residents of the Town of Reading, including children or parents of a Reading resident.
- Municipal Employees – Employees of any of the Departments of the Town of Reading, including the School Department, Light Department, and Municipal Government departments.
- Employees of Local Businesses – Employees of local businesses located within the Town of Reading. Documentation may be required, including pay receipts, or similar proof that the employee is working in the town of Reading.

Adopted November 1, 2005