

Natick Community & Economic Development

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Town of Natick, 13 E. Central Street Natick, MA 01760

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To: Natick Select Board
cc: James Errickson, Town Administrator
From: Amanda Loomis, Director of Community and Economic Development
Date: May 15, 2023

RE: Regional Housing Service Office (RHSO)

Over the past several years, Natick has been working on creating affordable housing through its Inclusionary Housing Bylaw, adopted in 2018 and recently updated at the 2023 Spring Annual Town Meeting. Natick has also created many affordable units through the provisions of MGL Chapter 40B (projects within but not limited to the areas of the Golden Triangle and Natick Center). As of March 15, 2023, of Natick's 14,052 residential units, 1,494 are affordable and counted towards the SHI. Therefore, Natick is compliant at this time, making 10.63 percent of its housing stock affordable (based on the 2010 Census).

Despite Natick being fortunate to have a housing trust (Natick Affordable Housing Trust), there is a lot to be done relative to affording housing once permitted. Tasks associated with recording and managing affordable units at the staff level include documentation review, monitoring, reporting, resale, and refinancing. Additionally, Natick is a WestMetro Consortium community requiring the production of regular reporting and regular management and use of HOME funding.

Natick, like any organization, when team members leave, there is a loss of institutional knowledge and a required learning process to get the organization back up to speed. Therefore, staff has sought the services of the Regional Housing Service Office (RHSO), which will provide consistent staff-level support where necessary and management of affordable housing as outlined in a contract set between RHSO and the community.

In addition to affordable housing staff support provided by RHSO, there is a community connection with the other nine municipalities that work in collaboration with RHSO. These communities meet regularly as a group with RHSO, so there is a regional connection while providing support.

In summary, RHSO provides tasks that provide both staff and Natick Affordable Housing Trust level support, with consistency when team members depart. It is with the hope that the Select Board will support the partnership between RHSO and Natick to improve the Town's efforts relative to affordable housing.