

*Lori Fernand
15 Camille Lane
West Simsbury, CT 06092
860-904-8873 lorifernand88@gmail.com*

January 29, 2021

Dear Members of the Simsbury Zoning Commission,

I am submitting this correspondence to express my support for an aggressive effort to achieve our affordable housing requirements in Simsbury. It is obvious, that to do this will take significant determination and creativity at the town, state and national level, and of course the Zoning Commission will have a major role in our success.

Recently, I was excited to hear that the Simsbury Planning Commission's updated Affordable Housing Plan includes the establishment of a task force to identify actions we can take immediately and to explore changes we need to make to our local ordinances to fulfill the state requirement that ten percent of our housing stock be deemed affordable.

The growing calls among Simsbury residents to prioritize achieving our affordable housing requirements support the establishment of this task force. This must be coupled with the contracting of an affordable housing expert to provide the full range of options for our town; to facilitate a conversation with the community to finalize a plan of action; and then to define a timeline to achieve our agreed upon vision.

As the Simsbury Affordable Housing Plan States, "More affordable units diversifies the housing stock...It creates options for citizens to choose to live in town whether its first time homeowners, renters, seniors wishing to age in place, or individuals that would otherwise not have the economic means to consider living in this community." The growing literature on the beneficial impacts of diversified communities point to stronger local economies and enhanced creativity and quality of life.

In addition, a complete affordable housing plan is a component of a vibrant and resilient environment. Properly identifying and siting affordable homes should include walkability and access to public transportation and parks and natural spaces. This might lower the need for vehicles and enhances the opportunities for people to connect to nature, one of the major reasons so many of us came to Simsbury.

I look forward to the unfolding conversation and joining the effort to realize our affordable housing requirements but even more so to realize the vision of a more vibrant place to call home.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

Warm regards,

Lori Fernand