

TITLE LXIV PLANNING AND ZONING

CHAPTER 674 LOCAL LAND USE PLANNING AND REGULATORY POWERS

Workforce Housing

NH RSA 674:58-61

Section 674:58

674:58 Definitions. – In this subdivision:

I. "Affordable" means housing with combined rental and utility costs or combined mortgage loan debt services, property taxes, and required insurance that do not exceed 30 percent of a household's gross annual income.

II. "Multi-family housing" for the purpose of workforce housing developments, means a building or structure containing 5 or more dwelling units, each designed for occupancy by an individual household.

III. "Reasonable and realistic opportunities for the development of workforce housing" means opportunities to develop economically viable workforce housing within the framework of a municipality's ordinances and regulations adopted pursuant to this chapter and consistent with RSA 672:1, III-e. The collective impact of all such ordinances and regulations on a proposal for the development of workforce housing shall be considered in determining whether opportunities for the development of workforce housing are reasonable and realistic. If the ordinances and regulations of a municipality make feasible the development of sufficient workforce housing to satisfy the municipality's obligation under RSA 674:59, and such development is not unduly inhibited by natural features, the municipality shall not be in violation of its obligation under RSA 674:59 by virtue of economic conditions beyond the control of the municipality that affect the economic viability of workforce housing development.

IV. "Workforce housing" means housing which is intended for sale and which is affordable to a household with an income of no more than 100 percent of the median income for a 4-person household for the metropolitan area or county in which the housing is located as published annually by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. "Workforce housing" also means rental housing which is affordable to a household with an income of no more than 60 percent of the median income for a 3-person household for the metropolitan area or county in which the housing is located as published annually by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Housing developments that exclude minor children from more than 20 percent of the units, or in which more than 50 percent of the dwelling units have fewer than two bedrooms, shall not constitute workforce housing for the purposes of this subdivision.

Section 674:59

674:59 Workforce Housing Opportunities. –

I. In every municipality that exercises the power to adopt land use ordinances and regulations, such ordinances and regulations shall provide reasonable and realistic opportunities for the development of workforce housing, including rental multi-family housing. In order to provide such opportunities, lot size and overall density requirements for workforce housing shall be reasonable. A municipality that adopts land use ordinances and regulations shall allow workforce housing to be located in a majority, but not necessarily all, of the land area that is zoned to permit residential uses within the municipality. Such a municipality shall have the discretion to determine what land areas are appropriate to meet this obligation. This obligation may be satisfied by the adoption of inclusionary zoning as defined in RSA 674:21, IV(a). This paragraph shall not be construed to require a municipality to allow for the development of multifamily housing in a majority of its land zoned to permit residential uses.

II. A municipality shall not fulfill the requirements of this section by adopting voluntary inclusionary zoning provisions that rely on inducements that render workforce housing developments economically unviable.

III. A municipality's existing housing stock shall be taken into consideration in determining its compliance with this section. If a municipality's existing housing stock is sufficient to accommodate its fair share of the current and reasonably foreseeable regional need for such housing, the municipality shall be deemed to be in compliance with this subdivision and RSA 672:1, III-e.

IV. Paragraph I shall not be construed to require municipalities to allow workforce housing that does not meet reasonable standards or conditions of approval related to environmental protection, water supply, sanitary disposal, traffic safety, and fire and life safety protection.

Section 674:60

674:60 Procedure. –

I. Any person who applies to a land use board for approval of a development that is intended to qualify as workforce housing under this subdivision shall file a written statement of such intent as part of the application. The failure to file such a statement shall constitute a waiver of the applicant's rights under RSA 674:61, but shall not preclude an appeal under other applicable laws. In any appeal where the applicant has failed to file the statement required by this paragraph, the applicant shall not be entitled to a judgment on appeal that allows construction of the proposed development, or otherwise permits the proposed workforce housing development to proceed despite its nonconformance with the municipality's ordinances or regulations.

II. If a land use board approves an application to develop workforce housing subject to conditions or restrictions, it shall notify the applicant in writing of such conditions and restrictions and give the applicant an opportunity to establish the cost of complying with the conditions and restrictions and the effect of compliance on the economic viability of the proposed development. The board's notice to the applicant of the conditions and restrictions shall constitute a conditional approval solely for the purpose of complying with the requirements of RSA 676:4, I(c)(1). It shall not constitute a final decision for any other purpose, including the

commencement of any applicable appeal period.

III. Upon receiving notice of conditions and restrictions under paragraph II, the applicant may submit evidence to establish the cost of complying with the conditions and restrictions and the effect on economic viability within the period directed by the board, which shall not be less than 30 days.

(a) Upon receipt of such evidence from the applicant, the board shall allow the applicant to review the evidence at the board's next meeting for which 10 days' notice can be given, and shall give written notice of the meeting to the applicant at least 10 days in advance. At such meeting, the board may also receive and consider evidence from other sources.

(b) The board may affirm, alter, or rescind any or all of the conditions or restrictions of approval after such meeting.

(c) Subject to subparagraph (d), the board shall not issue its final decision on the application before such meeting, unless the applicant fails to submit the required evidence within the period designated by the board, in which case it may issue its final decision any time after the expiration of the period.

(d) If an applicant notifies the board in writing at any time that the applicant accepts the conditions and restrictions of approval, the board may issue its final decision without further action under this paragraph.

IV. A municipality may require that an applicant record restrictive covenants acceptable to the land use board that the workforce housing may not be rented to or sold to any household whose income is greater than that specified in RSA 674:58, IV. The covenant shall be for the term specified in the regulations of the land use board. The municipality may adopt regulations to insure compliance with the covenants, which regulations may include requirements for the monitoring of the project by the municipality or by a suitable third party agency qualified to carry out such requirements, including but not limited to requiring the production of annual income verification for renters and non-owner occupiers. The land use board may consider the existence of recorded covenants or income qualification and occupancy criteria as satisfying the purpose of this paragraph if such covenants or criteria are administered by a state or federal entity.

Section 674:61

674:61 Appeals. –

I. Any person who has filed the written notice required by RSA 674:60, and whose application to develop workforce housing is denied or is approved with conditions or restrictions which have a substantial adverse effect on the viability of the proposed workforce housing development may appeal the municipal action to the superior court under RSA 677:4 or RSA 677:15 seeking permission to develop the proposed workforce housing. The petition to the court shall set forth how the denial is due to the municipality's failure to comply with the workforce housing requirements of RSA 674:59 or how the conditions or restrictions of approval otherwise violate such requirements.

II. A hearing on the merits of the appeal shall be held within 6 months of the date on which the action was filed unless counsel for the parties agree to a later date, or the court so orders for good cause. If the court determines that it will be unable to meet this requirement, at the request of either party it shall promptly appoint a referee to hear the appeal within 6 months. Referees shall be impartial, and shall be chosen on the basis of qualifications and experience in planning and

zoning law.

III. In the event the decision of the court or referee grants the petitioner a judgment that allows construction of the proposed development or otherwise orders that the proposed development may proceed despite its nonconformance with local regulations, conditions, or restrictions, the court or referee shall direct the parties to negotiate in good faith over assurances that the project will be maintained for the long term as workforce housing. The court or referee shall retain jurisdiction and upon motion of either party affirming that negotiations are deadlocked, the court or referee shall hold a further hearing on the appropriate term and form of use restrictions to be applied to the project.

Source. 2008, 299:2, eff. Jan. 1, 2010.