

I am Lorraine Bishop, I live at 10 Vale Street and I am here to speak in favor of the petition to repeal TNOZ1.

I moved to Peterborough in 1980 and lived on Old Street Road for 20 years and have now lived on Vale Street for the past 20 years. I continue to live in Peterborough because it is a small town with the traditional attributes of small town life, where I can live and work in my community.

I supported the adoption of Amendment 15 and I would have been satisfied with the compromise that offered between the underlying district zoning and TNOZ1. I am not opposed to the principle of “infill” and I am very much in favor of mixed housing with both workforce and affordable housing being offered in Peterborough. A diverse population makes for a more interesting and sustainable community! I am NOT however in favor of the density that TNOZ1 imposes - up to 16 units per acre in the General Residence District.

My observation of development that has occurred since the enactment of TNOZ1 is that what has been built are “smaller” houses on smaller lots at a high price- certainly not the type of housing that encourages or allows many young families to live in Peterborough. There is a need for a comprehensive, integrated approach to our town’s future. TNOZ1 is not that! It appears rather to be the superimposition of one element of the “New Urbanism” on one part of our town without the integrated approach that takes into account not only the physical, but also the social, emotional and cultural infrastructure that high density requires. As has been pointed out many times during the debate on this issue, TNOZ1 density exceeds that of Milford, Keene, Nashua and downtown Manchester.

Now, you may well ask, “Lorraine Bishop, where have you been for the past 5 years since TNOZ1 was adopted?” I suspect that I am not very different from many people when it comes to zoning - I’m very busy with an active life, and quite frankly, tend to glaze when it comes to all the facts, figures and terminology of zoning. I will admit that I have often turned to the recommendations of the Planning Board when voting on zoning and planning issues. For my negligence in not paying closer attention, I am responsible. It was during the debate on Amendment 15 that I became aware of my negligence, and when after the voice of the majority of the voters did not prevail, I welcomed the opportunity to be involved with Citizens for Sensible Zoning, a group of townspeople who certainly had been paying attention and doing their homework. (I want to emphasize that I am here this evening as an individual resident, taxpayer and voter, not as a member of that or any other group, nor do I speak for any member of Citizens for Sensible Zoning.)

The repeal of TNOZ1 will give space to the Housing Task Force in its current important work. If I could remind us all of the Task Force's Group Mission:

“The focus of the work of the Peterborough Community Task Force on Housing is to design and carry out a community-based process for gathering input from a majority of residents and stakeholders of Peterborough about their concerns, hopes, needs and wants for short & long term housing policy.”

Since it is acknowledged that it will be at least 2, possibly 3, years before the work of the Task Force is presented to the electorate, if TNOZ1 remains in place, those of us living within this overlay district are deprived of being on the same footing as everyone else in Peterborough in having input into our neighborhood's zoning. The repeal of TNOZ1 will not damage our town in any way, but will simply level the playing field so that all residents can have their “concerns, hopes, needs and wants for short and long term housing policy” addressed.