

On behalf of our local residents, we are doing a very good job in running our own communities. Our local citizens make up our town government, provide taxes to run the town government, and know best how to address the needs and

wants of the people that live there. We do not need any more State mandates that interfere with and may not take into consideration local nuances in zoning decisions.

In our town an abandoned golf course was purchased by the town for recreational use from an out of state developer who kept some of the land zoned for single family housing. After several years the developer started applying for zoning changes that would allow him to build nearly 300 apartment units on this land. In Zoning Board meetings the developer provided facts and figures that minimized the impact of this change on the local area. Claims such as parking for 1.5 cars per unit was more than enough. The school system would not see more than 12-15 new students throughout grades K-12. Local traffic would not see a significant increase, etc. This is in a rural area of narrow roads with poor sight lines, no sidewalks, questionable water and sewer capacity in a town considering closing the nearest elementary school to reduce the educational budget expense.

In the developer's last attempt, he threaten a lawsuit because the town was below the mandated 10% affordable housing. The town has over 9.25% affordable housing with several other reasonable projects already approved to address the shortfall. Our fear is that any new State laws controlling local zoning will not provide any protection or provisions that would stop such a developer from cashing in without any way for the town to pay for the additional services it may need to provide.

Perhaps a State property tax based on the impact on a town's budget, not just the value of the buildings, in such a development would give the towns some protection against a developer who's only real interest is making a quick buck and doesn't care about the long term impact of his project. What provisions are there in S.B.1024 to protect local taxpayers from bearing the brunt of unforeseen financial consequences of State mandated zoning changes?

The State of Connecticut already has housing guidelines for cities and towns to follow. It should not become too intrusive in local governments. It should focus on promoting economic growth, lowering taxes, controlling its spending, and creating opportunities that will keep our younger residents from moving out of this state.

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