

O'Brien bill: no impact on mobiles

Adding mobile homes to affordable housing may not affect prices



Staff photo/Susan Haney

Town and Country homes could be counted as affordable housing.

By Kevin Ford
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KINGSTON – Despite fears an amendment to the state's Chapter 40B, affordable housing, law would place a cap on sales of certain homes, the amendment's sponsor insisted that is far from the case.

The law allows developers to propose non-conforming projects if less than 10 percent of a town's housing stock is not deemed affordable. The board of selectman sent letters Wednesday to Sen. Therese Murray and Rep. Thomas O'Brien, urging

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them to support an amendment that would allow half the number of manufactured (or mobile) homes in a community to count toward that 10 percent threshold.

John Creed, a resident of Town and Country Estates, voiced his opposition to the amendment at Tuesday's selectmen's meeting. He feared if existing manufactured homes are deemed affordable under chapter 40B, regulations would restrict sale prices for those homes to a percentage of the average home price in the area.

O'Brien, the amendment's chief sponsor in the House, said Wednesday the amendment would not affect home prices. He said the amendment specifically avoids designating any particular home or group of homes as affordable. Rather, he said, it simply allows a town to count a documentable number toward the 10 percent threshold.

"I would never file an amendment that would in any way, shape or form be harmful to residents of mobile home parks," O'Brien said. "I've been their biggest advocate on Beacon Hill."

O'Brien's amendment would add the following language to the state's affordable housing law:

"50 percent of the homes in a community, as defined by section

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32Q of chapter 140, shall be eligible to be included toward the city or town's affordable housing threshold as documented on the subsidized housing inventory."

According to the assessor's office, the town currently has 288 manufactured homes. O'Brien said the town would simply add the number 144 to its affordable housing inventory.

"The law doesn't specify that a house at, say, 6 Blueberry Lane is affordable," he said. "It's simply a mathematical calculation."

The House originally passed the amendment last year, but the Senate defeated it. O'Brien expects another vote sometime in the next 9 to 14 months.