

From: [Kathleen Sutton](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Regarding the Proposal to drop the Familial restriction on ADUs in Hingham
Date: Friday, January 27, 2023 5:01:14 PM

Dear Planning Board,

Thank you very much for volunteering your time and energy for the betterment of our Town.

I'd like to request that you recommend the part of the ADU Study Committee's proposal that removes the familial restriction on renting standalone ADUs for an affirmative vote at our next Town Meeting. My primary arguments in favor of this position are:

1. We have a critical need for more diverse housing options in Hingham. Realistically, these units, limited in size and not offering amenities like health clubs and swimming pools (e.g., Avalon units), will rent for a more reasonable rate than most current options.
2. Hingham and the US in general are facing a trend of older adults who are "solo aging" and need independent housing options – regardless of whether they happen to be related to a community member. They may wish to live in an ADU or build one so an unrelated caregiver or income-producing tenant can reside on their property.
3. ADUs built explicitly for family members will not be needed by these family members forever. Is it a good use of resources to require them to be removed or vacant when this eventuality occurs?
4. The By-law proposed by the ADU Study Committee contains many restrictions that will prevent allowing detached ADUs from changing the overall character of our community, including a cap on total number of units at 2.5% of total single family residences, setback and lot size requirements, unit size requirements, and a residency requirement that would serve as a strong disincentive to anyone for keeping a disruptive tenant in place, family or otherwise.
5. There have been no reported negative effects of removing the familial restriction on ADUs in the many benchmark towns in the Commonwealth that have already done so.
6. Allowing these units to be rented to anyone has the potential to increase housing options in the community with no effect on open space, no added infrastructure such as utilities and roads, and little, if any, cost to the town.

7.

Because of reason 1 above, the economic appeal of spending the money to construct one of these units *solely* to earn third party rental income is fairly minimal; it seems unrealistic to expect an unwanted surge of building if the familial restriction is removed.

8.

Not all “families” look alike. Common law marriage, step or foster children, and other nontraditional arrangements are becoming more prevalent and this restriction is unduly burdensome on those community members.

The bottom line is that we need more options for people to live in our beautiful community – regardless of whether they already have family here – and this proposal provides a new option with no realistic downside. I also continue to be a proponent of incentivizing ADU owners to charge a lower rental amount vis-a-vis a tax abatement or otherwise.

Respectfully,
Katie Sutton