

From: [Diane DeNapoli](#)
To: [Advisory Committee](#); [Planning Board](#)
Subject: ADU Letter
Date: Tuesday, March 14, 2023 9:26:19 AM

Dear Chair Danis and members of the Advisory Committee,

As a former member of the ADU Study Committee, and the only member who voted to retain the right to vote on the final ADU report that was drafted by Emily Wentworth, I thought it was important for the ADCOM to have a better understanding of the history of the ADU Study Committee.

Although there are no records online, and in accordance with Open Meeting Law, the ADU Study Committee held its first meeting in November 2021. At the first meeting Chair Jen Gay- Smith told the group that we were to “study *how* detached ADU’s would be feasible not *if* they would be feasible.” I questioned this notion as I thought the purpose of the ADU Study Committee was to determine the “feasibility” and not act as if detached ADU’s were a forgone conclusion. Chair Gay- Smith replied that she had approved this line of questioning with town council.

During several meetings I would bring up concerns that would be noted by staff but never addressed again. For example, in the April meeting the ADU Study Committee discussed utilities but no representative from the Weir River Water System or HMLP were present on the calls to address the groups questions.

When I inquired what the potential impact of adding 150 units would be on our already stressed water system, I was told by Emily Wentworth that the impact would be “negligible”. While that may be true, I would have greatly preferred the opportunity to discuss this issue with someone who could have expertly address our water withdrawal status.

As the idea of rentals was being advanced by Emily Wentworth and Chair Gay- Smith I asked if we could evaluate how ADU’s might impact school enrollment. As a parent of school aged children, it seemed very likely that people would rent in Hingham to utilize the school system. My request was dismissed by Emily Wentworth because she didn’t think many people would rent an ADU with children. Again, that might be true, but I didn’t think the ADU Study Committee was appointed to make assumptions.

Given my growing concern over how the ADU Study Committee was operating, both from an Open Meeting Law perspective and the scope of our authority to advance “affordable housing”, I asked Chair Gay- Smith if we could hold a joint meeting with the Planning Board. This request was rejected by the Chair Gay- Smith and I was told that either Emily or Jen were in regular communication with the Planning Board.

I understand, more than most, that the ADU issue is a very complex and emotionally charged issue. However, I was very disappointed to hear Planning Board Chair Ms. Judy Sneath suggest that if the ADCOM doesn't vote with the Planning Boards super majority position (4-1) that the entire proposed ADU Warrant Article be voted down.

As a community I would hope we can come to an agreement that advancing detached ADU's does allow for more flexible housing options, is consistent with the Master Plan, and that we act responsibly and advance the proposed ADU Warrant Article.

Thank you,
Diane DeNapoli
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