

July 15, 2008

Ms. Mae Rhine  
Managing Editor  
The Beacon  
10 Hopewell Village Square  
P.O. Box 8  
Hopewell, NJ 08525

Dear Ms. Rhine:

We're at a decision point again. We need to decide whether we want to satisfy our Constitutional obligation to provide for affordable housing by certifying with COAH or whether we want to be open to builder's remedy lawsuits. Those lawsuits are not just costly, they also lay Hopewell Borough open to forced re-zoning by the Court.

So it would seem that we're better off with COAH. But some people say COAH has gone too far because it mandates one affordable unit for every five market rate units and one affordable unit for every 16 new jobs in new buildings. Sounds like a lot. But do you believe that out of 16 new jobs in new buildings only one will be low/moderate income? In a medical clinic, more than half the full time employees are low/moderate income. One for 16 is not too many. The whole point of the Mt. Laurel decision was to enable people who work in a community to live there too.

People from a wide range of incomes are eligible for affordable housing. Everybody from experienced accountants and social workers to barbers and bank tellers. In fact only 13% of affordable units need to be for the very low income families (less than \$22,833).

We applied for COAH certification last time around and I think we should again. This time let's plan for more than 13% to very low income households. We have until December 31 to file with COAH.

Sincerely,

**Hopewell Borough** Affordable Housing Advocacy Team.