

Amy Rose Weinreich
Town Clerk
Clerk to the Town Council
Clerk of the Probate Court
Clerk to the Board of Canvassers



TOWN OF CHARLESTOWN

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April 17, 2026

Honorable Stephen M. Casey, Chairman
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
82 Smith St
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Representative Casey:

At their April 13, 2026, meeting, the Charlestown Town Council approved the enclosed Resolutions relative to Municipal Authority of Land Use and Housing Decision:

- A Resolution Concerning Municipal Authority over Land Use and Housing Decisions
- Joint Municipal Statement of Rhode Island Municipalities on the 2025 State Affordable Housing Laws
- A Resolution Concerning Senate Bill S2275 Relating to Comprehensive Permit Review and Affordable Housing Unit Accounting
- A Resolution Identifying Shortcomings in the Housing 2030 Element of the Rhode Island State Guide Plan

On behalf of the Council, thank you in advance for your consideration and support regarding these matters.

Sincerely,

Amy Rose Weinreich, CMC

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Town Clerk

Enclosure

cc: Governor Daniel McKee
Senate President Valerie J. Lawson
House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi
Senator Robert Britto, Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce
Senator Gordon Rogers
Senator Victoria Gu
Senator Elaine J. Morgan
Representative Tina Spears
Associate Director Meredith Brady, Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning
Thomas Ward, Chair, State Planning Council
Deborah J. Goddard, Rhode Island Secretary of Housing
Randy R. Rossi, Executive Director, Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns

A RESOLUTION CONCERNING MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY OVER LAND USE AND HOUSING DECISIONS

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the Town of Charlestown recognizes that Rhode Island municipalities have traditionally exercised local authority over land use, zoning, and housing decisions in order to reflect the unique character, environmental conditions, infrastructure capacity, and community priorities of each municipality; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has concerns that certain recently enacted or amended state statutes related to housing and land use have had the effect of eroding municipal authority and discretion in these areas; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council acknowledges that reduced local control over land use and housing decisions limits the ability of municipalities to balance housing needs with environmental protection, public safety, infrastructure capacity, and community planning goals; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has received and reviewed resolutions adopted by the Towns of Tiverton and Portsmouth expressing similar concerns regarding state legislation affecting municipal authority over land use and housing matters; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council recognizes the value of collaborative advocacy among Rhode Island municipalities, including working through the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns and engaging municipal representatives in the Rhode Island General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council understands that a Joint Municipal Statement has been proposed or circulated as a means of expressing shared municipal concerns and seeking legislative reconsideration, amendment, or clarification of state laws impacting local land use authority;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Charlestown, Rhode Island, that the Town Council expresses its intent to explore and consider collaboration with other Rhode Island municipalities, the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, and Charlestown's elected representatives in the General Assembly regarding potential legislative efforts to reverse, amend, or otherwise modify state statutes that have diminished municipal authority over land use and housing decisions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that such consideration shall include, but not be limited to, issues and concerns raised in the resolutions adopted by the Towns of Tiverton and Portsmouth, as well as the potential endorsement or execution of a Joint Municipal Statement should the Town Council determine such action to be in the best interests of the Town of Charlestown; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby authorizes and directs the Town Administrator and other appropriate officials to engage in discussions, provide analysis, or report back to the Council regarding potential collaborative actions, legislative strategies, or advocacy efforts consistent with this resolution.

ADOPTED by the Town Council of the Town of Charlestown, Rhode Island, this 13th day of April, 2026

ATTEST:

Amy Rose Weinreich, CMC
Amy Rose Weinreich, Town Clerk



JOINT MUNICIPAL STATEMENT

Rhode Island Municipalities on the 2025 State Affordable Housing Laws

We, the undersigned Rhode Island municipalities, recognize the urgent and legitimate need to expand access to affordable housing throughout the State of Rhode Island. We share a commitment to solutions that are equitable, sustainable, and responsive to the diverse housing needs of our residents.

At the same time, we affirm that Rhode Island municipalities are constitutionally and statutorily vested with **home rule authority** over local land use, zoning, and comprehensive planning, as set forth in **Article XIII of the Rhode Island Constitution** and the Rhode Island General Laws governing municipal planning and zoning.

Rhode Island's cities and towns vary significantly in geography, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, fiscal resources, and existing housing stock. Accordingly, a **uniform, one-size-fits-all approach** to affordable housing policy risks producing unintended and inequitable outcomes that may conflict with locally adopted comprehensive plans, strain municipal infrastructure, and undermine long-established planning processes.

We are collectively concerned that aspects of the **2025 State Affordable Housing Laws**, as currently written or applied, may impair municipal home rule authority and disrupt the balance between statewide housing goals and local governance. These concerns warrant careful review, legal clarity, and constructive intergovernmental dialogue.

Therefore, we jointly state the following:

1. **We affirm municipal home rule authority** over land use, zoning, and planning, and assert that state housing mandates must be implemented in a manner consistent with constitutional and statutory protections of local governance.
2. **We call for collaboration among Rhode Island municipalities** to evaluate the impacts of the 2025 State Affordable Housing Laws and to share legal, planning, and policy analysis.
3. **We support coordinated municipal efforts to seek clarification or judicial review**, including joint or class-based legal action where appropriate, to resolve questions regarding the scope, interpretation, and lawful application of the law.

**A RESOLUTION CONCERNING SENATE BILL S2275 RELATING TO
COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT REVIEW AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNIT
ACCOUNTING**

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the Town of Charlestown recognizes the importance of a fair, transparent, and accountable review process for comprehensive permit applications under Rhode Island's affordable housing statutes; and

WHEREAS, local review boards play a critical role in evaluating comprehensive permit requests by balancing the need for affordable housing with public health, safety, environmental protection, infrastructure capacity, and consistency with local comprehensive plans; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council believes that requiring local review boards to issue written findings when denying a comprehensive permit application promotes transparency, due process, and clarity for applicants, residents, and reviewing authorities; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill **S2275**, introduced by Senator Gordon Rogers, proposes to restore the requirement that a local review board issue findings when denying a comprehensive permit request; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council finds that some of the provisions of S2275 support sound governance, improve procedural clarity, and reinforce an orderly and accurate approach to affordable housing oversight that respects both municipal decision-making and statewide objectives;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Charlestown, Rhode Island, that the Town Council expresses its support for sections of Senate Bill S2275, with the exception of provisions that relate to including affordable housing units in each city and town's inventory when building permits for those units are granted, and as may be amended in a manner consistent with its stated intent; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council urges the Rhode Island General Assembly to give favorable consideration to S2275, with the exception of including affordable housing units in each city and town's inventory when building permits for those units are granted, in recognition of the importance of transparent local review procedures and accurate accounting of affordable housing units; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk is authorized to transmit copies of this resolution to Senator Gordon Rogers, Charlestown's legislative delegation, the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, and other appropriate state officials.

ADOPTED by the Town Council of the Town of Charlestown, Rhode Island, this 13th day of April, 2026.

ATTEST:

Amy Rose Weinreich, CMC
Amy Rose Weinreich, Town Clerk



A RESOLUTION IDENTIFYING SHORTCOMINGS IN THE HOUSING 2030 ELEMENT OF THE RHODE ISLAND STATE GUIDE PLAN

WHEREAS, the Rhode Island State Guide Plan serves as the framework for statewide planning and policy coordination, including guidance related to housing, land use, infrastructure, environmental protection, and economic development; and

WHEREAS, the State of Rhode Island has recently adopted **Housing 2030** as an element of the State Guide Plan, establishing housing production goals for each of the State's thirty-nine (39) cities and towns based on an assessment of their potential for new housing growth; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the Town of Charlestown supports the goal of addressing housing affordability and availability across the State through thoughtful, data-driven, and locally informed strategies; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has concerns that the Housing 2030 plan assigns municipal housing production goals using generalized assumptions that may not sufficiently account for significant local constraints, including but not limited to environmental protection requirements, drinking water supply limitations, wastewater treatment capacity, infrastructure availability, and coastal and rural land characteristics; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council is concerned that the methodology used to determine each municipality's "potential for new housing growth" lacks transparency and may not adequately reflect existing zoning, adopted comprehensive plans, voter-approved land use policies, or long-standing conservation priorities; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council finds that Housing 2030 does not consistently account for the fiscal and operational impacts of accelerated housing production on municipal services such as public safety, schools, roads, and emergency management; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council further notes that Housing 2030 places housing production expectations on municipalities without clearly identifying corresponding state funding commitments, infrastructure investments, or implementation mechanisms necessary to achieve those goals in a sustainable manner; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council is concerned that the plan's town-by-town housing targets may be interpreted or applied in ways that diminish municipal authority over land use decisions, contrary to Rhode Island's tradition of locally informed planning and governance; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council believes that effective housing policy requires a collaborative partnership between the State and municipalities, grounded in respect for local conditions, capacity, and adopted plans;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of Charlestown, Rhode Island, that the Town Council formally identifies and expresses concern regarding the shortcomings of the Housing 2030 element of the State Guide Plan as currently adopted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council urges the State of Rhode Island to revisit and refine Housing 2030 in consultation with municipalities to ensure that housing production goals are realistic, equitable, infrastructure-aware, environmentally sound, and consistent with local comprehensive planning efforts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council encourages the development of a revised approach that emphasizes incentives, technical assistance, and state investment in infrastructure rather than prescriptive growth targets that may not be achievable for all municipalities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk shall transmit copies of this resolution to the Governor, the Secretary of Housing, Charlestown's legislative delegation, the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, and any other appropriate state officials.

ADOPTED by the Town Council of the Town of Charlestown, Rhode Island, this 13th day of April, 2026.

ATTEST:

Amy Rose Weinreich, CMC
Amy Rose Weinreich, Town Clerk

