

# **Report on Amended Bylaws of the Village of Manchester**

**First enacted 1931, Amended July 7, 2014**

Updated areas of the bylaw have been made to comply with statutory changes intended to allow for housing infill. These modifications include (1) revise the definition of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to clarify that ADUs are permitted as an accessory use to all single-family homes and increase allowable square footage for ADUs; and (2) assures that existing small lots connected to sewer and water may be developed. We have also reduced minimum parking requirements from two spaces per dwelling unit to one space per dwelling unit.

The State of Vermont has identified the need for affordable housing as a central goal for local, regional, and state planning efforts. It is important that good quality housing, for purchase or rent, be available in a variety of types and price ranges. People need to be able to have sufficient income to pay housing costs, as well as food, clothing, transportation, and other necessities. One measure often used to assess housing affordability for residents of a community is the number of families paying over 30% of their income toward housing costs. In the Village, 24.7% of homeowners and 35.9% of renters pay greater than 30% of their incomes toward housing costs. These are not the lowest percentages in the county but are among the lowest.

Even though the majority of homeowners and renters in the Village are paying less than 30% of their incomes towards housing costs, it is still important to provide affordable housing to residents in need. Though, providing affordable housing in the Village is difficult due to the high cost of property.

The recommended amendments are compatible with the following general guidelines for development outlined in the Village Plan of Development:

“For the purposes of this Plan, "development" is defined to mean any change in any use of land and structures. Development includes the division of a parcel of land into two or more parcels; the construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alteration, relocation, or enlargement of any structure; any mining, excavation, landfill, or land disturbance, and any use or extension of the use of land. The density of development is defined in the Zoning Bylaw.

Any type or style of development that would adversely alter historic structures, or alter the aspect of the small, well-preserved, late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century village and resort community, must be avoided.

1. Land use and development must be consistent with the land's capability to support such use and development. The natural and irreplaceable resources such as the scenic backdrop of Mount Equinox and Green Mountains must be preserved.
2. Development projects must integrate natural features and resources, rather than reclaiming, modifying, or destroying them.
3. Open space and landscaping must be incorporated into development projects.
4. Development must consider the relationship to adjacent properties.
5. Utility lines should be off-street or preferably installed underground.
6. Parking shall be to the rear of the building whenever possible and feasible.

7. Land development may be permitted only on lots with a 50-foot frontage on a public street or, with approval of the appropriate municipal panel, with access to a public street by permanent easement or right-of-way. Right-of-ways serving one family shall be a minimum of 20 feet wide, and those serving two or more families shall be a minimum of 40 feet wide.
8. Noise levels in all districts shall not be greater than levels acceptable for residential environments, and in accordance with any standards established by the Village.
9. Signs shall not be located in the Village right-of-way except as required by law, needed for traffic and pedestrian safety or as otherwise provided.
10. Development and signage shall adhere to the design guidelines and/or criteria established for the Village.
11. Before any multiple ownership plans of five or more units (whether called time-share estates, time-share license, club form of ownership or otherwise) shall be permitted, the applicant must demonstrate that the multiple ownership plan does not jeopardize the ability of the multiple owners to raise the necessary capital required to maintain and vitalize the property. This Guideline shall be enforced and implemented to the full extent permitted by the Village Charter and 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117. This Guideline shall not apply if the property is owned by a single entity.
12. Small and mid-scale renewable energy development is appropriate, when well-sited in compliance with all applicable ordinances, in many areas of the Village. Large-scale renewable energy facilities are appropriate only in preferred areas.”

The Planning Commission plans to continue making modifications to the Bylaws in the future to simplify and insure compliance with the recently enacted Home Act (Act 47).