



Mayor Joshua Garcia

Office of Planning & Development

City of Holyoke

Planning Department

August 15, 2022

Linda Vacon, Chair
City Council Ordinance Committee

RE: ZONING TEXT CHANGE – 50% LIVING SPACE FOLLOW UP (2021-10)

Dear Councilor Vacon,

Please be advised that the Holyoke Planning Board discussed the above referenced zone change request at our August 9, 2022 meeting. Although on January 25, 2022 the Planning Board recommended that the City not adopt an order "that any home construction in a residential zone be greater than 50% living space or require a special permit of the City Council if home construction will have 50% or less living space", we offer the following:

Attorney Degnan suggested in her letter of May 27, 2022 that the City Council should request from the Planning Board "a conversion of square feet to percent as it relates to our current regulation of the interior area of single-family homes." The Planning Board would like to clarify that there is NO current regulation of the interior area of single-family homes, whether in square feet or percentage.

While Holyoke does define "Floor Area Ratio" in its ordinances, that measure is not used in the dimensional controls that govern homes that may be constructed under our zoning. Instead, in 5.2 Table of Dimensional Regulations, ordinances set out what percentage of the lot a building may cover. For residential zones, this percentage varies from 20-40%; in the zone at issue, which is RA, that percentage is 20%. This percentage does not refer to the interior floor space of the home (which could be spread over multiple floors), but rather to the footprint of the building. This footprint would include any parking garage, and does not make any distinction as regards the interior space of the home, which is consistent with our previously-stated reading of Chapter 40a, Section 3, Paragraph 2 which states that "No zoning ordinance or by-law shall regulate or restrict the interior area of a single family residential building."

Very truly yours,

Mimi Panitch, Chairman
Holyoke Planning Board

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AUG 16 2022

Cc: Mayor Joshua Garcia
Damian Cote, Building Commissioner

Holyoke City Clerk's
Holyoke, MA