

Zoom Information

Meeting ID: 822 6728 0438

Passcode: 973682

Phone: 1-646-558-8656



WINTHROP TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING AGENDA
FEBRUARY 11, 2025
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING 6:30PM
HARVEY HEARING ROOM

Town Council Members

Town Council President James Letterie

Precinct 1 Councilor Costigan

Precinct 2 Councilor Munson

Precinct 3 VP- Councilor Belcher

Precinct 4 Councilor Swope

Precinct 5 Councilor Aiello

Precinct 6 Councilor DaRos

Councilor at Large DeMarco

Councilor at Large Tassinari

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

1. MINUTES

Approval of Minutes January 21, 2025 as circulated

2. GENERAL INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Attorney Cipoletta-Article 97 & ADU Compliance

Chief Wiley – Review Emergency Action Plan for Town of Winthrop

3. PUBLIC HEARING

None

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

5. CORRESPONDENCE

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Rules & Ordinance

Climate Commission

7. SCHOOL DEPARTMENT REPORT

8. TOWN MANAGER REPORT

9. UPDATE CDICR & POLICY MAKING COMMITTEES

10. OLD BUSINESS

11. NEW BUSINESS

Town Council vote to approve to create a new Education Stabilization Account

Town Council discuss New Finance Policy in regards to Free Cash

Town Council vote to approve the Amended Tree Ordinance

Town Council vote to approve \$158,500 for the funding of Phase II of the engineering at Tileston, Girdlestone and Pico

Town Council vote to approve letter to the Mass DOT Secretary and General Manager re: Winthrop Ferry

Town Council vote on Fire House Debt Exclusion Question

Town Council review EOHLA Action Plan – MBTA 3A

Appointment

2025 Ordinance Review Committee

12. PUBLIC COMMENT

13. PUBLIC RELATIONS / UPCOMING EVENTS

Time to Renew your Parking Sticker & Dog License online on the Town of Winthrop Website

14. ADJOURNMENT



TOWN OF WINTHROP OFFICE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, 1 Metcalf Square, Winthrop, MA 02152 Telephone: 617-846-1742

MOTION

Submitted By: Council President

Date: February 6, 2025

Motion: That the Town Council approve to create a new Education Stabilization Account; or take any other action thereto



TOWN OF WINTHROP

OFFICE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, 1 Metcalf Square, Winthrop, MA 02152 Telephone: 617-846-1742

MOTION

Submitted By: Vice President Belcher

Date: February 6, 2025

I move that the Town Council amend the Town of Winthrop ordinance titled "Title 12 - STREETS SIDEWALKS AND PUBLIC PLACES, Chapter 12.48 - TREES" to make the following amendments:

1. In the "DEFINITIONS" section, amend the "Landmark Tree" section to include the sentence "Any public tree with a DBH of 18 inches or greater shall automatically be designated a Landmark Tree." at the conclusion of the definition.
2. Under PERMITTING; ACTIVITIES REQUIRING A PERMIT, amend the fourth sentence that currently reads:
"No tree work/removal permit shall be issued unless on the following conditions exists,"
to add the clause immediately following the comma:
"and such permit shall only allow for a scope of work necessary to address the reason for the permit:"
3. Under "REMOVAL OF PUBLIC TREES", add the following immediately after the first sentence:
"Therefore, a Landmark Tree may not be removed for any non-Town purpose."
4. Under "TREE MEMORIAL PROGRAM", delete the final sentence that reads
"Plaques may not be affixed to a said tree."
to be replaced by:
"The tree warden may affix a memorial plaque as approved by the Memorials Committee to a memorial tree if they deem it appropriate based on the health of said tree. The tree warden (or their designee) must perform the installation of a memorial plaque."



TOWN OF WINTHROP

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Town Hall, 1 Metcalf Square, Winthrop, MA 02152 Telephone: 617-846-1077 Fax: 617-846-5458

Anthony Marino
Town Manager

Town Council Motion

February 6, 2025

Fiscal Year 2025

Motion Summary

Title: Engineering and Design Work for the Girdlestone, Tileston, and Pico Drainage Improvements Project - Phase 2

Motion ID: TCM25-010

Amount: \$158,500

Funding Source: Capital Stabilization Fund

Motion Details

Motion Type: Transfer

Submitted by: Anthony Marino, Town Manager

Date Submitted: February 6, 2025

Text of Motion

MOTION: I move that the Town Council transfer \$158,500 from the Capital Stabilization Fund to the Stormwater Engineering special article account for Phase 2 of the Stormwater Engineering for the Tileston Rd, Girdlestone Rd, and Pico Ave Areas; or take any other action thereto.

Funding Details

Funding Source			Funding Destination		
Account	Description	Amount	Account	Description	Amount
964	Capital Stabilization Fund	\$158,500	0196058-588214	Stormwater Engineering	\$158,500

Capital Stabilization Fund Balance: \$1,890,600

Amount Requested: \$158,500

Capital Stabilization after motion approval: \$1,732,100



TOWN OF WINTHROP

OFFICE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, 1 Metcalf Square, Winthrop, MA 02152 Telephone: 617-846-1742

MOTION

Submitted By: Vice President Belcher

Date: February 6, 2025

Motion for the council to accept and sign the attached letter addressed to MassDOT Secretary Tibbitts-Nutt and MBTA General Manager Peter Eng regarding operational concerns surrounding the Winthrop-Quincy Ferry.

The letter should be sent to the following email and physical addresses:

Recipient	Email Address	Physical Address
Secretary Monica Tibbitts-Nutt		10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116
GM Phillip Eng		10 Park Plaza, Room 3910, Boston, MA 02116
Senator Ed Markey	Ed@edmarkey.org	975 JFK Federal Building 15 New Sudbury Street, Boston, MA 02203
Senator Elizabeth Warren	info@elizabethwarren.com	2400 JFK Federal Building 15 New Sudbury Street, Boston, MA 02203
Representative Katherine Clark	MA5District@mail.house.gov	24 Beacon St., Room 410, Boston, MA 02133
Senator Lydia Edwards	lydia.edwards@masenate.gov	24 Beacon St., Room 413-C, Boston, MA 02133
Representative Jeffrey Turco	jeffrey.turco@mahouse.gov	24 Beacon St., Room 473B, Boston, MA 02133
Attorney Cipoletta	jcipoletta@town.winthrop.ma.us	1 Metcalf Square, Winthrop, MA 02152
Winthrop Climate Committee		1 Metcalf Square, Winthrop, MA 02152



OFFICE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, 1 Metcalf Square, Winthrop, MA 02152 Telephone: 617-846-1742

MassDOT Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt
MBTA General Manager Phillip Eng

February 7, 2025

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt and General Manager Eng,

The Winthrop Town Council sent a letter dated July 31, 2024 to you regarding our frustrations surrounding the Winthrop ferry, to which we received no response. It is deeply disturbing that we would not receive any communication – a response letter, email, phone call, or meeting request after our letter was received. Our letter outlined a number of concerns regarding the Winthrop ferry including boat maintenance, travel routes, affordability, and scheduling. As a representative body for the people of Winthrop, the Town Council is seeking to ensure reliable transportation for our residents, especially given our unique geographic location and proximity to Boston.

Our primary asks in the original letter were for year-round, 7 day service from Winthrop with no more than 2 hours maximum between trips. Prior to the 2024 ferry season, the schedule had not been wholly advantageous to those working in the city who wished to use it as their primary commuting method, given the ferry's schedule and the lengthy time needed to complete a route that included a stop in Quincy. During the 2024 season (notably exacerbated by the Sumner Tunnel closures), Winthrop saw a DECREASE in ridership as the boat was turning away passengers at our dock due to reaching capacity in Quincy. It is wholly unacceptable that Winthrop riders were turned away when it is Winthrop's vessel and Winthrop that originated the service.

While Winthrop faces a number of challenges in the public transportation space that we seek to partner with the MBTA to address, and we do wish to engage in discussions about these in the near future, we ask that you focus on the ferry first as we move towards the typical season of operation. Ensuring direct, frequent, and affordable ferry access from Winthrop to the city of Boston is paramount in supporting our community's transportation needs at this time.

As one of many communities that the MBTA services, Winthrop consistently falls to the bottom of the priority list. We are asking yet again that you prioritize correcting this issues, beginning with the ferry. Attached is our original letter for reference. It goes into much deeper detail about the important concerns we have.

In our last letter, we highlighted that it is time for action, not discussion. We requested a proposal for 2025 ferry service inclusive of 7-day service and divorced from Quincy. We did not receive

this proposal, an offer of discussion, or an estimated timeline on when we could expect either of those things.

Our expectation at this juncture is that we see swift action on this matter. We look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

The Winthrop Town Council

President James Letterie

Vice President Hannah Belcher

Councilor At-Large Max Tassinari

Councilor At-Large Rob DeMarco

Councilor Patrick Costigan

Councilor John Munson

Councilor Suzanne Swope

Councilor Joseph Aiello

Councilor John DaRos

Cc: Senator Ed Markey, Senator Elizabeth Warren, Representative Katherine Clark, Senator Lydia Edwards, Representative Jeffrey Turco, Attorney Cipoletta, Winthrop Climate Committee



TOWN OF WINTHROP
OFFICE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

MassDOT Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt
MBTA General Manager Phillip Eng

July 31, 2024

Dear Secretary Tibbits-Nutt and General Manager Eng,

We write this letter in frustration and with a straightforward request - please make the Winthrop ferry a permanent service, characterized by direct service to the East Boston, South Boston, and Downtown Boston waterfronts. As we have written before in concert with representatives from Quincy, Winthrop and Quincy service need to be separated from each other.

We were stunned by the MBTA's unilateral decision this year to take a Winthrop provided boat and gut the service to our community while favoring Quincy. Given this, Winthrop ridership has decreased while Quincy's has increased as would be expected. During the Sumner Tunnel closure, Winthrop riders have been turned away on the dock as the boat is reaching its capacity rendering the service unable to be utilized and leaving our residents stranded.

We also have a high level of concern regarding care of the Valkyrie. When the boat was given to the MBTA last year, the Valkyrie had just had two new Cummings engines installed, new wiring, and other improvements implemented. We are disappointed with the performance of the boat and the measures your vendor may have needed to take to keep the boat operating as expected.

Winthrop ferry service needs to run year-round, 7 days a week, with no more than 2 hours maximum between trips. This level of service also needs to remain affordable to our community members.

We believe that this service should be made permanent because:

- 1) **The MBTA has a long history of underserving our community despite the relative payments we make to the T.** As you know, the bus service is provided by a private vendor. The cost of this service relative to directly provided MBTA-staffed service is about 50% of those normal costs.

A) Until 2017, the outsourced bus service took the form of school buses. These buses failed to provide a number of amenities found on your bus fleet. These missing amenities included air-conditioning, a comfortable ride, no security tie-ins to your OCC etc.

B) Until 2019 the T did not provide MBTA bus stop signs, did not provide T fare collection equipment and basic marketing info such as inclusion of these bus routes as part of the T system. Our signs were either the vendor's or painted stripes on

telephone poles. This caused potential customer confusion, hindrances in using fare media, and a higher cost for our residents because of a lack of transfer credit.

- C) **Our current public transportation offerings are inadequate.** Today we have NO MBTA-PROVIDED BUS SHELTERS! Very little direct marketing from the T to our residents take place. We don't have adequate outreach to our middle and high-school students to try to shift the culture to more transit utilization. And its not clear to most residents on how to obtain a Charlie Card or a Senior Fare Card.
 - D) **Through the Bus Network Redesign project, bus service in the town of Winthrop will be permanently altered,** eliminating service to large sections of town, removing our most frequented (and only covered) bus stop, and bifurcating the route making Winthrop's Center business district inaccessible without transferring buses lines within our minute 1.2 square mile community.
- 2) **Winthrop has limited means of egress.** We must have a ferry because both of our vehicular pathways out of Town are one lane in each direction, each threatened by climate change and each unable to be expanded. As an example - the DCR-controlled Winthrop Parkway runs between the Atlantic Ocean and Belle Isle Marsh. The roadway is frequently closed by the Commonwealth- decreasing our exit capacity by 50% This results in backups of more than an hour delay. Ferries are a mitigation to this problem.
- 3) **Ferries are a mitigation to public safety challenges in Winthrop.** In addition to limited roadway access (which would be alleviated by an acceptable ferry service) Winthrop hosts two significant state authorities: Massport and MWRA. Each of these contributes to our local and regional traffic (by example Massport related travel accounts for more than 50% of the Ted Williams tunnel traffic). Each represents a major public safety risk if they have certain emergencies. Winthrop has no emergency room, as well as relatively small police and fire departments, thus the ability for a regional response of ambulances and public safety is essential. If our roads are shut down or congestion in our access roads remain at their current high level, public safety will be endangered.
- 4) **Winthrop is a very dense Environmental Justice community.** Setting aside Boston, Winthrop is already the 4th most dense municipality in the T's service area. The 3A housing law proposes to make us even more dense. For the reasons stated above we need better bus service and permanent ferry service in all their dimensions. Because of the historic lack of care by the MBTA, the T needs to also promote a more transit-oriented culture.
- 5) **Regional equity** - we are frankly tired of hearing about the T's lack of funds and the poor cost benefit of the Winthrop ferry. The T's own analysis shows that ferry service is the second most cost effective forms of transit when based on life-cycle costs (which represent the true cost to the taxpayer). The T has spent multiple billions of dollars over the past 5 years on three of the four main rapid transit lines. The T spends about a billion per year subsidizing the commuter-rail system. Have cost-benefit studies ever preceded that work? Multiple billions in expenditures have been made on the Southcoast Rail system with no cost/benefit study - not even an updated ridership study The MBTA has informally

communicated to us that it cannot afford to run the Winthrop ferry system in the manner requested, and yet they have just agreed to add weekend service with no apparent hesitation over its costs nor its unknown revenue.

Let us be clear - we want and need T to invest in our services. Winthrop has been ignored for too long. We need commitment, not idle chatter. Send us a proposal for calendar year 2025 that provides for year round, seven day per week service that runs directly into the three Boston ferry stops and not to Quincy at all. Improve the frequency and a seasonally adjusted time span. Consider a fare reduction and a discounted transfer at Aquarium station for those that need to travel beyond the waterfront. Regarding the bus routes in Winthrop- restore Point Shirley service (per our earlier letters) in the Bus Network Redesign plan, install at least 10 bus shelters within the next 60 days, as well as create a comprehensive marketing plan so all relevant parties can know more about the ferry, bus, and Blue Line and all about fare media.

Winthrop has multiple green and climate initiatives on-going. Join us for the sake of our future.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

The Winthrop Town Council

President James Letterie

Vice President Hannah Belcher

Councilor At-Large Max Tassinari

Councilor At-Large Rob DeMarco

Councilor Patrick Costigan

Councilor John Munson

Councilor Suzanne Swope

Councilor Joseph Aiello

Councilor John DaRos

Cc: Senator Ed Markey, Senator Elizabeth Warren, Representative Katherine Clark, Senator Lydia Edwards, Representative Jeffrey Turco, Attorney Cipoletta, Winthrop Climate Committee



TOWN OF WINTHROP

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Town Hall, 1 Metcalf Square, Winthrop, MA 02152 Telephone: 617-846-1852 Fax: 617-846-5458

Anthony Marino
Town Manager

MOTION

Submitted By: Town Manager Marino

Date: 2-11-25

MOTION: I move that the Winthrop Town Council adopt the following order:

ORDERED: That the Town appropriates the sum of FORTY MILLION DOLLARS (\$40,000,000) for the design, engineering, constructing, equipping, and furnishing of a new Fire Station, including the payment of costs incidental or related thereto; and to meet this appropriation the Treasurer, with the approval of the Town Manager, is authorized to issue bonds or notes under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, section 7, or any other enabling authority.

Ballot Question:

Shall the Town of Winthrop be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds issued in order to pay costs of designing, engineering, constructing, equipping, and furnishing a new Fire Station in Winthrop, Massachusetts, including the payment of costs incidental or related thereto?

Ballot Question:

Shall the Town of Winthrop be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds issued in order to pay costs of designing, engineering, constructing, equipping, and furnishing a new Fire Station in Winthrop, Massachusetts, including the payment of costs incidental or related thereto?

Summary:

The town council has voted to appropriate funds to build a new Fire Station in the town. The new station will replace the two existing stations that will be deactivated upon completion of construction. The appropriated funds would authorize vendors to design, engineer, build, and furnish the new Fire Station. The funds would be borrowed by the Treasurer and approved by the Town Manager. The cost of the debt service, like a mortgage, will be added to your taxes ONLY until the debt service is paid off. Again, just like a mortgage, when the debt service is paid off, there will be no Fire Station debt service payments added to your taxes. It is anticipated that it will be fully paid in Fiscal Year 2052.

A **YES** vote will authorize the town to fund all the costs of building the Fire Station, anticipated not to exceed 38.5 million dollars, by issuing bonds to pay for the costs of the project and to temporarily exclude that amount of debt from the provisions of Proposition 2 1/2. This is the definition of a "Debt Exclusion". In other words, a debt exclusion is a means of funding a particular project with a temporary increase, which we anticipate 25 years, in the levy limit. The debt service is excluded from the levy limitations of Proposition 2 1/2.

A **NO** vote will not authorize the town to exclude the debt service from the levy and will be held to the limitations required by Proposition 2 1/2. The town would not be able to build the fire station or need to bring forward a new or the same ballot question seeking authorization for a debt exclusion at another future election.

Override vs. Debt Exclusion

What is an Override?

Proposition 2 ½ allows a community to assess taxes in excess of the automatic annual 2.5 percent increase. A community may take this action as long as it is below its level ceiling, or 2.5 percent of full and fair cash value. An override cannot increase a community levy limit above the level of the community levy ceiling.

When an override is passed, the levy limit for the year is calculated by including the amount of the override. The override results in a permanent increase in the levy limit of the community which, as part of the levy limit base, increases at the rate of 2.5 percent each year.

A majority vote of a community's selectmen, or town or city council allows an override question to be placed on the ballot. Override questions must be presented in dollar terms and must specify the purpose of the override. Overrides require a majority vote of approval by the electorate.

What is a Debt Exclusion?

Proposition 2 ½ allows a community to raise funds for certain purposes above the amount of its levy or levy ceiling. A community can assess taxes in excess of its levy limit or levy ceiling for the payment of specified debt service costs. An exclusion for the purpose of raising funds for debt service costs is referred to as a **debt exclusion**. Debt exclusions require voter approval.

The additional amount for the payment of debt service is added to the levy limit or levy ceiling for the life of the debt only. Unlike overrides, exclusions do not become part of the base upon which the levy limit is calculated for future years.

Reimbursements such as state reimbursements for school building construction are subtracted from the amount of the exclusion.

Both of these exclusions require a two-thirds vote of the community's selectmen, or town or city council in order to be presented to the voters. A majority vote of approval by the electorate is required for both types of exclusion.

Questions presented to exclude a debt obligation must state the purpose for which the monies from the debt issue will be used.



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING &
LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Maura T. Healey, Governor ♦ Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor ♦ Edward M. Augustus Jr., Secretary

Via Email: amarino@winthropma.gov

January 27, 2025

Town Manager Tony Marino
Town Manager
1 Metcalf Square
Winthrop, MA 02152

Re: Winthrop – Confirmation of Status with G.L. c. 40A, Section 3A

Dear Town Manager Marino:

This letter is intended to clarify Winthrop's current status and obligations related to compliance with the MBTA Communities Law. On January 8, 2025, the Supreme Judicial Court published its opinion in the case of *Attorney General v. Town of Milton*, confirming the law is constitutional and valid, and that the Attorney General has the power to enforce it. The Court also held that EOHLC must promulgate the law's implementing guidelines through the Administrative Procedures Act if they are to be enforceable. In response, EOHLC filed emergency regulations with the Secretary of the Commonwealth on January 14, 2025, and plans to adopt permanent regulations after a public comment period. The regulations are filed as: 760 CMR 72.00 Multifamily Zoning Requirement for MBTA Communities. They can be viewed at mass.gov/mbtacomunities.

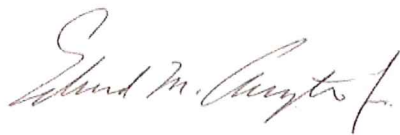
Winthrop has not submitted a district compliance application to EOHLC. **The emergency regulations provide Winthrop an opportunity to come into interim compliance by submitting a new Action Plan by February 13, 2025.** EOHLC is eager to work with municipalities to assist with developing and submitting an Action Plan that can be approved. The emergency regulations also provide Winthrop with additional time to adopt any necessary zoning amendments and submit a district compliance application to EOHLC. Winthrop's compliance deadline under the emergency regulations is July 14, 2025.

If Winthrop does not submit an Action Plan to achieve interim compliance, and/or does not meet its July 14, 2025, district compliance deadline, it will be ineligible for funds from the Housing Choice Initiative, the Local Capital Projects Fund, the MassWorks infrastructure program, and the HousingWorks infrastructure program. Additionally, Winthrop would remain ineligible for the [MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund](#) which was announced by Governor Healey in June 2024. Please note that all discretionary grant programs across the Healey-Driscoll Administration take compliance with the MBTA Communities Law into consideration when making funding decisions.

EOHLC will continue to provide updates related to compliance statuses under G.L. c. 40A, Section 3A as it promulgates and adopts permanent regulations. If you have questions or need further assistance

regarding this information, please contact MBTA Communities Compliance Coordinator Nathan Carlucci at nathan.carlucci@mass.gov. Thank you for your continued collaboration implementing this important housing law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Edward M. Augustus, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Edward M. Augustus, Jr.
Secretary

cc: Senator Lydia Edwards
Representative Jeffrey Rosario Turco



**WINTHROP
COMMISSION ON
DISABILITIES**

MEMBERS

Karla Murphy, Chair
Jon Rodis, Vice-Chair
Andrew Carr, Secretary
Hannah Belcher, Town Council
Liaison
Kathleen Kane
John Morgan
Denise Quist
Susan Smith

January 25, 2025

Dear Town Council Members,

The Winthrop Commission on Disabilities (WCOD) has been monitoring the debate surrounding 3A and its significant implications for our community, regardless of the vote outcome. WCOD has a longstanding track record of advocating for the rights of people with disabilities in Winthrop. Our town has made commendable strides toward inclusivity, and the support from our residents for this often-overlooked demographic is commendable. However, we cannot afford to take our progress for granted.

Recently, we collaborated with the public library to secure a \$225,000 grant from the Massachusetts Office on Disability to enhance accessibility for individuals with disabilities. This is just one of our many achievements over the past two years, which also includes publishing a Resource Directory, initiating a Speakers' Series, and hosting the First Annual Accessible Adventures event at Deer Island.

The ongoing commitment from our town is laudable in ensuring that we continue to make our community accessible *for everyone*.

We recently held a meeting featuring Jeff Dougan, Assistant Director for Community Services at the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD). During this meeting, we discussed applying for a Planning Grant through MOD that would lead to a Self-Evaluation Plan as mandated by Title II regulations and the ADA Standards for Accessible Design. This self-evaluation is an essential review of all programs, activities, and services in Winthrop. It is important to note that a self-evaluation was last conducted in 1993, and it did not include necessary updates to applicable laws and IT accessibility regulations. Conducting this review is not just a formality; it is a mandate and an imperative step for our town to develop a transition plan that addresses structural changes and modifies existing policies and procedures to be ADA compliant.

As we approach the beginning of May, when applications for the Planning Grant open, we are dismayed to discover that Winthrop is ineligible due to its recent vote against 3A. We have been informed by MOD that *our non-compliance severely restricts our access to vital grants intended to uphold ADA standards*. This is not merely a bureaucratic issue—it is a direct threat to our community's progress. While not everyone on our commission agrees on the effectiveness of 3A in achieving affordable housing, we stand

united in condemning the Governor's tactics that put Winthrop at a competitive disadvantage. We refuse to accept a reality where our town is poorer for it. We simply do not have the resources or expertise to carry out a comprehensive self-evaluation without support, and relying on our ADA Coordinator alone will not provide the quality of assessment that an experienced organization, like the Institute for Human-Centered Design, would deliver. Non-compliance means we are risking significant funding that could benefit our community, leaving taxpayers to cover the shortfall.

A self-evaluation is not just overdue; it is essential, as the one currently on file is over 30 years old.

As a nine-member commission, we are emphatically urging Winthrop to prioritize compliance with 3A while simultaneously challenging the punitive measures imposed by the Governor on communities that vote against it. It is our duty to take a stand on behalf of those residents with disabilities, and some of us will actively support any legislation that seeks to challenge the existing law and regulations. However, given the SJC's ruling on the constitutionality of the law, we need to acknowledge the challenges we face in changing the law and regulations before we meet our compliance deadlines. Our community is at risk due to the Governor's policy of linking grant access to compliance votes, and our residents must understand the implications of this. By withholding grant money because of our noncompliance with 3A, our Governor is compromising our town's ability to be ADA-compliant.

We request that the council members vote yes on 3A and collaborate with local groups to challenge a law that coerces citizens into accepting results that remain questionable at best. We cannot stand idly by. Our community deserves better.

Thank you for addressing this critical issue with the urgency it requires.