Memo to the Select Board and Kevin Harutunian, Town Administrator

February 8, 2023

RE: Emerson Homes Affordable Housing Project, Topsfield

The Council on Aging (COA) Director, COA Board and the Friends of COA are aware of the proposed Emerson Homes Project and development. However, our preference and the known need is housing similar to Little Brook Village which is based on income but does not have an asset ceiling. This is the financial model that many Topsfield senior citizens need. This project will by its financial criteria requirements exclude our current senior citizens.

The population increase from this housing project is a concern knowing that the senior citizen population is increasing in the Town of Topsfield, seniors currently making up 32% of Topsfield residents. The additional 44 to 88 seniors comes with financial concerns to the COA. In the proposed project the number of people (62+) with extremely low income who may not have the capability of owning their own transportation. The transportation and service needs will require an increase in the operating budget, to accommodate the need for a second driver ($20,000.00), a second bus ($125,000), Social Worker, ($25,000), additional staff hours ($30,000). There will also be the need to recruit additional volunteers. Without an increase in the COA budget, and with the limited space that the COA has for daily activities and functions, this will negatively impact the services provided to the senior citizens of Topsfield.

Respectfully submitted,

Council on Aging Director, The COA Board and The Friends of COA

CC: Financial Committee and Zoning Board of Appeals