

Housing bond bill contains funding for Newburyport

By Ethan Forman
• Staff Writer

Gov. Maura Healey's recent signing of a massive, more than \$5 billion housing bond bill earlier this month aimed at creating more housing in the Bay State contained earmarks supporting initiatives in Rockport and Gloucester, and for projects on the North Shore and Newburyport, state Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr, R-Gloucester, said.

In all, Tarr secured six amendments totaling \$8 million in authorizations to support housing initiatives in his district, he said in a prepared statement.

The legislation authorizes nearly \$5.2 billion in spending over the next five years to counter rising housing costs and the state's housing shortage, according to Tarr.

Six of Tarr's amendments were adopted in the Senate's version of the House bill, and were included

in the final conference committee report that became law.

The amendments are:

\$1 million for Gloucester for workforce development and affordable housing purposes in Amendment 19.

\$3 million for planning and design of water infrastructure interconnections between municipalities and other public water suppliers affected by the Ipswich River watershed to support current and future housing stocks in

Amendment No. 22.

\$2 million for infrastructure improvements to facilitate housing production along the Route 1 corridor between Topsfield and Salisbury in Amendment No. 97.

\$500,000 for Middleton for infrastructure improvements to support housing and public safety in Amendment No. 95.

\$500,000 for Newburyport for the development of housing at

See **HOUSING**, Page A3

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FROM PAGE ONE

» Housing

Continued from Page A1

the former Brown School at 40 Milk St.; \$250,000 for North Reading for infrastructure improvements to support housing production; and \$250,000 for the Rockport Affordable Housing Trust for the production of affordable housing in Amendment No. 99.

\$500,000 for Housing Support Inc. of Newburyport for the creation of housing to support low-income and homeless individuals, those with disabilities, veterans, and individuals in recovery in the Merrimack Valley in

Amendment No. 100.

Securing inclusion in the bond bill is the first step of a two-step process, Tarr said. Funding would only come in the second part of the process if the governor decides to spend the money authorized in the bond bill.

In Gloucester, the specifics of how the money might be used have yet to be decided.

"There are no specifics yet for this funding secured by Senator Tarr," Pam Tobey, the mayor's director of communications and constituent services, said in an email, "however we are so grateful for his advocacy and support

to secure this funding for our community and to invest in such a vital area of workforce development and affordable housing."

The Affordable Homes Act, signed by Healey on Aug. 6, includes a mix of bonding, policy changes, tax breaks and other incentives to spur the development of much needed new housing in the commonwealth.

The legislation and related initiatives are expected to support the production, preservation and rehabilitation of more than 65,000 homes statewide over the next five years, Tarr said.

"The ongoing shortage of housing in Massachusetts is a serious problem, and one that communities and organizations in our region are working diligently to address," he said.

"These earmarks create the potential for meaningful and increased partnership between state government and those working locally to create housing and the infrastructure to support it."

Material from Statehouse Reporter Christian M. Wade was used in this report.

Ethan Forman may be contacted at 978-675-2714, or at eforman@northofboston.com.

B1