

Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Housing Committee
7:00 PM June 4, 2025
Central Meeting Room, Town Hall 11 Meetinghouse Lane

Present: Mary Dean, Chris Dickerson, James Graham, Kathy Hunter, Lewis Shaffer.
Excused: Elaine Feldman, Donavon Lofters (Board of Finance liaison), Warner Marshall.

A quorum is present

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Kathy Hunter, Chair

a. Approval of Minutes of May 7, 2025: Approved unanimously (motion: Lew, second: Jim)

b. Public Comment: none

Chris offered comment on the matter of committee email correspondence, following up on his concern that some discussion via email that took place during the last month might violate FOI rules. He consulted an FOI trainer, Russell Blair, who advised that emails that go to the whole committee (as opposed to messages between individuals) constitute a quorum and hence must be posted as a meeting. Distributing an article by email is OK, but including any commentary would constitute a violation of FOI. In this case, discussion about creating a subcommittee to rewrite a plan could only take place at a noticed public session.

Chris also offered his perspective on what the committee should focus upon: follow the rules (cf. FOI), represent the public, and make our plan. (A message he took from the housing forum was that we need to engage the public to determine what we put in our plan.)

Lew clarified that in deference to Chris' concerns no subcommittee had met.

Mary clarified that the job of the proposed subcommittee was not to rewrite the plan; it was just for housekeeping, preparing materials for the committee at its scheduled meeting in an effort to make progress. Also, that we are not revising the Affordable Housing Plan at this time, just amending it to make some updates and clarifications.

Chris advocates not moving forward, but stepping back to digest information from the housing forum and current legislation. Others felt we should not delay longer.

3. Housing Chair Report

- a. About the CCW master plan: believes the task force has finished its work. To learn where the BOS is with the process see the April 28 Special meeting. There is also a decision-making guide on the CC Masterplan website. She imagines that there will be housing of some kind; next comes the cost-benefit analysis.
- b. 2030 Committee will be meeting June 16th, 6:30 p.m., Crest Auto. to present the first 30% design phase of its connectivity project, concentrated on the area of

Lucy St., Amity Road, and Bradley Road. After the presentation of the designs, public comment.

- c. Recommends we keep abreast of what is happening with the TPZ application, as it involves housing. Special meeting on Monday June 9 for working on the POCD. Updating some theme areas and land use plans. Then it will go to the BOS.

4. Preliminary Legislative Update

Housing Bill 5002 is now Public Act 25-49, yet to be signed by the governor. Anticipating that he will sign it. A lot of analysis will be required for full understanding. Many different bills had been mashed into HB 5002, so there is a lot to digest. Analysis will be required for full understanding. Direction and guidance about how to implement it will also be required; much under OPM. Kathy has sent out information via email.

Interesting elements that Kathy sees as highlights:

- as of right development on commercially zoned lots. (Middle Housing: 2-9 units)
- minimum off-street parking requirements prohibited for residential developments
- discretionary infrastructure funding prioritizing.
- Planning for municipal fair share allocations...to meet 25% of each fair share allocation over the next 10 years *
- Inventory of vacant and developable land to be reported
- More capacity for the COGs to help towns promote housing
- Attorney fees can be assigned to the defendant(s) if an 830g application was found to be denied in bad faith.
- Statewide wastewater capacity study
- Different moratorium threshold for those who establish housing zones
- Bonus moratorium points for projects with a neighboring town's housing authority

*Kathy notes that for Woodbridge that would be 332 units, and we had talked about 500 units over 20 years so the target number of housing units to develop is in the neighborhood of that which we identified for Woodbridge. Will have to come up with a plan to ensure the required amount of housing will be actually produced in the next 10 years. We want to be prioritized for state funding.

Thinking about having Sean Ghio, policy expert, come to explain the relevant features and their applicability. We should read at least a summary of this important legislative reform in preparation for the POCD and the next AHP.

5. Community Conversation planned with David Fink - 6/26

Will be June 26 in the **Center café** from 6-8 p.m.; to be called "The 411 on Housing: a Community Dialogue". Hope that other committees and commissions will come. Discussed details including having a seating arrangement that encourages dialogue, and whether and how to be ready to bring things into the conversation when we know misunderstanding has been reported. An FAQ page suggested, or an invitation to send questions to be answered by the committee during our meeting. A blog was also suggested for that same purpose, or a special email.

6. Other Community Conversations

Lew reported that he and Elaine have been going to the SCRCOG meetings, which are informative; it is useful to see how towns have approached things in different ways and are working at different speeds.

The meetings with All In (All in Woodbridge) is starting to meet every week and will be going public soon. Lew has been steering them away from a focus on housing so it isn't perceived as an extension of this committee. It offers a variety of topics (Mental health issues, children's issues) and featured things like walks. They are moving quickly and will be represented at town-wide events. Sandy Stein and Tim Austin will lead it.

7. Next Steps for Informational Sessions

Perhaps ask folks at the first session on June 26, which is intended to be broad in focus, what kind of informational sessions they recommend. Suggestions: Zoning (clarifying what the enabling legislation says). Play one of Richard Rothstein (The Color of Law)'s videos and discussing it.

8. Working Session on Updating the Affordable Housing Plan

Although time still remained, not all members were prepared to discuss the subject.

After considering having a special meeting, it was decided that we will dedicate the next regular meeting to the project. Next meeting is normally July 2 but may not have a quorum so will move the regular meeting to July 9 and focus on this task for the agenda.

Mary suggests that rather than worry about anything after the first 12 pages, in which all the known issues appear, we put in the preface a disclaimer to the effect that the data in the later graphs and tables, etc. is dated. We can say to refer to the new POCD for updated conditions in Woodbridge.

Committee members are to send any additional comments for incorporation and review at this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned (Chris/Jim) at 8:22 p.m.