

Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Housing Committee
7:00 PM July 9, 2025
Selectman's Conference Room, Town Hall 11 Meetinghouse Lane

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

A quorum is present

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Kathy Hunter, Chair

Approval of Minutes of June 4, 2025: As they were inadvertently omitted from the agenda, the minutes will be considered at the next meeting

1. Debrief of Community Conversations and next steps

Elaine noted David Fink's calm demeanor throughout the presentation, and that she felt the audience seemed primarily receptive to the information provided. The last comment, very helpful, was that the conversation reminded the resident of what she had heard 10 years ago in Westport on the need to provide affordable housing to attract good teachers

Mary thought his recommendation that the public meet with developers was a very good idea. The general emphasis on finding builders who have a good local track record and who will not build and leave, taking no responsibility for the quality of the work or upkeep of the development, opened up a new line of discussion.

General discussion of the high costs associated with housing construction dependent upon public subsidies (Chris referenced Great Hill Cottage Community in Guilford). Kathy explained that this is caused by, for example, the layers of financing required, requirement for prevailing wages, and also miscellaneous requirements like higher closing costs.

Chris reported that he was again struck by the consistent indication that what we do is up to us, and he advocates that we solicit public input about what individuals want to see; what they think will work. Discussion noted that we need to ensure we represent the needs of all residents, especially those most in need of affordable housing and are least likely to show up at public hearings to voice their opinions. Also noted was how the charge of the committee dictates our responsibility to make considered recommendations, to help everyone in the community understand the need and to identify options for meeting it.

Next steps: Kathy suggests that the July 30 Conn Conservation Council meeting on the intersection of affordable housing and conservation might be the basis for discussion with the Conservation Commission and others. It was decided that as it will be taped, we can consider doing this sometime after September.

There was a question about who on the committee would be involved then, depending upon when Housing is made a commission. Kathy recommends that when public comment on the ordinance is solicited we should ensure that its wording is accurate and correct.

2. Finalizing updates of current Affordable Housing Plan and prospective required updates for next plan.

A work session to review and discuss proposed wording changes and additions to the introductory pages of the 2022 Plan resulted in agreement on the points reviewed. The changes will be incorporated into a new version and distributed for further revision and/or approval in August.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m. on a motion by Chris, seconded by Kathy.