

Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Housing Committee
October 8, 2025
7:00 PM Selectman's Conference Room, 10 Meeting House Rd., Woodbridge

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

A quorum is present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Kathy Hunter, Chair

1. *Approval of Minutes* of September 4, 2025. Motion to approve: Lew; second: Elaine.

2. *Public Comment*: Ben Carlson

A member of the Conservation Commission, Mr. Carlson spoke as an individual to offer the conservation perspective: it is inherently place-based, depending upon the circumstances of an individual place's ecosystem. By contrast, housing is more flexible in its choices. He spoke about CCW from a conservation perspective, noting its value as an area suitable for wildlife, and that houses nearby would endanger that.

The committee discussed some of the points made and is looking forward to the opportunity to discuss with the Conservation Commission our relative perspectives on land use and hopefully develop some common ideas.

3. *Housing Chair Report*:

YIMBY Conference: among its interesting features was reporting successes in red states that have been passing zoning reforms to allow more housing because of the need to grow their economies.

The chief economist of Redfin also spoke about housing prices shutting out middle class people, and also the lack of turnover because people believe their homes should still sell at the peak, Covid-period price, whereas the market has lowered.

Another speaker of interest was Bill McKibben, founder of The Third Act, an organization for those over 60 that is focused on climate and social justice.

There has been no movement on HB 5002; it's under discussion but no special session yet scheduled.

Good news on Lucy St. housing: a nonprofit that specializes in elderly housing, New Samaritan, has expressed an interest, and they can bring in resources to update it etc. Want to make it all deed-restricted affordable, not just 6 units.

Kathy provided public comment on the Master Plan of the CCW. A zoning overlay district (which would allow commercial development) was suggested; Kathy wants to ensure that anything done does not have the effect of decreasing affordability requirements that the site is currently zoned for. More will be known after there are responses to the Request for expression of interest.

Ordinance: Kathy reported our recommendations to the BOS but none were incorporated: previously this evening they voted to approve it as drafted. The committee was particularly dismayed that the commission will have only 6 members.

4. *Comments on the POCD*

The committee will make no recommendations for change to the housing language. It will examine the new version carefully to ensure that any revisions do not remove essential directions on the subject.5. Debrief on Woodbridge Like Me Day

Elaine, Warner, Kathy where there to talk to people about the need in Woodbridge, using ALICE, United Way reports data. People were encouraging about housing; admittedly, the visitors were self-selecting for people with interest. Attendance and number of people circulating among the tables was relatively low.

Kathy had the ADU information sheet made into a poster and she will suggest it be posted in the Building Department. It was noted that nobody has applied to subdivide for 2 units, which are legal as of right everywhere.

6. Conservation/Housing Joint Meeting – November 6, 2025?

The possibility that we would be attending their meeting for only 15 minutes was discussed; Mary advocated that we have an agenda so it was clear that more time would probably be needed. The presentation in July on Conservation and housing could be the starting place; Mary suggested that we recap to get their perspective on it and hopefully clarify things that may have been misunderstood. Jim pointed out the desirability of breaking down the silos of individual committees just working within their own perspective.

There was conversation about the timing for the dissolution of the Housing Committee and installation of the new commission. The conclusion was that we were to serve until replaced, so we would continue to make plans such as this.

7. Community Conversations: not discussed

8. Next Steps for Information Sessions

ADUs: Mary advocated for this because she saw a recording of a panel on the subject that was produced in Fairfield. The panel, which included an owner, a builder, and others, covered the subject from many angles, and additional information can readily be provided because many information sheets (in addition to our own) are available on the internet. She will circulate the link so others can view the presentation.

Kathy suggested repeating our program about housing laws. New members of TPZ will need the training, and it was thought that more members of the public would be interested in the topic now than had been the case when we had one in 2023 at the JCC. Commissions would be invited: TP&Z, Board of Appeals, Wetlands, Conservation. For speaker we would want a land use attorney: Mark Branse, Jason Klein, someone from the Bar Association list that Kathy consulted in the past.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m. on a motion by Jim, seconded by Lew.

Submitted by Mary Dean, Secretary pro tem