



## Housing Oversight Task Force History

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Housing Oversight Task Force (HOTF) is to make housing more available to people having a range of income levels and backgrounds while preserving our town's unique character and scale and continuing to protect our treasured natural environment.

### Housing Oversight Task Force Formation

The Town of Woodstock adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 2018 which lays out a vision for the community that will accommodate a diversity of artists, musicians, incomes, generations of young families, diverse workforce, volunteers, increasing older population—everybody who wants to live and raise families here.

New York State enabling law for towns requires that zoning and land use regulations must be consistent with an adopted Comprehensive Plan, and that was also a guiding principle in producing our zoning and subdivision code updates. The community has acknowledged that Woodstock is experiencing a severe housing crisis that needs attention on a systemic level.

To address this severe housing crisis and other zoning and land use issues identified in the Comprehensive Plan, the Town Supervisor formed the Housing Oversight Task Force in June 2021. The HOTF is composed of members drawn from existing committees and boards. The Town of Woodstock secured a Greenway grant, prepared by the Woodstock Housing Committee, to engage a consultant, Nan Stolzenburg (principal, Community Planning & Environmental Associates – CP&EA), to assist with updating Woodstock Zoning Code on housing to reflect the Town's Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2018.

Working in a compressed time frame, the HOTF was to develop draft zoning to present to the Town Board for its consideration and adoption. The HOTF got right to work on this task, and kept their originating groups informed, receiving input as needed, using the Comprehensive Plan as a roadmap.

The Task Force held its first meeting on July 6, 2021 and has met every month since through April 18, 2023.

### Task Force Members

- **Deborah Meyer DeWan**, Co-Chair, Housing Committee member, Woodstock Housing Liaison to Ulster County's Housing Smart Community Initiative
- **Kirk Ritchey**, Co-Chair, former Housing Committee co-chair, Chair of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan Committee
- **Laura Ricci**, member of the Town Board, Chair of Zoning Revision Committee, Town Board Liaison of Complete Streets Committee, former Town Board Liaison to Comprehensive Plan Committee and Woodstock Environmental Commission

- **Richard Heppner**, Town Board member through December 2021, Town Historian, and former chair of Short-Term Rental Task Force
- **Judith Kerman**, Planning Board Vice-Chair, former member of Complete Streets and Critical Environmental Area Committees
- **Jeffery Collins**, Zoning Revision Committee member
- **Michael Castigione**, Zoning Board of Appeals and Zoning Revision Committee member

## Draft Version 1 July 2021 – May 2022

### July - August 2022

Beginning at the project's Kick-Off Meeting on July 6<sup>th</sup>, HOTF created and carried out an action plan to draft recommended zoning code updates. Our activities began with conducting a detailed evaluation of the current zoning code for housing and analyzing its strengths and weaknesses related to housing goals based on the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.

HOTF identified and evaluated a set of opportunities and potential tools from land use planning best practices to create housing options consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. HOTF conducted interviews with community stakeholders across a diverse spectrum of the community: nonprofits, faith-based community leaders, town employees, committee chairs, town department managers, police department, realtors, business owners, service workers, arts organizations, library staff, builders, contractors, engineers, new and long-term residents across different generations.

### September - December 2021

HOTF reviewed our initial findings and set direction for the consultant to prepare a draft of revised zoning language on housing, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and best practices for housing and land use. The HOTF worked with the consultant and a geo-spatial analyst to evaluate the environmental factors and sensitive areas to identify if and where there are locations in town that could accommodate multi-family housing. This effort assisted the HOTF in identifying zoning tools to provide for these opportunities in a manner that protects the environment and maintains current community character. The revised laws developed from this process also were crafted to improve housing and environmental decisions made by Town departments including the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Town Board and the Building Department.

HOTF directed the consultant to prioritize environmental protection, sustainability, design, community character and scale, and to evaluate the potential use of average lot size and density (dwellings per acre) versus minimum lot size for a dwelling (as required in current zoning), in order to protect the environment by building housing on smaller areas of land parcels while preserving open space.

The consultant introduced land use tools for major subdivisions to achieve more housing options in keeping with environmental protection, design, character and scale, including:

- Mandatory conservation subdivision regulations for all major subdivisions and some minor subdivisions
- Floating Residential District designed with conservation based design and inclusionary requirements
- Housing Overlay District
  - Note: In early 2022, HOTF rejected the Housing Overlay option as a result of committee concerns

- Density incentives
- New Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) options:
  - Increasing number of allowable ADUs per parcel depending on criteria including affordability, energy efficiency, character and scale, size, use, including prohibition of STR use, providing flexibility on ADUs
- Revise mapping -- create consistency and flexibility with GIS data layers

By the end of 2021, HOTF's work allowed the consultant to begin writing the initial draft of new code, based on discussions between July and December, and planned to have the consultant deliver a completed draft version to the HOTF in early 2022.

### January – May 2022

From January 11 thru 31, 2022, HOTF presented an update of its work to the Town Board, followed by a joint meeting with Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals and meetings with the Environmental Commission, Complete Streets and Zoning Revision, and Tree committees. HOTF compiled the input from these boards and committees for consideration in a draft set of recommended zoning and subdivision code changes.

From February – April 2022, the HOTF met weekly to review and comment on the draft code and associated materials from the consultant. HOTF conducted “what if” scenarios to test code application for various locations and property types in the town.

In early May HOTF returned to the consultant all of its comments and revision recommendations for the draft code. The consultant then incorporated all of HOTF's changes and returned a Version 1 draft to HOTF. This Version 1 was presented to the Town Board on May 31, 2022.

Immediately after the May 31, 2022 presentation to the Town Board, Version 1 and all associated documents were made public and placed on the Town's website. These documents included a full document of Version 1 Recommendations showing the original Law and all edits, Version 1 List of Recommendations Overview, Version 1 Recommendations Detail Report, other associated documents to navigate and describe the changes, and HOTF's May 31 presentation to the Town Board.

The Town created an email address [zoningupdates@woodstockny.org](mailto:zoningupdates@woodstockny.org) and requested all Town Board members, Town Boards and Committees and town residents to submit comments using this address. Over the months of June and July comments were assembled, and beginning in July 2022, HOTF began review of all comments.

The Task Force reviewed and considered all the written comments received on Version 1 through the summer and into fall 2022 and met with the Planning Board, ZBA and representatives of other committees to get their additional feedback. In reviewing what was received, the HOTF found that the comments fit into seven general categories:

1. Concern that housing affordability is not ensured by the proposed law (**Affordability**).
2. Concern that an increase in density will result in housing everywhere (**Density**).
3. Short Term Rental (STR) concerns related to housing affordability (**STR**).
4. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) questions & concerns, including proliferation, carrying capacity, etc. (**ADU**)
5. Misinterpretation of the proposed code (**Misinterpretation**).
6. Housing issues that cannot be addressed through zoning (**Not Zoning**)

7. Clarifications and wordsmithing (**Clarifications**).

## Development of revised draft Zoning & Subdivision Law / June 2022 – April 2023

For 10 months, HOTF discussed every comment received and worked to identify solutions to the concerns expressed in the comments. As a result of these extensive discussions, HOTF arranged for the consultant to make revisions to Version 1 creating a new Version 2.

Beginning in late February 2023, the HOTF arranged for John Lyons, Esq. Woodstock's land use lawyer for the Planning Board, to conduct an extensive legal review of what was then being called Version 2. HOTF also arranged for an informal review of Version 2 to be conducted by the Ulster County Planning Department, and met with the County Planning Department Director and Senior Planners. The results of both of these reviews were thoroughly evaluated, and decisions were made by HOTF on policy comments from both Ulster County's Planning leadership and John Lyons and his associate.

From late March through April 18, 2023, HOTF and the consultant prepared a final draft Law for Subdivisions and a draft Law for Zoning, as well as other documents associated with information, details, and explanations, including:

- Summary of revisions to draft Zoning Law and draft Subdivision Law
- Handout of proposed changes highlighting housing and environmental benefits
- Detailed report of proposed changes listing housing and environmental benefits
- Nan Stolzenburg, FAICP, bio and qualifications;
- Geospatial mapping and analysis
- Non-zoning policy recommendations
- HOTF history and timeline, including developing recommendations, the results of 2021 interviews with town residents, and categories of Version 1 comments from Town Boards, Committees and the public

These materials are being submitted to the Town Board on April 18, 2023, for consideration and action..