

Town of Woodstock Town Board meeting held on November 1, 2022 at 6:45 pm

RESOLUTION 209-2022 UC HOUSING SMART COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

Offered by Supervisor McKenna, seconded by Councilmember Ricci:

WHEREAS, the Woodstock Town Board believes that housing is a human right, and that working toward housing solutions is a priority for the well-being of the local residents, the economy, and community sustainability; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board believes that rising housing and rental costs and a lack of diverse housing opportunities including quality affordable rental housing as well as opportunities for community members to own their homes, pose significant challenges to all members of our community and threaten our community character; and

WHEREAS, according to the Ulster County Housing Action Plan, based on census data, 22% of Town of Woodstock homes are renter occupied; and

WHEREAS, affordable housing is defined as housing in which the occupant is paying no more than 30% of monthly or annual income for housing costs, including utilities; and

WHEREAS, 68% of Woodstock's renters and 34% of owners live in "unaffordable" housing (paying more than 30% of income) with 21%-25% in the category of "severely cost burdened" (housing costs of more than 50% of income); and

WHEREAS, ensuring there are affordable housing options for all community members is a critical component of creating a healthy, sustainable, and prosperous community to which local elected officials are committed; and

WHEREAS, rising housing and rental costs and a lack of diverse housing opportunities for all community members is in part due to the demand for housing far exceeding the supply of new affordable and workforce housing being developed in the community; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Woodstock has made housing a priority through several initiatives in recognition of the housing crisis:

(1) creation and passage of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan which identified the Town's housing needs and the goal of providing housing options;

(2) appointment of the Woodstock Housing Committee in 2019 whose work identified three crucial areas of focus: zoning revisions (Housing Oversight Task Force), a Home Share program, and a Housing Trust (Woodstock Housing Alliance), which have been realized in 2022; and

(3) development by the Housing Committee of an education and outreach effort to raise awareness of housing needs through a newsletter, social media efforts, and a presence at in person events; and

WHEREAS, a long-term commitment by the local government to review and approve new affordable and workforce housing projects is a critical strategy for ensuring there are affordable housing options for all community members; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board has the opportunity to actively address housing challenges and ensure that our essential workers and other community members can continue to live in the community they call home by committing to join the Ulster County Housing Smart Communities Initiative (Housing Smart Communities) and thereby receive a wide range of supportive resources.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Woodstock, in order to meet local housing needs, adopts the following commitments as part of joining the Ulster County Housing Smart Communities Initiative. The commitments to the program include the timely completion of the following six steps:

1. Join the Housing Smart Communities program and engage the community
2. Designate a Housing Smart Communities coordinator to serve as the liaison between the municipality and the Housing Smart Communities program staff
3. Form a housing task force or designate an existing official housing-related body of the Town to serve as the group committed to the Housing Smart Communities program
4. Register for the program on the Housing Smart Communities website
5. Establish a community outreach and educational campaign on the importance of developing a range of housing options
6. Commit to implementing actions in the Housing Smart Communities program

All voted aye 5-0:

Supervisor McKenna
Councilmember Ricci
Councilmember Earls
Councilmember Ratcliff
Councilmember Conte