

## **Housing Smart Committee Meeting Minutes March 23, 2026**

Call to Order - 6:05

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

- Sara Bayer - present
- Philip Mones - present
- Sophie Grant - absent
- Vickie Starr - present
- Deb Dolan - present
- Roy Dignes - present

Tonight's meeting focused on the final draft of the Comprehensive Plan, and beginning to plan for our zoning code update.

Roy Dignes began by discussing how important it is for our new Comprehensive Plan to include a mention of all the key changes we hope to achieve when we update our zoning code. He explained that when it's time for the new zoning code to be shared with the community, anyone who objects to something in the zoning code can challenge the change if it's not sanctioned in the Comp Plan. Vickie mentioned townhouses and condos as examples of the types of "missing middle" housing that we want to encourage, and thus would like these mentioned in the Comp Plan.

Phil Mones pointed out that the Comp Plan suggests allowing ADUs to be built on single-family parcels "by right", and suggested that a lot of people in town may have issues with that. Vickie challenged Phil on this, noting that over 30 people attended the ADU info session the committee hosted in August 2025, suggesting a lot of interest from residents to ADUs. But Phil countered that there will probably be a lot of people in town who simply don't believe they should have to look at another house next door to them if they don't want to, and may try to block our efforts on this front.

Sara Bayer then explained that "as-of-right" or "by right" means that if a proposed project meets all the written requirements of the zoning code such as use, size, setbacks, height, density, parking, and so on, it gets approved automatically. The issue, we all agreed, is that the general public may not understand this, and may misinterpret those terms to mean that anyone who wants to build an ADU on their property can simply go ahead and build it without getting plans approved by the Town.

The group agreed that it a better way to word this would be to simply state that the process for getting ADUs built is to streamline the permitting process with the town, so that if someone presents building plans that adhere to our zoning code, they can be approved by our administrative staff and should not need to go before the planning board.

Vicke suggested that it's the responsibility of the Housing Smart Committee to create a "positive housing narrative" among our residents in order to get more housing built, and asked the group what they thought our talking points should be to win more people over to our efforts, and become more open-minded about increasing density in certain areas where we could put more housing.

Phil said the way to get more of the community to embrace our housing efforts is to focus on issues that nobody can argue with, such as:

- Our population is declining and our taxes are going up. We need a more robust tax base to support the town, and the way to get this without raising taxes is to have more residents paying taxes.
- We have almost no buildable land and therefore need to loosen up more restrictions
- We need more services and workforce housing for employees to work in the new businesses

Vickie asked the committee if they think it would be beneficial to host a series of workshops or presentations about various housing issues, and if we thought enough people would attend. Phil suggested we consider doing something similar to the housing expo PH2 hosted at the Pine Hill Community Center in fall 2024 since that seemed to attract a lot of people.

Motion to close the meeting made by Sara at 7:25. All in favor? (motion carried?)

Minutes taken by Vickie Starr

The next Housing Smart Committee meeting will take place on Monday, April 27 @ 6pm @ Shandaken Town Hall.