

## MEETING AGENDA - August 24, 2026

Call to Order - 6:07

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call - Names of members (Write Absent or Present)

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

Due to the absences of several committee members, there was no agenda for the meeting. Instead we engage in an open conversation with a member of our community who came to learn more about our Housing Smart Task Force.

The conversation began with an introduction and explanation by Vickie Starr regarding when and why Shandaken's Housing Smart Committee was formed. Starr explained that Shandaken's Housing Smart Task Force was created to study Shandaken's housing needs and possibly housing solutions based on current affordable housing and housing smart trends, and to help educate our town government and the residents of Shandaken about our housing challenges and potential solutions. It was further explained that this is being done in accordance with [Ulster County's Housing Smart Communities Initiative](#) (HSCI), of which we are a member, and that our efforts are largely focused on achieving as many of the HSCI's "[Housing Smart Action Items](#)" as are reasonably applicable to our town. We also noted that achieving these goals allows us to reach various levels of "certification", which will help to unlock future county, state and federal funding for larger housing efforts our town chooses to undertake.

This was followed by a conversation amongst Starr, Deb Dolan and the audience member about what each of us sees as the primary reasons for the current housing crisis afflicting our town, the national economic context in which this is happening, and various solutions being embraced by pro-housing advocates, developers, and municipalities across the U.S. Everyone agreed that this is a bipartisan political issue.

Because the audience member is a tenant of Howard Widensky's who was invited to the meeting by Starr following a Facebook conversation around Howard's efforts to evict tenants currently living on a residential property recently purchased by Widensky, Starr clarified that Shandaken's Housing Smart Task Force is not opposed to Widensky developing fair market housing in Shandaken. Instead, the concern is his constant requests for zoning variances for his real estate development projects while refusing to offer any concessions to help us address our housing affordability crisis. "If Widensky needs to seek variances from the town for his real estate projects, he needs to be willing to give something back to the community in return," stated Starr, referring to the proposed density clause in the new Comprehensive Plan.

(This proposed density clause can be found on page 73 of the current draft of the Comp Plan, which suggests: Any increase in allowable residential density, including for multi-family or attached housing, should be conditioned on the provision of meaningful public benefits, including a substantial share of permanently affordable, workforce, and/or affordable senior housing. The purpose of this type of incentive zoning is to ensure that increased development intensity is directed to appropriate sites, contributes directly to addressing the Town's housing needs, and advances broader planning goals set forth through the comprehensive plan.)

Motion to close the meeting made by Deb Dolan at 7pm. Vickie seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Minutes taken by Vickie Starr

The next Housing Smart Committee meeting will take place on Monday, September 28 @ 6pm @ Shandaken Town Hall.