

Shandaken Housing Smart Task Force Minutes - March 24, 2025

Attended by committee members: Deb Dolan, Sophie Grant, Philip Mones and Vickie Starr

Guest: Kai Lord-Farmer, Senior Planner, Ulster County Planning Department

Our March meeting was again dedicated almost entirely to discussion of our Housing Site Inventory mapping project, with a special focus on conducting a “Windshield Survey” of the town, to be conducted by our committee members. It was also noted that we would invite some members of “PH2” to help us conduct this survey.

Before diving into the Windshield Survey, Kai reported that he and his intern were about 75% finished with their work on the map, and that they will have a rough draft of the map ready to present to us @ our April meeting.

Kai explained that the Windshield Survey was an important supplement to the mapping he and his team were doing using data collection, since a visual survey can sometimes provide property info that can’t be captured using mapping and demographic data collection software. He gave us examples of things to look for - such as zombie houses, or parcels that appeared to be zoned for commercial use but no longer seem to be operating and are being left to rot.

We agreed to use this Shandaken Housing Sites Inventory template to document your work and create a draft inventory of properties:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1c7_3RrJSnXdTYG9fKrAuRsbaDt9-UrvHRnyeazkFr44/edit?gid=0#gid=0

Below are the guidelines Kai gave us for conducting this survey. We agreed to divide and conquer, with each member of the committee committing to survey 1-2 Hamlets, as follows:

Deb Dolan: Phoenicia/Chichester, Woodland Valley, with assistance from Michael Ruane (PH2)

Phil Mones: Highmount

Sophie Grant: Allaben/Shandaken

Sophie / Phil (splitting these): Mount Pleasant/Mount Tremper

Sara Bayer: Bushnellsville/Pine Hill, with assistance from Jan Jaffe who will tackle the Pine Hill Historical District.

Vickie Starr: Big Indian/Oliveria

During our discussion of the instructions below, Kai also mentioned that their mapping shows some parcels that don’t adhere to the zoning for their area – i.e. undersized or non-conforming

lots. This led to a brief discussion about our zoning laws, and raised some questions for us to address:

- Can we apply for a grant to hire a consultant to guide us through the Zoning Review process and help us revise the Zoning laws, similar to the way Patterns for Progress is helping guide the Comp Plan update..
 - Kai suggests Fall 2025 is a good time to submit the request for a consultant
- Can we get the zoning board to potentially grant approval to build on these non-conforming lots, which might present some immediate locations for building new housing.

Guidance for Identifying Properties

- **Desktop/Windshield Survey**
 - Focus on properties in the following the Hamlet Residential, R1.5, and R3 zoning districts as identified in the Parcel Viewer (see below)
 - Use Google maps and the UC Parcel Viewer to scan for properties well-suited for housing.
 - Windshield survey guidance - Here is a good guide for thinking about logistics for doing a walking or windshield survey. This for a full community survey not just focused on housing but can still be a helpful guide for logistics:
<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/windshield-walking-surveys/main>
- **General Site Criteria**
 - Focus on identifying sites with the following characteristics:
 - a minimum of 1.5 acres.
 - outside of the flood plain
 - not on steep slopes
 - in the Hamlet Residential, R1.5, or R3 zoning districts

Resources

- **Ulster County Parcel Viewer:** <https://ulstercountyny.gov/maps/parcel-viewer/>
 - Use this tool to locate zoning districts and other parameters for the properties identified.
 - Turn on the Municipal Boundary layer and the Municipal Zoning Layer and Zoom into Shandaken.
- **For Sale Properties:** Use online realty websites like Zillow, Realtor.com, and Redfin to identify for-sale properties

The next Housing Smart Task Force meeting will be on Monday, April 28 @ 6pm at Shandaken Town Hall.