

Community Housing Conversation  
Woodbridge Public Library  
Thursday, March 23, 2023  
6:00-7:30pm

In attendance:

- Susan Jacobs — from LA, on 2030 task force, important topic
- Cathy Wick — wants Woodbridge to remain a place that is beautiful and welcoming
- Bob Hill — learn about the housing committee's work, provide suggestions and input
- Steven Lawrence — get affordable housing and evolution of the town right; if we don't do it, it'll be done for us, and we won't like it
- Ke Xu — wants to learn, wants 11-year-old daughter to have experience
- Kathy Hunter — diversity — embrace children
- Alan Solomon — cautionary tale from Southern California: lost open space *and* affordability
- Elaine Feldman — many needs and perspectives; problems are not insurmountable
- Chris Dickerson — business development, on 2030 task force
- Jen Park-Lofters — raising children here
- Barbara Fabiani — wants to hear things firsthand
- Chuck Pyne — affordable housing will have significant impact — what could the future hold?
- Tahera Parvez — mother of four, from upstate New York
- Ben Fink — SCRCOG facilitator

Conversation notes:

- Story of biracial couple at bus stop. Bus stop is now really diverse, much more than it was. Feels so welcome and supported.
- Another story of racial intolerance, then a move, now much more welcome.
- This community is evolving. How to celebrate and build?
- Lack of diversity in Woodbridge has an effect on kids.
- Market problems. Hard to sell and move. Nothing affordable anywhere — a problem for older people looking to downsize.
- More diversity in housing is important for people who want to stay in town.
- “If you want to belong, you have to reach out.”
- We can do this taking everyone's needs into consideration.
- The Flats are diverse and walkable. A lot different from upper Woodbridge. In the Flats you know your neighbors. Prejudice against the Flats.
- Sense of isolation and aloneness, when moving here from an urban area. Not many places to interact in town.
- Highest education level in Connecticut. We know Kiev and Beijing better than our neighbors.
- More property is available in Woodbridge than we think.
- To know your neighbors, walk.
- Kids are linchpin of social fabric.
- Deeds in vault — no Blacks, Jews, Irish.

- “Natural” vs. “forced” change. “Legal fiat” vs. “organic.” “Pernicious legalisms.” Things are happening naturally, without anyone putting their thumb on the scale.
- Respect people’s privacy.
- Opportunities to connect more? How can a community evolve to serve all of us?
- Survey showed many people are in need of housing, close to being homeless. Can’t wait too long.
- Want kids to be able to live here.
- What’s fixed and what’s fluid?
- We did not hear fear tonight — fear of the future, fear of change — as we so often hear in public hearings and meetings.
- Offense at how Woodbridge is described in the media. 350 naturally affordable homes. Woodbridge is high in the diversity index. Big changes recently.
  - “Does that mean we don’t do anything?”
  - “No!” Just need to recognize where we are; different from what was.
  - Most of those 350 homes aren’t for sale.
- State issues, ADUs.