

Housing Committee – June 12, 2025 — At-a-Glance Recap (for distribution)

When & Where **Thu June 12, 2025 • 5:30 – 6:50 PM • City Hall Conference Room A/Zoom**

Present: Co-chair Councilor John Tabor; Tracy Kozak; Dagan Migirditch; Jennifer Stebbins Thomas; Erik Anderson; Mary Loane; John O’Leary; Andrew Samonas
Attendance **Remote:** Asst. Mayor Joanna Kelley **Staff:** Peter Stith (Planning & Sustainability) **Absent:** Councilor Beth Moreau; Megan Corsetti; Byron Matto

1. Housekeeping

- **Minutes approved** (Mar 13, Apr 10, May 8) without changes.

2. City-owned Land for Housing

- Only the **lower City Hall parking lot** remains on the potential-sites list; however, a **Gateway-Neighborhood Overlay District (GNOD)** project now underway nearby is likely to take priority. Committee agreed to revisit the parcel after the GNOD concept firms up.

3.

Zoning-Barriers Report

— Draft Short- & Long-Term Actions to Council

Theme	Proposed Action
Parking reform	Fold parking requirements for projects ≥ 3 units into Planning Board site review to speed approvals.
Dimensional relief	Re-examine frontages/lot sizes in single-family zones where most lots are already non-conforming; align with Master Plan update.
Map changes	Identify ≈ 15 industrial/commercial parcels that could replicate the GNOD model and unlock mixed-use housing.
Adaptive reuse	Draft options to convert large single-family homes to multifamily.
Environmental hurdles	Re-view wetlands/buffer standards for unnecessary friction—without weakening protection.
Data foundation	Public roll-out of the RKG housing-needs study set for July 10 .

The committee will circulate a polished memo before the next Council meeting.

4. Developer Roundtable — Key Takeaways

- **Mark Stebbins, Eric Chinburg, Tom Balon** cited parking ratios and construction-type thresholds as top cost drivers.
- **Micro-units (300–600 sf)** could pencil out **if parking is decoupled**.
- Steel/elevator construction only becomes feasible at **8–10 stories**; current 60-ft height cap outside downtown is a brake.

- Strong support for a **local Housing Loan Pool** seeded by the Housing Trust Fund and area banks (Upper Valley model). Councillors Cook & Tabor will open talks with the NH Bankers Association.

5. Housing Trust Fund

Staff will bring back draft guidelines tying fund investments to projects that meet the upcoming zoning-barrier fixes.

6. Public Comment

- **Bill Bowen:** Prioritize better use of existing land before expanding boundaries.
- **Jim Smalley:** Strip out “nuisance” zoning rules that add cost but no benefit.

7. Next Steps & Key Dates

- **July 10 @ 5:30 PM** — Public information session with **RKG** (Council Chambers & Zoom).
- Staff to finalize **Zoning-Barriers report** and draft **Housing Trust Fund criteria**.
- Co-chairs to brief Council leadership on developer feedback and parking-reform concept.

Why It Matters

The committee moved beyond diagnostics toward **actionable code changes**—especially parking flexibility and dimensional relief—that could unlock units quickly. Pairing those reforms with a funded **loan pool** targets both regulatory and capital barriers. Watch the July 10 RKG session: it will set quantitative targets that give these zoning ideas political traction.