

Township of South-West Oxford
Minutes
SWOX Housing Opportunities Committee
October 7, 2025

In Attendance: Mayor David Mayberry, Councillor Valerie Durston (Ward 3),
Councillor Craig Gillis (Ward 6)

Staff: Acting CAO/Deputy Clerk Julie Middleton, Oxford County
Development Planner Laurel Davies Snyder

Regrets: Councillor Peter Ypma (Ward 2); Paula Parris (community
representative – resigned)

Guests: Mark Burke, Property Owner – Vine St., Beachville

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m. by Mayor David Mayberry and a quorum was present.

Discussion Items

Proposed Mount Elgin Small Home Development Options (17 Peggy Ave)

Discussion among the members present took place regarding the potential small/affordable home initiative in Mount Elgin, the Committee discussed various approaches to increase housing choice and affordability, including unit types, ownership models, and prospective partnerships. Members noted that a local developer connected to the lands is discouraged by the current slow pace of development and low demand for higher-priced housing product, prompting consideration of whether the Mount Elgin property—or its development rights—might be suitable for a more attainable housing concept.

The group expressed interest in co-operative housing and small/tiny homes, with consideration given to investigate funding sources beyond a partnership with the County. The Committee referenced the [Doug Tarry/St. Thomas project](#) with YMCA/YWCA as a principal partner. It was also clarified that the Mount Elgin subject property (17 Peggy Ave) is currently owned by the McLaughlin's. An early site concept contemplated townhouses facing one street with tiny homes to the rear; however, parking constraints would need to be resolved.

Preliminary site parameters from Julie's sketch as presented at the meeting indicate approximate lot sizes of 33 ft × 60 ft on the outside and 30 ft × 50 ft on the interior, a road width of about 50 ft, and an overall plan width of roughly 324 ft. The Committee sees strong potential demand for smaller, realistically priced homes—particularly one- and two-bedroom formats—and emphasized the need to model lot and servicing costs

to hit a target overall price in the \$350,000–\$400,000 range (serviced land plus a tiny home).

From a planning and social-policy perspective, Laurel Davies Snyder underscored the case for small-footprint housing, the importance of addressing parking (for private vehicles and/or work-from-home realities), and the need to define the project philosophy early—whether primarily market housing or some supportive component. A site visit to the St. Thomas Project Tiny Hope was identified as a potential learning opportunity. A diverse housing mix (singles, semis, townhouses) was encouraged, with openness to stacked townhouses (two-storey units with separate entrances) to maximize land efficiency. Staff expressed willingness to bring forward a site-specific zoning by-law (e.g., lot area, side yards, setbacks, etc.) and suggested championing sustainability features, aiming for a net-zero mindset to position the Township as a leader in smaller-footprint development.

The Committee discussed ownership and neighbourhood considerations. While remaining sensitive to adjacent residents (e.g., height and density), members observed that individual ownership often supports long-term property care. The Township's preferred role is facilitative—supporting and coordinating rather than directly funding and developing. In light of current market conditions, builder incentives (expedited permits, fee reductions) were suggested to attract participation, and members noted that removing development charges for affordable units could reduce costs by approximately \$20,000–\$40,000 per home. A slower economy may also present opportunities for more favourable pricing. Public education and engagement will be essential to build enthusiasm and acceptance, particularly as the market shifts away from larger homes.

To advance the concept, the Committee agreed on the need to translate core principles into tangible site options with professional design support, setting clear parameters for a designer to test realistic scenarios and maximize usable space. Key targets include developing homes at or below \$400,000 for households priced out of current offerings, identifying suitable partners (including potential co-op operators), and outlining financing pathways for both land and construction.

Immediate next steps include contacting the McLaughlins to gauge interest in the land; if positive, reconnecting them with Dan Siegel to discuss a potential partnership structure; continuing to explore a range of partnership models (Oxford County?); engaging a designer to prepare concept sketches; and speaking with local builder Brian Graydon about modifying typical plans to deliver smaller, more affordable homes.

Vine Street, Beachville – Development Update

Mark Burke, property owner, was in attendance for this portion of the meeting. An update was provided to the committee regarding the proposed subdivision development on Vine Street in Beachville. The property consists of approximately 26 acres and is planned to accommodate 21 residential lots, each averaging about half an acre in size, though some may be larger or smaller. The development is envisioned to feature

medium-sized homes, appealing to residents seeking “next-step-up” housing opportunities within the community.

The property is owned by Mark Burke and his business partners. Development Planner Spencer McDonald, who previously oversaw the development coordination with Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, continues to provide planning services from Oxford County on the file.

Access to the subdivision is proposed primarily from Vine Street, between two existing homes, with a secondary/emergency access point extending to West Hill Line via Canfield Lane, which also includes a proposed water easement. The emergency access is planned to be 5 m (approximately 16 ft) wide, pending review and input from the Township’s Fire Chief. The Barrett Drain, which runs through the property, will remain open as a green space feature—contrary to the original concept that proposed enclosing it to create additional lots. Stormwater management will be situated at the lower portion of the site (north), adjacent to existing homes along Beachville Road, functioning as a low-lying, grassy buffer rather than an active pond.

The project aims to enhance local housing diversity by offering medium-sized homes with larger garages or workshop spaces, which are in demand within the Township. A traffic study has been completed and is expected to show minimal impact. Oxford County has confirmed that sufficient water capacity exists to service the development. Potential recreational connections are also being explored, including a walking path from Lot 21 to the nearby soccer fields to the West, a trail around the stormwater management area, and possible tree planting or low-impact amenities such as frisbee golf.

Environmental studies completed to date include a comprehensive hydrogeological review with well monitoring and drainage flow analysis, as well as flora and fauna studies identifying local species such as butterflies, toads, and beechnut trees. An archaeological assessment was also undertaken, uncovering some arrowhead artifacts.

The lands are already zoned for residential development, and the project team is targeting advancement through the planning process later this Fall – with a public meeting to be scheduled soon.

While access to the adjacent soccer field has been discussed, it may be limited, though the development is not considered landlocked. The subdivision is designed to promote walkability and pedestrian connectivity between West Hill Line and Vine Street. Housing forms are anticipated to include 1,200–1,400 square-foot bungalows, raised ranches, and split-level homes that respond to the property’s topography. Preference will be given to engaging a local builder to ensure customized, high-quality construction.

Julie will follow up with the Township’s Fire Chief to confirm the emergency access width requirements – 5m vs. 6m.

Built for Good Report

Received for information.

Paula Parris Resignation

The Committee accepted Paula Parris' resignation from the Committee. Mayor David Mayberry will write an email to thank her for her time and work on the Committee over the last few years.

Directives

- Assist the Township and provide recommendation on taking a leadership role with respect to the consideration of various housing options within the Township and the County of Oxford;
- The SWOX Housing Opportunities Committee acts as a resource, information gathering and advisory body to Township Council on housing needs within the community;
- Monitor and obtain information on the local housing market and identify trends and emerging housing needs in the community and recommend action where appropriate;
- Provide advice and make recommendations regarding affordable housing initiatives and priorities within the community;
- Explore options for facilitating outside partnerships/involvement for new housing;
- The committee will not be directly involved in providing social housing within the community (this is an upper tier responsibility). However, may consider facilitating discussion in this regard should the opportunity arise with available land or interest from developers.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:41 p.m. The Committee will arrange a visit/tour of Project Tiny Hope in St. Thomas. Mayor David Mayberry will reach out to schedule this visit.