



NEWS FROM
ULSTER COUNTY
County Executive Jen Metzger

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Contact: Amberly Jane Campbell, Assistant Deputy County Executive
(845) 340-3800 x8958 / acam@ulstercountyny.gov

Ulster County Hosts 2026 Housing Smart Communities Forum

County Executive Metzger Presents Inaugural Housing Leadership Award to New Paltz Supervisor Tim Rogers

KINGSTON, NY - Ulster County today brought together local officials and representatives from 14 municipalities participating in the Ulster County Housing Smart Communities Program to share local progress, exchange best practices, and collaborate on strategies to expand housing opportunities across the County. The forum was held at the Restorative Justice and Community Empowerment Center in Kingston to discuss Countywide needs and next steps, and provide local officials with information and tools to address local challenges in a series of workshops and presentations.

The Ulster County Housing Smart Communities Program, launched in 2022, supports municipalities in meeting their local housing and affordability challenges through a structured certification program, technical assistance, and consultant support from the Ulster County Planning Department. This innovative County program to encourage housing-friendly policies and approaches at the local level helped inspire Governor Hochul's Pro-Housing Initiative at the state level.

Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger opened today's forum and presented the County's inaugural Ulster County Housing Leadership Award to Town of New Paltz Supervisor Tim Rogers.

"This Housing Smart initiative has shown what's possible when communities learn from one

another, build capacity together, and commit to practical, forward-looking housing solutions. The forum was an opportunity to celebrate that progress and chart the work ahead,” **said Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger.** “It’s also an opportunity to recognize exceptional local leadership, and I was very pleased to present New Paltz Town Supervisor and former Village Mayor Tim Rogers with our first Housing Leadership Award. Under his leadership, the Village took numerous steps to advance housing affordability and expand the availability of housing, and made New Paltz a regional model for inclusionary zoning — the product of a careful, community-driven process that balanced development pressures, student-housing demand, and long-term affordability needs.”

Rogers was recognized for his significant contributions as both Mayor of the Village of New Paltz and now as Town Supervisor. Under his leadership, the Village strengthened its affordable housing framework; established a permanent Housing Board; expanded accessory dwelling unit opportunities; supported apartments above commercial space; strengthened rental and short-term rental oversight; and partnered critical zoning reforms with sewer, water, and lead-service-line infrastructure upgrades.

“I’m honored to accept this Housing Leadership Award on behalf of New Paltz. For years, our elected officials and volunteers haven’t just talked about being pro-housing, we’ve taken actions. We were early adopters of mixed-use, three-story zoning to support greener, walkable neighborhoods, and we strengthened local laws on short-term rentals, security deposits (before NYS), accessory dwelling units, affordable housing in apartment complexes, rental registration, and with our landlord-tenant relations council,” **said New Paltz Supervisor Tim Rogers.** “I want to thank Ulster County and the County Planning Board for their partnership and for this meaningful recognition. While many in our community deserve recognition for advancing this work, I feel compelled to acknowledge a few housing pioneers whose leadership laid the foundation in New Paltz more than a decade ago. I want to recognize former Mayor Jason West, Deputy Mayors Dr. KT Tobin and Rebecca Rotzler, Affordable Housing Board Chair Guy Kempe, and Planning Board Chair Maurice Weitman (RIP). Their vision laid the groundwork for where we are today. Thank you to New Paltz’s housing pioneers for getting us here and to everyone continuing this work to create more much needed housing regionally, statewide, and nationally.”

The Housing Leadership Award — hand-carved by local artists Nils Kulleseid of New Paltz (stone) and Kieran Kinsella of Rosendale (wood) — is designed to be passed from one honoree to the next each year, recognizing sustained, practical, forward-looking leadership in expanding housing opportunity across Ulster County.

Participating Municipalities and Current Certification Levels:

GOLD

- City of Kingston — Continues to uphold its Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA) rent stabilization law, protecting tenants amid ongoing legal challenges.
- Village of New Paltz — Established a tenant-landlord relations council and is pursuing a nuanced, community-driven approach to inclusionary zoning that balances housing production with affordability and local character.

SILVER

- Town of Olive — Working with Ulster County, LaBella Associates, and HRA to draft inclusionary zoning legislation and targeted smart-growth zoning allowances.
- Town of Rochester — Advancing a Home Rule request for a 1% Real Estate Transfer Tax, supporting conservation and a local housing fund; recipient of a Pro-Housing Communities grant.
- Town of Shandaken — Integrating a strong housing component into its comprehensive plan update; members of the Housing Task Force are piloting the Catskill Alliance for Conservation and Housing, a new community-rooted nonprofit.
- Town of Woodstock — Using ARPA funding to assess town-owned sites and develop an RFP process for rural affordable housing development.

BRONZE

- Village of Ellenville — Recipient of a Pro-Housing Communities grant; conducting an inventory of village-owned sites to identify opportunities for affordable housing.
- Town of Esopus — Newest program member, forming its housing committee and beginning capacity-building efforts.
- Town of Gardiner — Advancing reforms to short-term rental and ADU laws to better balance housing availability with tourism pressures.
- Town of Hurley — Reforming its ADU zoning code to improve access and affordability.
- Town of Marbletown — Partnered with the Open Space Institute to acquire a large farm property, dedicating most of it to conservation while reserving a portion for affordable housing.
- Town of New Paltz — Passed an inclusionary zoning law requiring affordable units in new residential development.
- Town of Rosendale — Adopted updates to its ADU zoning regulations and is actively working to identify sites suitable for new housing development, building a foundation for expanded housing production in the community.

- Town of Saugerties — Conducting a Good Cause Eviction community outreach campaign to educate residents and landlords.

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