



“Let’s talk it over at Mohonk”

Mohonk Consultations is an independent nonprofit dedicated to creating opportunities for the meaningful and productive exchange of ideas at the historic Mohonk Mountain House. Please consider a donation in support of these efforts to bring together people of diverse perspectives and create paths for positive change.

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**ROOM ENOUGH FOR BOTH:
Building Affordable Housing and
Preserving Open Space in the Hudson Valley**

November 13, 2023

Support for our 2023 Fall Conference provided by:



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ROOM ENOUGH FOR BOTH: Building Affordable Housing and Preserving Open Space in the Hudson Valley

Presented by Mohonk Consultations in collaboration with
the Hudson Valley Affordable Housing and Conservation Strategy Project

November 13, 2023
Mohonk Mountain House Conference Center, New Paltz, NY

PROGRAM

8:30 Coffee and Registration

9:30 Convening

- Sarah Underhill, Mohonk Consultations
- Katie Naplatarski, Mohonk Consultations

9:35 Mohonk Consultations Welcome

- Louisa Finn, Mohonk Consultations
- Cara Lee, Mohonk Consultations

9:45 Mohonk Mountain House Welcome

- Tom Smiley, Mohonk Mountain House

9:50 Ulster County Smart Housing Communities Program

- Jen Metzger, Ulster County

10:00 Hudson Valley Snapshot: Affordable Housing and Land Use

- Adam Bosch, Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress

10:15 Setting the Stage and a Call to Action

- Rebecca Gillman Crimmins, Hudson Valley Affordable Housing and Conservation Strategy
- Steve Rosenberg, Hudson Valley Affordable Housing and Conservation Strategy

11:00 Audience Questions

- Rebecca Gillman Crimmins (moderator)
- Steve Rosenberg (moderator)

11:15 PANEL DISCUSSION: Emerging Strategies and Solutions

- Kitty Brown (moderator), Mohonk Consultations
- Kai Lord Farmer, Ulster County
- Robert McKeon, Town of Red Hook
- Weston Minissali, Taproot Community Land Trust

12:00 Lunch/Conversation

1:00 PANEL DISCUSSION: Rural Workforce Housing Solutions

- Marty Irwin (moderator), Mohonk Consultations
- Al Bellenchia, Columbia County Habitat for Humanity
- Rica Bryan, Rock Steady Farm
- Kyle Ellis, Rock Steady Farm
- Lucinda Poindexter, Chester Agricultural Center

1:45 Break/Conversation

2:00 PANEL DISCUSSION: Getting Us from NIMBY to YIMBY— Building Public Support for Policies and Projects

- Seth McKee (moderator), Scenic Hudson
- Kevin O'Connor, RUPCO
- Neil Bettez, Town of New Paltz
- Kenneth Kearney, Kearney Group

2:45 Wrap-up and Next Steps

- Rebecca Gillman Crimmins, Hudson Valley Affordable Housing and Conservation Strategy
- Steve Rosenberg, Hudson Valley Affordable Housing and Conservation Strategy
- Cara Lee, Mohonk Consultations

3:00 Conversation Stations with Presenters/among Attendees

- Hudson Valley Affordable Housing and Conservation Strategy
- Emerging Strategies and Solutions
- Rural Workforce Housing
- NIMBY to YIMBY
- Mohonk Consultations

4:00 Conference Space Closes

CONTINUING THE COLLABORATION

Today's program seeks to provide information and inspiration that will contribute to emerging initiatives in the Hudson Valley to address our need for both affordable housing and preservation of open space. We hope it has been an opportunity for you to hear from, and converse with, a variety of voices and perspectives. In the coming days, all conference participants will receive a followup email with a brief survey for you to provide feedback. Thank you for being part of today's event, and we look forward to your observations and comments.

Speakers and Panelists

Sarah Underhill, Mohonk Consultations Board Member—Sarah's love of the Hudson Valley began in the 1980s when she worked on the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater as an environmental educator, activist, and sailor. Her love of singing and song collection and the arts, supports her dedication to community building. Sarah serves on the Wawarsing Environmental Commission, and on the boards of Clearwater, SeedSong Farm Center, and Slow Food Hudson Valley. Previously an RN for Hudson Valley Hospice starting in 2002, she is on the Ethics Committee for Health Alliance Hospitals. Her Quaker heritage, emphasizing justice and mercy, informs her work.

Katie Naplatarski, Mohonk Consultations Board Member—Katie grew up in the Hudson Valley and recently returned "home" after 40 years in Brooklyn, where she championed open space and greening causes for more than 25 years, most recently as co-creator of "Stop the Plastic Park" and "Our Voices Seen and Heard: 50 Years of Protest." A former NYC teacher, Katie still spends time in Brooklyn where her daughter resides. She lives in Accord, is a member of High Falls Conservancy, and relishes the marvelous natural and cultural offerings of the area.

Louisa Finn, Board Chair, Mohonk Consultations—Louisa is a fourth-generation Smiley family member. She grew up in the Hudson Valley, frequently visiting Mohonk where her grandmother and family lived. Louisa is committed to preserving the land, philosophy, and ideals of her Smiley ancestors. She is a practicing speech and language pathologist, a reading tutor, and a published poet.

Cara Lee, Mohonk Consultations Board Member—Cara has had a 40-year career in conservation in Hudson Valley as an advocate, land manager, policy developer, lobbyist, and educator. She was environmental director for Scenic Hudson before joining The Nature Conservancy in 2001 to work on ecological management in the Shawangunks and then on renewable energy policy. Cara is currently the Chair of New Paltz's Community Preservation Fund Advisory Board.

Tom Smiley, CEO Mohonk Mountain House—A fifth-generation Smiley family member, Tom has been part of the Mohonk Mountain House management team since 2003, and spent eight years overseeing the properties and project management teams. Before that he was a member of the board. He is CEO since 2018 in a co-leadership model with his cousin, Eric Gullickson. Tom holds an MBA from SUNY New Paltz, chairs the Town of Marbletown Zoning Board of Appeals, and previously served on the Ulster County Housing Advisory Board.

Jen Metzger, Ulster County Executive—Jen Metzger holds a Ph.D. in political science, and has extensive experience in government and policy, having served in local government for over 10 years, as a New York State Senator, and as co-founder and Director of Citizens for Local Power. In the Senate, she championed passage of key climate and open space laws and helped pass the 2019 Housing Stability & Tenant Protection Act. As County Executive, climate and housing are high priorities, demonstrated by her creation of a \$15 million Ulster County Housing Action Fund to catalyze development of healthy and green affordable housing.

Speakers and Panelists

Adam Bosch, President and CEO, Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress—After a career in journalism in the Hudson Valley, Adam joined Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress in 2012 as vice president of research and external affairs, where he has authored numerous reports on Hudson Valley issues. Prior to his current position, Adam served as director of public affairs for the New York City water supply system, responsible for community outreach, intergovernmental affairs, and education programs.

Rebecca Gillman Crimmins, Co-convenor of Hudson Valley Affordable Housing and Conservation Strategy—Rebecca is Senior Vice President of Real Estate and Development at the Institute for Community Living. Previously, she was an Assistant Vice President at New York State Homes and Community Renewal, financing affordable housing across the State. Rebecca has worked on the financing and development of affordable and supportive housing, as well as planning and policy in government and nonprofits, for over 10 years.

Steve Rosenberg, Co-convenor of Hudson Valley Affordable Housing and Conservation Strategy—Steve is a former Senior Vice President at Scenic Hudson and Executive Director of Scenic Hudson Land Trust, where he led many efforts bringing land, equity and conservation together at the regional scale. His work included authoring the NYC/Hudson Valley Foodshed Conservation Plan, launching Scenic Hudson's River Cities Program, and leading efforts to transform the Hudson's post-industrial waterfronts into safe and inviting public places. Steve served on the board of the Land Trust Alliance for nine years.

PANEL: Emerging Strategies & Solutions

Kitty Brown, Mohonk Consultations Board Member (Moderator)—Kitty has served three terms on the New Paltz Town Board, and on the Board of the NYS Greenway Conservancy since 1991. She been a Board member of Mohonk Consultations since 1993. Kitty co-founded the Wallkill Valley Land Trust and helped negotiate the purchase of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail. She is an active member of the Ulster Activists Environmental and Affordable Housing Committees.

Robert McKeon, Supervisor, Town of Red Hook—Robert has long been recognized for his leadership in protecting Red Hook's farmlands and rural life both as a volunteer and as Red Hook's current Town Supervisor, a position he has held for eight years. He was recognized by Scenic Hudson as Hudson Valley Hero for his leadership preserving the region's farmlands and open space. Robert is a local small farmer and served 10 years on the Red Hook Ag & Open Space Committee and the Farm to Food Pantry Program.

Kai Lord-Farmer, Ulster County Senior Planner, Social and Workforce Housing/Climate Action and Adaptation—Kai is a Senior Planner for the Ulster County Planning Department focused on affordable housing. He is a city and transportation planner with experience in social and workforce housing, land use and transportation policy, climate action planning, and climate adaptation. Kai grew up in Ulster County and is happy to call Hudson Valley his home again after beginning his career in California. Kai strives to practice an equitable and innovative community planning process

Speakers and Panelists

focused on long-term sustainable solutions for the 21st century and beyond.

Weston Minissali, Project Manager, TapRoot Community Land Trust—Weston was born and raised in Ulster County. He got involved in housing justice to help alleviate the rising cost of living and prevent the further displacement of vulnerable members in his community. Weston is responsible for researching, identifying, and implementing the tasks required to launch TapRoot Community Land Trust so that it can best create and preserve affordable housing in Ulster County and the surrounding areas.

PANEL: Rural Workforce Housing Solutions

Marty Irwin, Mohonk Consultations Board Member (Moderator)—Marty has advocated for protecting open space since retiring to New Paltz in 2002. As a member of the New Paltz Open Space Commission and then the town board, he worked with the Wallkill Valley Land Trust to create Mill Brook Preserve. Marty currently serves as an officer on the Wallkill Valley Land Trust board and chairs the Conservation Committee. Prior to retiring, he developed affordable housing in the lower Hudson Valley.

Al Bellencia, CEO Habitat for Humanity, Columbia County—Al has global experience in strategic planning, marketing, management, and organizational development. Habitat provides affordable homeownership for traditionally underserved communities. Under his leadership, Columbia Habitat aims to provide more homes and services to low to moderate-income families. Al is a Trustee of The Friends of Lindenwald (President

Martin Van Buren's home) and a director of Kinderhook Tri-Village Rotary Club.

Rica Bryan (they/them), Harvest/CSA Manager and Co-Owner, Rock Steady Farm, Millerton NY—With a background in outdoor education, in NYC, Rica pursued public health nutrition and was involved with food access-related programs including Grow NYC's Learn It, Grow It, Eat It Program and NYC Department of Health's Farmers' Markets for Kids. They coordinated programs for Community Access, a non-profit expanding opportunities for people through affordable housing, advocacy, and healing-focused services. Rica is a graduate of Farm School NYC, which trains local residents in urban agriculture.

Kyle Ellis (he/they), Worker/Owner, Rock Steady Farm, Millerton NY—Kyle has farmed for eight years and is in his fifth season at Rock Steady. He is interested in farmer equity, especially surrounding basic needs and the discussions around raising real standards of living for farm workers.

Lucinda Poindexter, Executive Director, Chester Agricultural Center—Lucinda is passionate about the mission of the Chester Agricultural Center (CAC) and in collaborating with farmers, farmworkers, and values-aligned organizations to build a stronger, more equitable regional food system. She steered CAC's transition to a non-profit, made the land access program more inclusive, and is developing a model for affordable housing for farmers and farmworkers. Lucinda was formerly the Executive Director of Re>Think Local, a collaborative that educates and empowers locally-owned independent businesses and citizens who care equally about people, planet, and prosperity.

Speakers and Panelists

PANEL—Getting Us from NIMBY to YIMBY: Building Public Support for Policies and Projects

Seth McKee, Executive Director of The Scenic Hudson Land Trust, Inc., and Land Programs (Moderator)—Seth leads Scenic Hudson's land conservation program and helps Hudson Valley's cities protect and enhance their land assets, local history, and culture in an inclusive and equitable way. Having started in 1991, he became Director of Land Conservation in 2007, and assumed his current role in 2021. Seth has chaired the Advisory Board of the Land Trust Alliance's New York program, served as a board member of The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, and as co-chair of the Town of New Paltz Open Space Protection Commission.

Kevin O'Connor, President, RUPCO—Kevin has 32 years of experience in the housing sector. He has transformed communities in the Hudson Valley through the development of supportive and affordable housing that includes multigenerational, artist and homeless housing, homeownership, and commercial units. RUPCO's CEO since 2002, he is a director of Pattern for Progress and the National NeighborWorks Association. Before joining RUPCO, Kevin served as Associate Executive Director at Hudson River Housing in Poughkeepsie, NY. He holds B.A. in Communications from Marist College and graduated from the Harvard Kennedy School's Achieving Excellence in Community Development Program.

Neil Bettez, Supervisor, Town of New Paltz—Currently in his third elected term as New Paltz Town Supervisor, Neil holds a BS in Forestry from the University of New

Hampshire, an MA in Biology from the University of North Carolina Greensboro, and a PhD in ecology from Cornell University. He is also a visiting scientist at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, NY, where prior to being elected Neil did research on ecological processes in urban environments, how our actions affect them, and what we can do to make urban areas more sustainable.

Kenneth Kearney, Founder and President, Kearney Group—Throughout his 20 years of real estate development, Ken has grown Kearney Group from a boutique real estate development firm into a regional leader in the affordable and mixed-income housing industry. Known as "a businessman with a big heart," Ken is deeply connected to the communities in which he works. He is a member of the Board of Directors for Patterns for Progress and Hudson Valley Community Foundations and a member of the Putnam Hospital Center Board of Trustees.