

**Message from Town Supervisor Bill Smith  
May 2025**

**New Zoning Code Provides for Improvement; Protects What We Care About**

This is a welcome opportunity for me to express my gratitude to the people of Pittsford for sharing your views with me and the Town Board over recent years, as we've put together a new Comprehensive Plan, and subsequently, as we've revised our Town Zoning Code based on that Plan.

Your advice throughout both processes are what have made possible a new Zoning Code that embodies the views, interests and wishes of the broad consensus of our community.

Town Board approved a revised Zoning Code on March 16, 2025 culminating an open and public process. Just as we held a series of open workshops for the Comprehensive Plan, the Board met in a series of special public sessions to review and revise the Zoning Code section-by-section, with two public hearings on the full revision. Your comments and clearly expressed preferences directly defined our Comprehensive Plan and the new Zoning Code based upon it.

Clearly the views of elected officials are influential in shaping public outcomes. Yet representative government shines most admirably is when its priority in pursuing results rests not so much on what *we* think, but on what *you* think. Our new Zoning Code honors that principle, both in what it changes and in what it doesn't. It's a plan for continual improvement, that lets Pittsford be Pittsford.

Here are the principal substantive points of our new Zoning Code:

***Residential neighborhoods:*** Residential neighborhoods won't change. Neighborhoods of single-family homes will stay that way. As per existing Code, houses can't be modified to include a separate apartment, and the rule remains one house per lot.

***"In-Law" Suites:*** The Code makes it easier to provide a suite for privacy for a parent or other family member, in a way that doesn't create a separate apartment within the house.

***Attached Houses:*** For new construction on currently unbuilt tracts, the revised Code gives broader scope for single-family attached houses, like Greenpoint Trail and Alpine Ridge. This would not apply to new construction in existing residential neighborhoods of single-family *detached* houses.

***Incentive Zoning:*** The new Code builds into the existing Incentive Zoning law new provisions to encourage more moderately priced market-rate housing for people in or approaching retirement age.

***More Housing Variety:*** The new Code extends Incentive Zoning opportunities Town-wide. This can allow for greater density and thereby for housing priced more moderately than what has been available traditionally.

***Monroe Avenue Commercial Corridor:*** The new Code offers a comprehensive vision for improving the Monroe Avenue commercial corridor. The goal is to create a mixed-use commercial district with a more village-like feel and of more walkable scale. To do this it provides for storefronts at the street and parking to their rear, with housing above the streetside storefronts. In addition to the mix of commercial and residential, the new Code provides for a greater variety of businesses, including micro-breweries and boutique hotels.

***Keeping Chickens:*** The revised code permits keeping chickens, within reasonable limitations, on residential lots. Households keeping chickens must maintain a coop sited at least 50 feet from neighboring property lines. Regulations for keeping bees also have been included.

***Parking:*** New parking regulations promote less asphalt and more landscaped islands in areas of redevelopment, as well as stronger guidelines for the provision of pedestrian connections in parking lots.

***Lighting:*** New dark-sky lighting regulations protect residents from intrusive light from adjacent properties. These regulations benefit wildlife and the environment as well.

***Former Golf Courses:*** Our Zoning Code now provides that, if a golf course closes and sells its land, the density of any housing to be built will be substantially consistent with existing residential areas, with requirements for open space and buffering. This rezoning makes no changes to existing golf courses or their operations. It makes a difference only if a golf course goes out of business and sells its land for development.

***Environmental Stewardship:*** The new Code encourages and provides compatibility guidelines for beneficial environmental practices and infrastructure, such as solar energy systems, electrical vehicle charging stations, installation of geothermal and more.

You'll find the new Zoning Code on the Town website here:

[www.townofpittsford.org/zoningcode](http://www.townofpittsford.org/zoningcode).

The new Code includes other changes you'd expect: in formatting, such as consolidating definitions for ease of reference; revising citations to State law as necessary, clarifying sections where experience showed the existing language to be ambiguous, deleting outdated or obsolete provisions; accommodating new practices and preferences of residents that have emerged since the last Zoning Code update in 2009.

Like so many of you, I hold a deep appreciation of what we have here in Pittsford in terms of open space and the balance between suburban and rural. I grew up in a place where I watched, from boyhood to early adulthood, as what was once a substantially rural corridor became almost completely paved over. It left a lasting impression: that there had to be a better way. One better way we found in Pittsford was by enacting the Greenprint, that preserved two-thirds of the farmland in Town when we enacted it in 1996. Land that remains open and protected.

Although our new Zoning Code doesn't involve the Greenprint farms – it doesn't because they can't be built upon – it rests on the same foundation: a sensibility broadly shared among Pittsford residents about how, consistent always with the rights of property owners, land use at each place in Town affects the whole community; how it can add to or detract from that unique collection of characteristics that make Pittsford recognizable as the place we've chosen to live.

The great strength of our new Code is that it represents the wishes of the overwhelming majority of our community. You expressed it in our public sessions for the Zoning Code, and earlier in the Community Survey and public workshops that shaped our Comprehensive Plan. We've respected your wishes.

Now it's the duty of our Town Staff and Volunteer Boards to apply the new Zoning Code and to educate the public about it. It's my duty and the duty of our Town Board to continue to honor your wishes by upholding and preserving our new Code.

*I can do my job best when you let me know what you need and what you think needs attention. Please contact me whenever the Town can help. Let me know your suggestions for improvements in Pittsford. I maintain an open-door policy in the office, answer my own phone unless I'm in a meeting or on another line and have a monthly Saturday open house for residents at the Library's Fisher Room. You can reach me at (585) 249-6220 or by email at [bsmith@townofpittsford.org](mailto:bsmith@townofpittsford.org).*