

# NICOLE NEWICK

INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE FOR BETHEL TOWN COUNCIL

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Dear Neighbor,

## What is your position on reducing plastics in Bethel?

Reducing our reliance on single-use plastics is both an environmental and community initiative. We can follow the lead of towns like Hoboken, which **requires restaurants to provide cutlery and straws only upon request**, using **compostable alternatives** whenever possible. Many farmers' markets and festivals across the country **mandate compostable service ware and prohibit plastic bags**. Neither of these steps are costly to the town and all promote environmental consideration. Another idea, that would come at a **low cost to the town**, is creating a **community composting program** to reduce the need for plastic trash bags. Our community garden at Bethel Park, next door to our transfer station, opens an excellent opportunity to **generate a composting program** that can see all use phases of use and be **easily accessible to the community**.

## What is your position on transforming old vacant, dilapidated motels and homes in Sullivan County into AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ALL? What is your position regarding Religious Based Housing?

Affordable housing is the foundation for a strong local workforce and a vibrant community. **Revitalizing vacant or blighted properties into safe, affordable homes**—while protecting environmental quality and neighborhood character—addresses a pressing need and supports economic stability. Bethel's financial auditors have repeatedly noted that our reserves are higher than recommended, **urging us to invest in our community**. Using some of these funds, along with the **state and federal grants** can create lasting change, strengthen our local economy, and enhance the quality of life for residents.

It's essential to ensure fairness and inclusivity within the broader conversation about housing. Any housing—religious or otherwise—must **comply with all applicable zoning, building, and environmental regulations**, and be subject to the same public review process as other developments. While the development of religious-based housing continues, **we must ensure that secular housing options grow at an equal pace so that all residents have fair and inclusive access to housing**. Housing created in partnership with the municipality should always remain secular to guarantee equal opportunity for everyone in our community.

## What is your position on improving Healthcare in Sullivan County?

Healthcare access is another key priority. While much of healthcare policy is set at the county and state level, Bethel can **take action to attract providers** and **make services more accessible**. Addressing year-round affordable housing will make our community more appealing for medical professionals and their families. We can strengthen our case to providers by partnering with schools, senior programs, and local employers to **demonstrate a stable patient base** and conducting a **healthcare needs assessment** to show demand. Keeping the blighted properties around town in mind, we can use **grant funds, state programs, and other supports to create turnkey medical office space—**to **attract medical facilities** to our area. **Ensuring our zoning is welcoming** to medical facilities is also essential and should be part of our **forward-thinking plans**.

## What will you do to bring sustainable business into Bethel?

**If you build it, they will come.** If we **create spaces that businesses can thrive in**, through housing for **year-round residents** who will be part of this **workforce** and part of this **patron base**, creating facilities that are **ready for businesses** to move into, and zoning that makes sense to our vision for **Bethel's growth**, we can help build sustainable businesses in Bethel.

## What would you do to bring more Peace, understanding and Environmental Conservation into Bethel?

Peace and understanding are built through **open conversations and transparency**. Environmental Conservation happens through **policy and practice**. I believe, we need all these factors for Bethel to move forward **happily and healthily**. I would be honored to **lead our way**.

Respectfully,



Nicole Newick



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