

**ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

January 9, 2020

Public Safety Complex, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, 49 ½ Court Street, Canton, NY

**I. Call to Order**

- a. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum.** B. Murray called the meeting to order at 6:55 pm. A quorum was present.

**Members Present:** E. Alan, K. Bellor, K. Bisonette, J. Cameron, D. Chambers, D. Duff, M. Gazin, A. Gilbert, M. McCluskey, B. Murray. **Members Absent:** W. Davis, D. Fay and K. O’Neil. **Staff Present:** M. Larson and J. Pfothenhauer.

- b. Adoption of the Agenda.** Pfothenhauer identified two projects that would be discussed under MOU. The modified agenda was unanimously adopted (Bellor/O’Neil).

- c. Approval of the Meeting Minutes.** The December 12, 2019 minutes were unanimously approved (Duff/Gilbert).

**II. Public Forum**

Murray thanked Bellor for serving two terms as the Chair of the Planning Board.

**III. Project Reviews**

- a. Projects Returned for Local Action.**

- i. Waddington (V): Three-lot subdivision in the R-1 District off the Franklin Road. Pfothenhauer said the local Planning Board reviewed the proposed subdivision in December and opted to approve it contingent on County Planning Board approval. Pfothenhauer also said the local Planning Board does not meet in the winter, and he decided to return the project for local action in order to accommodate a bank closing.
- ii. Massena (T): Site Plan Review for an Auto Detailing Business in the Highway-Commercial (H-C) District at 170 Highland Road. Pfothenhauer described the project location and noted it was a former Salvation Army thrift store. *The Board concurred with staff recommendation to return the project for local action.*

Duff asked how local boards could address the challenge of establishing a meeting quorum when not enough residents are willing or able to serve on a municipal advisory board. Pfothenhauer and Larson talked about appointing alternate board members, and the consolidation of municipal planning and or zoning boards between a village and town. A

suggestion was made to include the item in the annual newsletter. Larson said an overview of the 2020 Newsletter would be the Board's first land use training session at their February meeting. Bellor suggested adding the ramifications of having a local board take action before a project is reviewed by the County Planning Board.

**b. Full Reviews.**

- i. Massena (T): Adoption of a Solar Energy Facilities Law. Pfothenhauer said much of the language in the draft law was similar to the Town of Canton's, which was reviewed by this Board in August 2019. Pfothenhauer reviewed the suggested changes in the staff report. A discussion ensued about the safe installation of battery banks, including emergency response procedures in the event of a fire or failure; the health and safety hazards to the surrounding area; environmental and groundwater contamination; and decommissioning. A comment was made that energy storage facilities can consist of a three to four-story building with compressors. Chambers and Cameron suggested the Town's local law to omit energy storage facilities from a project review. A suggestion was made to revise the definition of solar energy facilities to exclude energy storage systems, and to state they are subject to separate review. A suggestion was made to schedule a presentation by a NYSERDA representative on solar energy storage facilities. Staff verified for Gazin that the law included language for decommissioning, and decommissioning funds with an escalator.

Bellor said his wife was recently elected as a Town of Massena Board member, and said it was his intent to recuse himself from land use projects in the Town of Massena. A discussion ensued about recusals to avoid the appearance of a conflict, which included not participating in discussions, as well as not voting. A majority of the Board voted to approve the solar law with conditions (Alan/O'Neil). Abstention: Bellor.

**IV. Reports**

- a. **Executive Committee.** Murray said the Executive Committee met by phone to set tonight's meeting agenda and discussed an email from Gazin about consistent application of standards for similar projects in different locations. Larson and Pfothenhauer said they will deliver a Board training on site plan review and special use permit standards. Pfothenhauer said similar projects are subject to different standards based on the extent of land use regulations that are in effect in a community. Murray said he felt the Planning Office staff does a fair and thorough review of land use projects. Bellor suggested creating a punchlist of elements that can be applied to projects. Alan offered to compile a checklist of criteria that is based on the Board's written record.
- b. **Board of Legislators.** None.
- c. **Highway Department.** Chambers said several Federal aid projects are going out to bid, including Brown's Bridge in Hannawa, and the Talville Bridge in Edwards. Chambers said the Department is also scheduled to meet with an architect about establishing three

department outposts in Russell, Potsdam and Lisbon. Chambers thanked Planning Office staff for their help in writing applications to secure funds for these projects.

- d. **County Roundtable.** None.
- e. **Staff Report.** Pfothenauer said Lisa Bartalo will begin working in Planning Office as an Office Manager for the next six months, and said the Office is beginning its Census 2020 promotional initiative. Pfothenauer said the Village of Potsdam was designated as the North Country recipient of Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding. Pfothenauer also said the Office is working with Emergency Management Services to update the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Larson said the County's transit system provided 25,000 more trips in 2019 than in the previous year.

## V. Other Items

- a. **Correspondence.** None.
- b. **2020 Work Program.** The Board unanimously adopted the 2020 Work Program (Gilbert/Bellor).
- c. **Announcements.** None.
- d. **Next Meeting Dates.** The Executive Committee will meet Thursday, January 30<sup>th</sup> at 4:15 pm. The Planning Board will meet on February 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room of the County Public Safety Complex, located at 49 ½ Court Street in Canton.

## VI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned by consensus at 8:30 pm (Bisonette/Alan).

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Alan, Secretary