

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

September 12, 2019

Public Safety Complex, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 49 ½ Court Street, Canton, NY

I. Call to Order

- a. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum.** K. Bellor called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. A quorum was present.

Members Present: E. Alan, K. Bellor, K. Bisonette, J. Cameron, D. Chambers, W. Davis, D. Duff, M. Gazin, M. McCluskey, D. Mullaney, B. Murray and K. O’Neil. **Members Absent:** D. Fay and R. Hotte. **Staff Present:** M. Larson and J. Pfothhauer. **Others Present:** Mary Ann Ashley, Canton Town Supervisor, and John and Bonnie Danis, Rensselaer Falls residents.

Bellor welcomed members of the audience who were present to hear the full review for Canton’s Joint Comprehensive Plan.

- b. Adoption of the Agenda.** A comment was made that Duff would make a report under the State of the County about attending a Ft Drum Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) meeting. The agenda was unanimously adopted (Alan/Cameron).
- c. Approval of the Meeting Minutes.** The August 8, 2019 minutes were unanimously approved (O’Neil/Duff).

II. Public Forum

None.

III. Project Reviews

- a. Projects Returned for Local Action.**

Pfothhauer said two projects to be returned for local action – an area variance for a garage, and a special use permit for a small rural business in the Town of Morristown – would be added to next month’s MOU list.

- b. Full Reviews.**

- i. Canton (T): Joint Comprehensive Plan. Pfothhauer said a copy of the staff report and a link to review the draft document online was forwarded to the Board. Pfothhauer highlighted the planning process and timeline to prepare the plan, then reviewed comments outlined in the staff report.

John Danis identified himself, listed his residential address in Rensselaer Falls, and read a statement in response to a proposed waterfront overlay district in the residential zone of the Village of Rensselaer Falls. Highlights from his letter include: the proposed overlay benefits a 4-acre waterfront lot that would accommodate a variety of commercial uses, and the plan says local zoning would be amended to be consistent with the plan. Danis reviewed the dimensional constraints to accommodate commercial activity in the location and the adverse impacts it would have on the surrounding residential neighborhood, including: noise from evening events and gatherings; snowmobile and automobile traffic volume and exhaust. Danis also noted local elected officials are related to the property owner and should recuse themselves from the land use process. Danis provided a copy of his letter to include in the meeting record.

Bellor asked Danis if he expressed his concerns to the local boards who will ultimately adopt the plan. Danis said yes, he expressed his opposition to the boards in June, and again in July. Pfothenauer confirmed for O'Neil that when a comprehensive plan is referred to the County Planning Board, the County examines whether the plan contains certain elements, rather than evaluate the final extent of land use regulations that may stem from the plan. Gazin said most commercial uses in the Village are on the east side of the Oswegatchie River. Members of the Board wondered whether there was local consensus to create the overlay district, and whether additional public hearings were scheduled to solicit input on the proposed district. Danis said despite his objections in June and July, the proposal to create the overlay district has not changed. Canton Supervisor Ashley said a public hearing will be held on Monday in Rensselaer Falls, followed by a joint meeting on Tuesday to accept the draft plan.

O'Neil suggested the notice of action state the proposed overlay district is incongruous with the intent of the residential zone; that it appears it is being established without local consensus; and that the overlay district would be more compatible with the commercial district on the east side of the river. Larson and Cameron said it appeared that consensus didn't exist. Alan said the proposed commercial overlay district in the residential zone will create a potential zoning conflict. A comment was also made that the overlay district in the residential area would require significant infrastructure investment. The Board unanimously approved the comprehensive plan with non-binding comments (Gazin/Alan).

- ii. Gouverneur (T): Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review for two 5 MW Solar Arrays in the Rural District at 126 Little Bow Road. Larson delivered a PowerPoint presentation as the staff report which included the intent of the Rural zoning district, surrounding land uses, the proposed layout for the solar array, and the shallow depth to bedrock along the southern portion of the lot. Larson also reviewed the recommended conditions of approval, which omits consolidating two utility lines into one as Larson learned each array requires a separate set of utility poles. Gazin and Alan recommended the decommissioning estimate be updated every five years by a qualified, third-party engineer who is licensed to practice in New York State. The Board unanimously voted to conditionally approve the SUP and Site Plan for two, 5-MW solar arrays at 126 Little Bow Road (Davis/O'Neil).

- iii. Potsdam (V): Site Plan Review and Special Use Permit for Mixed Use Development in the Innovation District at Old Snell Hall, located at 41 Elm Street. Pfothenhauer described the property's location and former uses. Pfothenhauer said the developer is proposing 59 studio, single-bedroom, and double-bedroom units on the 3.3-acre lot along with institutional and commercial office space. Pfothenhauer said the parking lot off Elm Street would be reserved for the residential tenants, and employees would park on an adjacent lot. Pfothenhauer also said the access to the parking lot off Elm Street would be reduced from two to one driveways to help reduce congestion in the area, and that the Village has determined the sewer line has enough capacity to accommodate the uses, that the property will get plumbing upgrades and access a 12" water line.

Pfothenhauer said the proposal satisfies parking and lot coverage requirements, but discovered a density standard does not exist for uses in the Innovation District. A comment was made that the project proposal is a significant adaptive reuse in the village, and the reconfigured driveway off Elm will help address congestion. When asked, Pfothenhauer identified the locations on the site plan for snow storage and dumpsters. A majority of the Board concurred with staff recommendation to return the project for local action, and to include a comment to establish a density standard for uses in the Innovation District (Mullaney/Bisonette). Abstention: Davis.

IV. Reports

- a. **Executive Committee.** Bellor said the Executive Committee met on August 29th to set the meeting agenda and discuss tonight's full review projects.
- b. **Board of Legislators.** None.
- c. **Highway Department.** Chambers said the County Route 35 Bridge is open, and the Sullivan Road is open. The Brouse Road project is in progress, and road work will be complete mid-November.
- d. **State of the County.** Duff said the Ft Drum Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) meeting was organized by the Development Authority of the North Country to discuss land use projects that occur around the perimeter of the base, including solar and wind energy, and wireless communications towers. Duff said the group has prepared model laws to share with surrounding jurisdictions, and said base helicopters may make use of area airports. Duff also said a map is also being prepared to depict the impact area of Ft Drum's exercises.

Alan said the Town of Hopkinton is preparing a solar energy facilities law.

- e. **Staff Report.** Pfothenhauer said Planning staff is to be commended for their work in preparing the Town of Morristown's Comprehensive Plan, which will be reviewed by Zimmerman for the Planning Board's October meeting, who has moved into a new office in the County Courthouse. Larson said the Board of Legislators is considering a resolution

to establish a bus route that would serve Massena and neighboring Akwesasne in Franklin County. Pfothenhauer said the Local Government Conference will be held in Kellas Hall at SUNY Potsdam on October 15th. A comment was made that conference registration is no longer online; conference attendees must submit a paper form to register.

V. Other Items

- a. Correspondence.** Pfothenhauer said this month's correspondence consisted of standard notices of action from local jurisdictions.
- b. Next Meeting Dates.** The Executive Committee will meet on Thursday, September 26th at 4:15 pm in the Planning Office. The Planning Board will meet on October 10th at 7:00 pm. in the 2nd 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 8:54 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Brian Murray, Vice-Chair

Minutes prepared by M. Larson

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