

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

October 10, 2019

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.** K. Bellor called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. A quorum was present.

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

Bellor congratulated Pfothenhauer for his recent appointment as Planning Director.

- b. Adoption of the Agenda.** Pfothenhauer said a site plan review and special use permit to expand an existing Stewart’s Shop at 242 East Main Street in the Village of Gouverneur would be added as a full review project. The modified agenda was unanimously adopted (Davis/Murray).
- c. Approval of the Meeting Minutes.** The September 12, 2019 minutes were unanimously approved (Gazin/Mullaney).

**II. Public Forum**

None.

**III. Project Reviews**

- a. Projects Returned for Local Action.**

Bellor said an MOU Addendum was distributed at tonight’s meeting.

- i. Massena (V): Area Variance for North Country Mill Works in the Residential B District at 128 South Raquette River Road. Pfothenhauer described the property’s location and reviewed aerial imagery of the lot and surrounding neighborhood. Pfothenhauer said the property requires a 5’ to 10’ variance for a sideyard setback, and said the request exacerbates a non-conformity. A member of the Board asked why the two lots could not be combined into one. Pfothenhauer explained the local code does not allow for more than one principal use on a lot. Pfothenhauer said because the proposed addition exacerbates a non-conformity, he said he would notify local code officials that the project should be resubmitted as a use variance.

## **b. Full Reviews.**

- i. Morristown (T): Comprehensive Plan. Pfothenhauer said tonight's review was prepared by Zimmerman as other Planning staff drafted the text of the document. Pfothenhauer reviewed the recommendations in the staff report. Gazin asked if utilities extended along the North Umberland bypass could be installed underground. Chambers said there is shallow depth to bedrock in that area and underground lines may be cost prohibitive. Members of the board agreed to strike "underground" from the utilities recommendation. The Board unanimously agreed to return the comprehensive plan for local action with non-binding comments (Chambers/Duff).
- ii. Gouverneur (V): Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review to expand Stewart's Shop in the Highway Commercial (B-2) Zone at 242 East Main Street. Pfothenhauer reviewed the property's location and described the proposed site plan. Pfothenhauer also displayed streetview imagery of the property and noted the proposed exit onto Depot Street would help improve traffic flow on East Main Street. Pfothenhauer identified the proposed locations for the light poles and recommended recessed bulbs with full cut off shields to minimize light trespass onto an adjacent residence. Pfothenhauer also suggested the existing vegetation be retained as much as possible for screening purposes. Duff said the property's current arrangement causes a choking point for traffic on Main Street, and said the line of sight in that area is poor. Davis recommended the existing and new canopy include fully recessed bulbs as the original fixtures create glare which affect drivers traveling on Route 11. A comment was made that if the existing vegetation could not be retained, to plant additional vegetation along the privacy fence to screen the business. The Board unanimously voted to conditionally approve the SUP and Site Plan for the expansion of Stewart's Shop at 242 East Main Street (Fay/Gazin).
- iii. Morristown (T): Site Plan Review and Special Use Permit for two, 5-MW solar arrays in the Residential-Agricultural District at 34 County Route 2. Larson described the project proposal and location; the permitted uses in Morristown's R-A district; and the regulations that apply to freestanding solar arrays. Larson displayed streetview imagery of surrounding land uses and reviewed the recommended conditions of approval. Chambers said the recommendations should include securing a permit from the County Highway Department. Larson confirmed for Gazin the recommended conditions of approval would include cybersecurity language that was drafted for a solar array project in Gouverneur. The Board unanimously voted to conditionally approve the two, 5-MW Solar Arrays at 34 County Route 2. (Murray/Chambers). Bellor noted tonight's meeting packet included a Wall Street Journal article that was provided by Gazin about cybersecurity threats.

## **IV. Reports**

- a. **Executive Committee.** Bellor said the Executive Committee met on September 26<sup>th</sup> to set tonight's meeting agenda.

- b. **Board of Legislators.** Fay said the proposed County budget presented by the County Administrator won't include a change to the existing County tax rate. Fay said a big issue at the moment is sales tax negotiations with the City of Ogdensburg, and the committee is scheduled to meet again on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- c. **Highway Department.** Chambers said the Highway Department is completing its summer projects; 30 miles of road were paved and shoulder gravel is being completed. The Brouse Road Bridge is projected to open in November. The Department recently opened bids for the Wanakena bridge, which was under budget. Chambers said sending out bids early is yielding a cost savings for the County.
- d. **State of the County.** Duff said he attended the Village of Rensselaer Falls' public hearing on the adoption of a joint-comprehensive plan with the Town and Village of Canton, and relayed the concerns noted in the County Planning Board's review of the proposed plan. Duff said the boards unanimously voted to add language for reviewing project proposals in the overlay district. Duff said the Rensselaer Falls' mayor abstained from voting.
- e. **Staff Report.** Pfothenhauer said in light of the infestation of the Emerald Ash Borer, the County Forester recently completed an assessment of hazard trees along County Roads, and said the County is examining funding opportunities to proceed with hazard tree removal. Pfothenhauer said the Office will be involved in promoting participation in the 2020 Census which will occur in six months. Pfothenhauer also said the remediation of the former J&L site in the Town of Clifton ended with a positive balance, and those funds will be reinvested in a couple of site options. Pfothenhauer said Larson is fully engrossed with the administrative oversight of the County's transit system, and announced the upcoming Local Government Conference on October 15<sup>th</sup> at SUNY Potsdam. Fay noted Pfothenhauer was recently appointed as the Planning Director; members present applauded their congratulations.

## V. Other Items

- a. **2020 Work Program.** Copies of the 2019 work program were distributed at tonight's meeting. Pfothenhauer asked members of the Board to forward their suggestions for the 2020 Work Program to staff. Pfothenhauer said a draft work program will be reviewed by the Executive Committee.
- b. **Nominating Committee.** Pfothenhauer said the terms for current officers will be concluding and the end of this year, and a new slate of officers is needed by the December meeting.
- c. **Announcements.** Pfothenhauer said the St. Lawrence Health Initiative is sponsoring a daylong complete streets workshop on November 19<sup>th</sup>. Pfothenhauer also said the Office's fall land use training session is scheduled for November 21<sup>st</sup>.
- d. **Next Meeting Dates.** The Executive Committee will meet on Thursday, October 31<sup>st</sup> at 4:15 pm in the Planning Office. The Planning Board will meet on November 14<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 8:23 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian Murray, Vice-Chair

Minutes prepared by M. Larson

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