

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
WESTCHESTER COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
Webex Online Video Conference
Tuesday, May 3, 2022

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT BY VIDEO CONFERENCE:

Richard Hyman, Chair (Village)
Robert Baron (Village)
Dwight Douglas (City)
Daniel Finger (Town)
Ximena Francella (City)
Holly Hasbrouck (Town)
Bernie Thombs (Town)
Renee Toback (City)
Kathleen O'Connor, Commissioner, Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation
Hugh Greechan, Department of Public Works & Transportation
Nat Federici for Vincent Kopicki, Department of Environmental Facilities

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

James Arndt (City)

STAFF PRESENT BY VIDEO CONFERENCE:

Norma Drummond, Commissioner
Blanca Lopez, Deputy Commissioner
Kelly Sheehan, Assistant Commissioner
Naomi Klein, Director of Transportation Planning
Bill Brady, Chief Planner
Leonard Gruenfeld, Housing Administrator
Lukas Herbert, Associate Planner
Ted Leimbach, Associate Planner
Michael Lipkin, Associate Planner
Michael Vernon, Planner

VISITORS PRESENT BY VIDEO CONFERENCE:

Ken Jenkins, Deputy County Executive
Gregory Casciato, County Board of Legislators
Lisa Hochman, County Board of Legislators
Gayle Katzman, Department of Public Works & Transportation
Hernane De Almeida, Department of Public Works & Transportation
Peter Tartaglia, Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation
Lori Ensinger
Anne Holmes
Rhea Mallett
Henry Neale

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I. Call to Order

Richard Hyman, Chair, called the meeting of the Planning Board to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. Meeting Dates

Mr. Hyman stated that the next meetings of the County Planning Board are scheduled for Tuesday, June 7; Tuesday, July 5; and Tuesday, August 2, 2022. He asked if the next meetings would be held virtually or in person. Ms. Drummond responded that the virtual meetings Executive Order has been extended through June 8, after which the Governor would have to extend the law further.

III. Adoption of Minutes

Mr. Hyman asked if there were any edits or comments to the minutes of the Board meeting of April 5, 2022. There being none, a motion to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2022 meeting of the Planning Board was made by Ms. O'Connor, seconded by Ms. Toback, and approved unanimously by the Board.

IV. Chairman's Remarks

Mr. Hyman provided an update of various development projects around the county. In Harrison, he stated that the Avalon is largely finished, but only 5% of the units would be set as affordable housing and the sidewalks are very narrow. The Playhouse Lofts, also in Harrison, are currently under construction, and would not provide any affordable units. In White Plains, the former YMCA building on Mamaroneck Avenue has been demolished for a new apartment building for which the developer paid a fee-in-lieu of providing affordable housing. He also stated that the new construction at 1133 Westchester Avenue is changing the character of the neighboring Maple Moor Golf Course.

Mr. Hyman then stated that changes to various development plans within Port Chester have been made after the County reviewed their referrals and have not been re-referred. Mr. Hyman asked for the Planning Department to send a reminder letter that major changes to previously referred actions should be forwarded to the County for review.

V. Commissioner's Remarks

Ms. Drummond stated that a special meeting of the Planning Board should be scheduled in order to review the upcoming capital projects budget. She offered June 8, 2022 as a possible date for the meeting, as it is currently the final day virtual meetings are permitted.

She then stated that the financial disclosure forms from the Board members are due on May 13th to the Human Resources Department. She also reminded the Board that all members are required to earn yearly training credits, and referenced various training opportunities offered over the upcoming months.

She continued, stating that the Census Bureau is delaying the release of the rest of the 2020 Census data due to the increased effort needed to keep the data confidential. They have stated the data should be released in 2023. Mr. Hyman asked if there would be an opportunity for municipalities to protest the data. Ms. Drummond responded yes.

She finished by introducing three new employees to the Planning Department. Kevin Thomas is the new executive secretary, and Theresa Fleischman and Gaitre Rambharose have been hired within the Housing Section.

VI. Referrals

- A. Ratification of actions taken by staff in response to planning and zoning actions referred to the County Planning Board March 16, 2022 through April 15, 2022

Mr. Hyman asked if there were any comments regarding the Referrals report. He then asked if the findings statement for HAR 22-001 has been issued. Mr. Herbert responded that the public comment period closes today, and that the findings should be finalized later this month.

Mr. Hyman then asked if the Chappaqua moratorium extension was approved. Mr. Herbert clarified that the referral was for a new moratorium, not an extension, and that it was approved. He said that the new moratorium language included a stated desire to maintain the status quo.

Mr. Hyman then questioned the affordable housing opportunities within the proposed Town of Ossining Comprehensive Plan update as noted in OST 22-001. Mr. Herbert stated that he and Mr. Brady spoke to the Town Board during a recent work session. The meeting included a discussion of the Town's Draft Comprehensive Plan which recommends up to four residential units within single family zoned properties, under specific circumstances. He noted the County Planning Board's letter which recommends that the Town expedite the proposed zoning change, though understood that the Town Board is not in agreement over including this provision into the Plan. They also discussed other comments made by the County in the referral letter for the Plan, to which the Town Board was in agreement.

Mr. Hyman then stated that municipalities should give the County written statements regarding referral comments that are not followed.

A motion to adopt the Referrals report was made by Ms. Hasbrouck, seconded by Ms. Toback, and approved by the Board, with Mr. Thombs recusing himself from WHP 22-006.

VII. Matters for Board Action

Mr. Hyman called for a motion to schedule a special County Planning Board meeting on Tuesday, June 8, 2022 to review the proposed Capital Budget. Mr. Baron made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Toback and unanimously approved by the Board.

VIII. Matters for Board Discussion

A. 715 Sleepy Hollow Road, Town of Mount Pleasant, Parks Board Resolution

Mr. Brady presented an overview of a resolution from the County Parks Board in favor of the County acquiring the property located at 715 Sleepy Hollow Road in Mount Pleasant. He noted that the property is not currently for sale, and that the property is currently under review for a 31-lot conservation-style subdivision. The property is adjacent to the Pocantico Lake County Park, which is denoted as a Critical Environmental Area due to the lake's potential use as an emergency water source. The proposed development would lie atop a ridge overlooking the lake, and would include a conservation easement separating the residences from the lake and on-site wetlands. The Board reviewed a referral for an EIS scoping document in October 2021 for the proposed development. He then outlined the County's Open Space Policies, which are currently being updated.

Ms. Hasbrouck asked for the status of the dam and water source infrastructure. Mr. Brady responded that the infrastructure is not in use and would require significant upgrades, but the dam is kept in repair. Mr. Baron asked if the dam might be removed. Mr. Brady responded that no consideration has been made for its removal. Mr. Baron then asked if the Board must determine if the proposed buffer is enough to protect the water quality of the lake. Ms. Drummond explained that such a determination would be decided by the Town Board through the SEQR process.

Ms. Francella said that the public comment letters should be reviewed and considered, as this development will have a major environmental impact. Mr. Hyman stated that the Town is the SEQR lead agency, and that the County Planning Board will only advise them. He noted that the Town should send the County a referral for the draft EIS when completed.

Mr. Douglas asked if the role of the Planning Board is to respond to the Parks Board regarding potential acquisition. Mr. Hyman responded that after considering all the information received yesterday and additional information to be received from the Town, then the Board could make a recommendation whether acquisition is appropriate. Mr. Brady restated that the developer has not indicated a desire to sell the property to the County. Mr. Thombs noted that the comment letters from the public should be acknowledged. Mr. Hyman said the Planning staff should send a letter or email to those who sent letters that they were received and are in review.

B. Grasslands Master Plan

Mr. Hyman noted that the Board has received and reviewed the draft Master Plan and that the Department is requesting comments.

Mr. Baron said that he is concerned about climate change, specifically regarding the effects of transportation. He stated his appreciation for the inclusion of alternative transportation models in the Plan, but is concerned that they may be marginalized due to the proposed 112% increase in parking at the campus resulting from the development of the North 60 which will induce the demand for driving. He also questioned if the increase in parking would lead to more traffic that could increase the travel time for the proposed train shuttle. He asked if shared parking could be

implemented, as well as parking fees. He also recommended a parking cap be determined for the campus, more mixed-use development, and an inner-campus shuttle or bike share system.

Ms. Klein stated that the campus is one of the heaviest destinations in the Bee-Line system north of I-287. She said that the campus is a focus of the County's Mobility and Transit Plan which is looking at improvements and more service to the campus. She said that bike share, scooter share, parking management, shared parking, toolkits for developers and municipalities and other concepts are also being included in the Grasslands Transportation Demand Management (TDM) study.

Mr. Baron said that disincentives for single-occupant vehicle ridership should be included in the TDM plan to ensure more people utilize the alternative transportation systems. Ms. Drummond said that a large section of the campus is under lease agreements with various entities, which could affect the County's ability to limit parking. She also stated that the medical college and hospital charge for parking. She said that the recommendation to include housing in the North 60 development would help to reduce car usage. She also stated that most County facilities on the campus are not open to the public, and many of the associated parking lots are for employees.

Mr. Douglas requested that a map of the connections between the proposed Tarrytown-Kensico Trailway and neighboring trailways be included in the report. He also recommended that a more clarified road map be included in the plan for those unfamiliar with the site. Mr. Douglas recommended that Appendix 15 should include better marking of the roads. He agrees that the density of the campus may support shuttles.

Mr. Thombs asked if County properties include electric vehicle parking. Ms. Drummond noted that a county law requires electric charging stations to be installed in County-owned parking lots when under construction or being renovated. She said that many EV stations are currently being installed. Mr. Greechan noted that the County is adding EV stations to parks, even though it is sometimes a challenge to get power to some parking areas. Mr. Baron stated that electric charging capabilities should be extended to bicycle parking areas on County properties. Ms. Toback noted that solar canopies could also be installed within the parking lots. Ms. Francella stated her support for Mr. Baron's comments, and said she would also desire to see a reduction in single-occupancy vehicle usage.

Mr. Hyman stated his belief that a proposed DPWT garage, which is proposed to be constructed on Site U1, is in an inappropriate location, as it would be in the middle of the campus and would require trucks to drive through a large portion of the property. Mr. De Almeida stated that the Campus already hosts trucks that service the hospital and other uses in the vicinity. He further stated that the constraints of the site and the size requirements of the garage render the currently proposed site as the most appropriate location. He said that it would be a short access from Route 9A and along Dana Road and up to the end of Hammond House Road. He said that deliveries to the garage would be during the day, and that the County's vehicles would be accessed in the morning and returned in the evening. He said that the truck traffic proposed would not be equivalent to an industrial use. Additionally, Mr. De Almeida said the existing DPWT garage in Harrison is in a residential area and that a goal of the project is to move the facility to a less residential area.

Mr. Baron stated that any pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure installed should be separated from the roadway. He said that the proposed Tarrytown-Kensico Trailway should be accessible throughout the year so that it remains a viable transportation corridor even during snow events.

Mr. Hyman noted that the Bradhurst Property, or Site U9, would be an appropriate location for workforce housing, as it is located within an existing residential area. He then asked if any of the buildings on the campus could receive State or National Historic Designation. Mr. Lipkin noted that the New York State Historic Preservation Office determined none of the buildings are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Mr. Brady stated that the next steps for the Plan include further editing of the document and receiving comments from the County Executive's office. He said the Planning Board would be briefed periodically.

Mr. Hyman requested a status update of the North 60. Ms. Drummond stated that on Thursday, the FGEIS should be accepted as complete by the Town of Mount Pleasant, after which the Town Board would conduct the rezoning required for Phase One site plan review. She said the developer aims to submit the site plan in early fall. Mr. Hyman asked if the FGEIS includes the housing alternative. Ms. Drummond responded that the Town needs to finish their review of the FGEIS, after which the developer will request a lease amendment to the County for the residential component.

IX. Adjournment

On a motion made by Mr. Baron, which was seconded by Mr. Finger and unanimously approved by the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.