

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
WESTCHESTER COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
Webex Online Video Conference
Tuesday, July 5, 2022

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT BY VIDEO CONFERENCE:

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

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

James Arndt (City)
Daniel Finger (Town)
Renee Toback (City)

STAFF PRESENT BY VIDEO CONFERENCE:

Norma Drummond, Commissioner
Blanca Lopez, Deputy Commissioner
David Kvinge, Assistant Commissioner
Kelly Sheehan, Assistant Commissioner
Bill Brady, Chief Planner
Leonard Gruenfeld, Housing Administrator
Michael Lipkin, Associate Planner
Michael Vernon, Planner
Hannah Nemerever, Intern

VISITORS PRESENT BY VIDEO CONFERENCE:

Emily Saltzman, Office of the County Executive
Gregory Casciato, County Board of Legislators
Lisa Hochman, County Board of Legislators
Hernane De Almeida, Department of Public Works & Transportation
Kevin Roseman, Department of Public Works & Transportation
Henry Neale, Chairman, Westchester Parks Board
Rhea Mallet

I. Call to Order

Richard Hyman, Chair, called the meeting of the Planning Board to order at 9:01 a.m.

II. Meeting Dates

Mr. Hyman stated that the next meetings of the County Planning Board are scheduled for Tuesday, August 2; Tuesday, September 6; and Tuesday, October 4, 2022. He asked if those meetings would be held virtually or in person. Ms. Drummond responded that the Executive Order process regarding virtual meetings remains the same as in past months, in which the Governor would have to extend the Order. She said that the Board will be informed before the next meeting whether it will be held in person or on Webex.

III. Adoption of Minutes

Mr. Hyman asked if there were any edits or comments to the minutes of the Board meetings of June 7 and June 8, 2022. There being no edits, a motion to approve the minutes of the June 7 and June 8, 2022 meetings of the Planning Board was made by Mr. Douglas, seconded by Ms. O'Connor, and approved unanimously by the Board.

IV. Chairman's Remarks

Mr. Hyman stated that the site plan application for 345 McLean Avenue in Yonkers, for which a discussion regarding a Housing Implementation Fund request is listed on the agenda for this meeting, was never referred to the County. The site plan has been approved locally, with only the lead agency notification received by the County. He suggested that the funding request discussion be removed from the agenda, and not be reinstated until the site plan referral is complete.

Mr. Hyman then stated that information regarding 715 Sleepy Hollow Road in Mount Pleasant was received by the Department. Ms. Drummond explained that a petition was created by members of the public in favor of the County acquiring the property. She explained that later in the meeting, staff would review an analysis of the County's Open Space Policy recommendations in regards to the site that the Department prepared for the property and distributed prior to the meeting. Mr. Hyman stated that the Board can further discuss the acquisition at the next meeting as the information was too recently received for a proper review this month.

V. Commissioner's Remarks

Ms. Drummond stated that the Board of Legislators have adopted virtual meeting allowances, permitting board members to attend meetings virtually so long as there is a quorum in a physical location open to the public. These allowances would be in effect should the Governor not extend the open meetings executive order. She stated that the Planning Board would have to include this provision within their bylaws. She asked if the Board would like to dedicate time to review the bylaws. Mr. Hyman asked Staff to analyze the bylaws and provide a report at the next meeting, and for Board volunteers to form a committee to review this report.

VI. Referrals

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

Mr. Hyman asked if there were any comments regarding the Referrals report. Mr. Baron stated that a sidewalk should be added to the street frontage of GRB 22-005 – Carlson’s Nursery. He also stated that the proposed market building should not be set back from the street. He then asked for a copy of the proposed parking regulations in MTV 22-001 - DTOAD Zoning. Mr. Vernon stated he would send a copy to the Board.

Mr. Hyman stated that the United Hospital redevelopment in Port Chester is under review by their Board of Trustees. He said that **it is his opinion that** the site plan does not follow the Village’s zoning **code**.

Ms. Francella stated her appreciation that RYC 22-001 – Osborn Home is providing senior housing, but that affordable units should be included in the development.

A motion to adopt the Referrals report was made by Mr. Douglas, seconded by Ms. Hasbrouck, and unanimously approved by the Board.

VII. Matters for Board Action

- A. Draft Planning Board Report on the 2023-2027 Capital Project Requests

Mr. Brady presented a review of the Board’s comments from the June 8, 2022 special meeting. Mr. Baron requested to add a further comment to RB014I, recommending that the bridge includes a road diet to permit space for a bike lane and pedestrian accommodations.

Mr. Brady noted that Mr. Hyman has in the past requested updates on the Board of Legislators’ recognition of the Planning Board’s comments. Mr. Brady said he would **report back to the Planning Board after the Board of Legislators adopts the 2023 Capital Budget**. Mr. Hyman also asked for an update on the number of housing units that have been created utilizing the Housing Implementation Fund.

Mr. Baron requested that language be included for all County departments to focus on means to reduce driving, and for an update to be provided every year. He also stated that RB108 should include a protected bike lane as part of Central Park Drive. He said that, if constructed correctly, this path could serve as a highlight for best practices. Mr. Brady said he would follow-up with Public Works.

Mr. Hyman asked for the next steps of the budget process. Mr. Brady responded that the adopted resolution would be transmitted to the Capital Budget Committee and the County Executive.

A motion to approve the resolution adopting the report was made by Mr. Douglas, seconded by Mr. Francella, and unanimously approved by the Board.

B. BPL1A, Housing Implementation Fund II (HIF), 345 McLean Avenue, City of Yonkers, Amendment to the Planning Board Report on the 2022 Capital Projects

A motion adjourn this action until a site plan referral review is conducted was made by Ms. O'Connor, seconded by Ms. Francella, and unanimously approved by the Board.

VIII. Matters for Board Information

A. Traffic Signal System Demonstration – DPWT – Traffic Engineering Section

Mr. Roseman presented a demonstration on the County's traffic control signals and actuation devices. New cameras and technology has been installed at some County-controlled intersections that has proven effective at managing traffic in these locations. He explained that the new technology is able to detect bicyclists and pedestrians.

Ms. O'Connor asked if the intersection in front of the County Center has been upgraded to the new camera. Mr. Roseman responded that the older style cameras are still installed there, but they plan to install the new technology when the street is repaired.

Mr. Hyman asked if there is coordination between the County and municipality systems, as the County controls relatively few intersections. Mr. Roseman responded that only some of the cities and the State have sophisticated traffic control systems, and that the smaller municipalities generally do not have the same capabilities. Mr. Hyman then asked if the County has offered assistance to the municipalities. Mr. Roseman said that assistance was provided in the past, but recently not as often unless a municipality is already conducting work on an intersection. Mr. Hyman asked if sunlight causes issues with the cameras. Mr. Roseman responded that is rare with the new cameras, but the older cameras occasionally had lighting problems.

Mr. Baron stated that coordination should occur more often between the municipalities and the County, and that the County should be managing all intersections. He asked if the camera system could be used to prioritize buses. Mr. Roseman said that the Central Avenue intersections already prioritize buses, but the Bee-Line has not asked for signal prioritization in the other County-managed intersections. Mr. Baron then asked if the cameras are used to enforce red light restrictions. Mr. Roseman said no, that they are only equipped for surveillance not enforcement, but that they are used to assist traffic management for special events or flooding issues.

IX. Other Business

Mr. Brady provided an overview of the County's open space policies as they relate to the potential acquisition of 715 Sleepy Hollow Road in the Town of Mount Pleasant. He showed a draft matrix developed by staff which describes how the property satisfies or doesn't satisfy each of the open space policies.

Mr. Baron noted that the property acquisition could be used to limit urban sprawl. Mr. Brady noted that the area surrounding the site is already residential. Ms. O'Connor stated that the area could

provide a habitat for wildlife; Mr. Brady noted that the property is not particularly exceptional and that the property is not being reclaimed from another use.

Mr. Hyman asked if the policy examination matrix has been utilized in the past. Ms. Drummond stated that the policies have been used in the past, but this matrix format was implemented for 715 Sleepy Hollow Road. She also noted that the Open Space Policies are currently being updated.

Ms. O'Connor noted that it has been many years since the County has acquired property this large. She said that the County Executive questioned her regarding this particular acquisition, and she responded that the various boards are analyzing the property for open space acquisition merit. Mount Pleasant is also undergoing site plan review of the developer's proposal to use the property as housing. Ms. Drummond reminded the board that the County has not discussed possible acquisition with the developer, and that there are other means of protecting open space on the property, such as conservation easements. Ms. O'Connor stated that it would be her preference not to acquire additional buildings, citing upkeep costs associated with other similar park with large mansions.

Mr. Hyman stated that the County parklands acquisition process should not be conducted to block development, and should only be based on the merits determined by the County Open Space Policies. Mr. Douglas supported the use of alternative means of protecting properties and noted the need for the County to carefully assess the need to purchase any additional properties. Ms. Drummond noted that there are 1,200 acres of protected open space around this site. Mr. Hyman stated that discussion of this proposal should be continued at the next meeting, following additional information provided by staff and the Town.

X. Adjournment

On a motion made by Ms. O'Connor, which was seconded by Mr. Douglas and unanimously approved by the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:08 a.m.