

CORTLAND COUNTY PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 15, 2021

The regular monthly meeting of the Cortland County Planning Board was **called to order** at 6:32 p.m. by Chair Ann Swisher. Members present included Amy Bertini, Wendy Miller, Laurie Comfort, Emily Discenza, Paul Dries, Chuck Feizli, Beau Harbin, Emma Hans, and Daniel Haynes. Member Paul Slowey was absent. Also present were Director of Planning Trisha Jesset P.E., Planner Alex Schultz, and Guest Vince Patriarco.

Vice-Chair Bertini moved to approve the August 18, 2021 regular meeting minutes as submitted. Seconded by Member Comfort. There were no objections.

Chair Swisher moved into the **Chair's Remarks** by welcoming two new members to the Planning Board; Daniel Hanes and Emma Hans. Chair Swisher invited both new members to introduce themselves.

Chair Swisher then turned it over to Director Jesset for the **Director's Remarks**. Director Jesset presented proposed drafts of new GML referral forms/applications, GML reports, and Planning Board agendas and asked for feedback from Board members. A discussion ensued regarding GML applications and return for local determination letters.

Chair Swisher inquired about communication between municipal code enforcement officers, municipal planning boards, and county planning staff. Director Jesset responded that the planning staff would also like to reach out to these municipalities to establish relationships with them and to host trainings individualized for each municipality. The planning staff intends to create a GML guidebook outlining the step-by-step process on applications for everything from a subdivision to an area variance, similar to a few other counties in the area have already done. The staff also plans to update the forms into fillable PDF's and have them available with the additional information on the county website. Director Jesset then asked the members for feedback regarding any of these ideas.

Vice-Chair Bertini voiced concern over the wording 'recommend approval with conditions' due to municipal planning boards not looking at these recommendations because many are not trained to understand them. She believes it is great that planning staff will be offering trainings to help with this. Director Jesset stated that these forms are not set in stone and reiterated that the planning staff would welcome any recommendations so that they can best serve the taxpayers.

The following **General Municipal Law Reviews** were on the agenda:

GML#88.15-02-41.000 Special Permit for the purpose of operating a home-based internet business out of a single family dwelling. The property is described as 25 E. Main St within the Village of McGraw and is zoned R-1 (Residential). Planner Schultz gave a brief summary of the staff report including staff recommendations for conditions.

Vice-Chair Bertini made a motion to discuss then accept GML#88.15-02-41.000 with staff recommendations. Seconded by Member Comfort.

Chair Swisher then called for those in favor of accepting GML#88.15-02-41.000 with staff recommendations. All members were in favor. The resolution passed by a vote of 10 ayes, 0 nays.

GML#66.42-02-01.000 Major Subdivision for the purpose of subdividing a previously approved planned unit development district into one with a zero lot-line condo ownership model. The property is described as Dee Street within the Village of Homer and is zoned PDD-R (Planned Development District Residential). Planner Schultz gave a brief summary of the staff report including staff recommendations for conditions.

Vice-Chair Bertini made a motion to discuss then accept GML#66.42-02-01.000 with staff recommendations. Seconded by Member Hans.

Member Feiszli voiced concern over the maintenance of roads, driveways, parking, and storm water with lots split up this way. He wondered if Mr. Patriarco, a representative of the applicant, could address his concerns.

Mr. Patriarco replied that the Village will be assuming ownership of the roadway and that other maintenance will be provided by the developer until all units are sold. Once all units are sold, maintenance will fall onto individual land owners; however the developer will recommend that a condo association of some kind is formed to take ownership of maintenance.

Vice-Chair Bertini voiced concern that this property is in the floodplain and asked Mr. Patriarco if the individual owners will be responsible for floor insurance or obtaining letters of map amendment.

Mr. Patriarco replied that the previous developer had raised the land up above the floodplain and that until development begins he does not know if the developer will attempt to obtain a letter of map amendment from the DEC before selling lots.

Chair Swisher asked if there was an easy explanation as to why the developer was going to divide the property into all these little lots vs how it was presented before.

Mr. Patriarco explained that due to funding constraints they were forced to further subdivide.

Member Harbin asked how someone was to get to and park at some of the buildings as the lot lines cut off road access to some of the properties.

Mr. Patriarco answered that the layout has not changed from the previously approved site plan and that there will be deeded right of way access for those lots without road frontage.

Vice-Chair Bertini asked if street parking was going to be allowed.

Mr. Patriarco responded that the Village will be assuming ownership of the road and that they would make those rules. However he believed that the Village did not want street parking there.

Member Feiszli again expressed concern over the storm water maintenance as he knows this has been a problem for other municipalities in the past where the town had to take over property to maintain them. A discussion ensued over storm water maintenance and easements.

Member Feiszli moved to amend the previous motion to add an additional condition; that the Village take into consideration the maintenance pertaining to the approved SWPPP. Seconded by Member Harbin.

Member Haynes conversed with Mr. Patriarco about individual resident's responsibility for maintenance and concerns of who's responsible for making sure shared-asset maintenance is taken care of if no formal condo owners association is being formed by the developer.

Chair Swisher then called for those in favor of accepting GML#66.42-02-01.000 with staff recommendations and the condition that the Village take into consideration the maintenance pertaining to the approved SWPPP. All members were in favor. The resolution passed by a vote of 10 ayes, 0 nays.

GML#66.75-01-27.000 Site Plan Review for the purpose of renovating a commercial building for conversion into a 1st floor restaurant, outdoor dining patio and 2nd & 3rd floor multi-family residential. The property is described as 19-27 N. Main St. within the Village of Homer and is zoned CBD (Central Business District). Planner Schultz gave a brief summary of the staff report including staff recommendations for conditions.

Member Feiszli made a motion to discuss then accept GML#66.75-01-27.000 with staff recommendations. Seconded by Member Harbin.

Chair Swisher voiced concern over the lack of parking on the property and suggested reducing the size of the outdoor patio area to allow for more parking spaces.

Member Hans voiced concern over how the lack of parking would affect existing businesses. She also expressed concern over the lack of a separated parking area for the 2nd & 3rd floor residential use.

A discussion ensued over parking availability on and near the property and how the new uses would affect the supply of parking in the Village of Homer. It was also discussed that the developer informed the planning staff that they intend to purchase adjacent property and expand parking availability.

Director Jesset explained the movement toward walkability in urban settings and how this project fits well into this movement.

Chair Swisher suggested amending the staff's recommendation to waive the off-street parking requirement.

Member Harbin voiced support for the movement toward walkability and that these are the kind of projects we are looking for in our downtown cores. He does not want to stifle projects moving towards walkability by getting tripped up over concerns about parking.

Member Comfort disagreed by voicing concern over the lack of parking availability in downtown Homer. There is no parking for the businesses in the mornings and afternoons.

Member Discenza agreed with Member Harbin and voiced concern over destroying the historic nature of downtown Homer to build more parking.

The discussion over parking availability continued.

Member Feiszli agreed with Member Harbin and mentioned that businesses in the downtown district of the City of Cortland are not required to provide parking. He voiced the opinion that some of the off-street parking requirements in local municipal codes are overkill.

Chair Swisher then called for those in favor of accepting GML#66.75-01-27.000 with staff recommendations. Members Swisher, Bertini, Miller, Discenza, Dries, Feiszli, Harbin, Hans, and Haynes were in favor. Member Comfort opposed. The resolution passed by a vote of 9 ayes, 1 nay.

Planner Schultz mentioned there were two **Return for Local Determination** letters sent this month, provided a short explanation, and invited questions. There were none.

Chair Swisher then asked if there were any **Announcements**.

Chair Swisher announced that the next meeting will be on October 20, 2021, then asked Director Jesset if it will be in person, online, or both. After some back and forth between members, Director Jesset offered to poll the members in the coming weeks.

With no further business, Vice-Chair Swisher motioned to **Adjourn** at 7:57 p.m.

Wendy Miller

Wendy Miller, Secretary
September 15, 2021