



**Planning Board
Zoom Hybrid Meeting
Meeting Minutes
August 15, 2023
Approved: September 19, 2023**

Board Members Present: Chair Pete Angie, Linda Liddle, Mo Klein
Board Members Absent: Rebecca Schneider, Bart Gragg
Quorum Present

Applicants Present: Carrie Pollak, Ivan Garcia, Jessica Janssen, Eric Jansen, Stephen Knapp, Carl Mazzacone, Jason Demarest, Kristin Savard
Town Legal Present: Nate VanWhy
Town Staff: Niels Tygesen, Mollie Duell
Members of the Public Present: Brian Crandall, Vivien Rose, Penny McGuire, Sally Yates, Dolores Higareda, Joup Boor, Derga Boor

Proceedings

Chair Pete Angie called the meeting to order at 7:26 PM at Town Hall.

Approval of Agenda

Motion: Klein made a motion to approve the agenda; Liddle seconded.

Vote: Liddle, aye; Klein, aye; and Chair Angie, aye.

Motion Carried.

Approval of Past Minutes

Motion: Klein made a motion to postpone the approval of the July 18 and August 1 meeting minutes; Liddle seconded.

Vote: Klein, aye; Liddle, aye; Chair Angie, aye.

Motion Carried.

Privilege of the Floor

Vivien Rose of 104 Pennsylvania Ave spoke about the Comprehensive Plan and urged the Planning Board to review elements of the plan's vision statement when considering applications.

Old Business Items

SPP2303-02: New Women's Residential Addiction Recovery Center, Site Plan-Special Permit Review, Public Hearing

The applicant and property owner, Ithaca Alpha House Center, Inc. DBA Cayuga Addiction Recovery Services, applied for site plan and special permit review for the subject site noted above. The applicant proposes to construct a new two-story detached building, approximately 13,385 gross square feet, for use as a 25 bed facility associated with the existing Cayuga Addiction Recovery Services on-site. The A/R zone permits rehabilitation facilities subject to a special permit and site plan review per Ulysses Town Code (UTC) 212-28.L and UTC 212-18.C.1 The Board previously discussed the proposal during its meetings on March 7, 2023, May 2, 2023, June 6, 2023, and August 1, 2023. On June 6, 2023, the Board affirmed the previous 2019 SEQR negative declaration. On August 1, 2023, the Board gave direction to notice the hearing for August 15, 2023.

Architect Ivan Garcia presented the site plan for the proposed new building.

CARS CEO Jessica Janssen spoke about the operations of the current and proposed facility. Janssen stated that patients typically stay at the facility for three to six months and are transitioning from a higher level of care.

Eric Jansen stated that CARS is recently affiliated with Cayuga Medical Center, which has improved the facility's capabilities.

Chair Angie opened the public hearing at 7:40 PM.

Mack Travis stated that he was on the Board for the Alpha House for about 5 years and showed support for the proposed addition.

Penny McGuire of 6560 Route 227 acknowledged that newer staff members have provided appreciated improvements, however McGuire raised concerns about the proposed lighting, stating that the current lights are directed at her residence, affecting her daily life.

Vivien Rose of 104 Pennsylvania Ave noted concerns over lighting, suggesting that developers consider the direction and spectrum of light being emitted from fixtures in order to avoid impacting neighbors and surrounding wildlife.

Board members agreed that more details about lighting should be provided.

Chair Angie noted that negative impacts from light created by traffic should also be considered.

Klein asked if pole lights would be installed in the parking lot; Garcia responded yes.

Garcia stated that the new facility will be dark-sky compliant.

The Board clarified that the existing lighting is creating problems, suggesting that currently installed fixtures could be revised.

Janssen responded that existing lighting is already in the process of being replaced and noted that in the past, a lack of lighting created hazards for employees when someone tripped and fell in the dark parking lot.

Garcia mentioned foot candles could be installed as a possible low impact lighting fixture.

Chair Angie suggested adding a vegetation buffer to further protect neighboring residents from lighting in the parking lot.

Garcia suggested that conifers could be planted to serve as a buffer.

Motion: Klein made a motion to continue the public comment until the next Planning Board meeting; Liddle seconded.

Vote: Klein, aye; Liddle, aye; Chair Angie, aye.

Motion Carried.

DD2211-01: Inn at Taughannock Falls, Development District

Jason Demarest, on behalf of the property owner TFI Landco, LLC, proposes to create a new development district to modify some of the existing zoning regulations of the current B1 zone. The proposal would facilitate development of the subject site to include construction of a multi-purpose hotel with 75+/- guest rooms, spa, fitness center, and an event space with a commercial kitchen. The Board previously discussed the proposal during its meetings on July 18, 2023 and requested additional

information from the applicant.

Jason Demarest presented the proposed new building for the site where the Inn at Taughannock is located, and described the frequency of events and capacity of staffing, noting that having an additional building would not mean that two events would be held simultaneously.

A traffic study from 2017 was reviewed.

Demarest described the plans for updated septic and water treatment facilities, stating that an AquaPoint system is desired.

Demarest discussed the Scenic Byway on Route 89 and noted that manmade development can contribute to the quality of the road if designed well.

Demarest shared renderings of what the proposed new hotel would look like from Cayuga Lake.

Demarest reviewed the comments from Tompkins County and stated that he believes the Inn promotes ecotourism and reflects the goal of the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Demarest continued to present renderings of the proposed structure from various angles, noting that the architectural design of the hotel has not yet been finalized.

Demarest showed views of properties located close to the site, noting that the surroundings offer a varied backdrop beyond park land.

Chair Angie stated that he felt that traffic, parking, and view shed concerns had been mitigated somewhat by receiving additional details.

Liddle requested a written statement from the State Park, verifying that there are no future plans for developing trails on the park land adjacent the Inn.

Klein expressed concerns that too much has changed since 2017 to accept the previous traffic study, adding that parking lots are often at capacity near the parks and pedestrian activity is very high.

Chair Angie reminded the applicants that a future site plan review would require additional details about a robust stormwater management plan, noting the roof on the proposed hotel is quite large.

Chair Angie asked about the setbacks, noting the required distance seems too low.

Demarest stated that no large structures would be constructed close to the setbacks besides a small building for security or other purposes.

Demarest stated that there would be 225 total parking spaces on the entire property, including underground parking.

The Board requested an updated traffic study, a formal statement from the State Park about future plans in the vicinity of the Inn, and a topographical map from the applicants.

Liddle noted concern remains over the mass of the proposed structure.

Mazzacone stated that the current depicted design is ugly and would be revised significantly.

Liddle stated that she researched construction history at the Inn in the past and discovered that in 1988, a request to build higher was denied; in 2001, the building known as Edgewood was constructed in compliance with zoning regulations. Liddle expressed concern that increasing the height allowance could lead to an imbalance in the scale of the property.

Tygesen stated that the Planning Board has the option of holding a public hearing for this proposal, but it is not required.

The Board agreed that gathering input from residents would be valuable.

Motion: Liddle made a motion to hold a public hearing at the September 5 Planning Board Meeting; Klein seconded.

Vote: Klein, aye; Liddle, aye; Chair Angie, aye.

Motion Carried.

Town Board Liaison Report

No Town Board members were present at the meeting.

Motion: Klein made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Liddle seconded the motion.

Vote: Liddle, aye; Klein, aye; and Chair Angie, aye.

Motion Carried.

Members of the public requested to speak to the Planning Board. After brief discussion, The Board agreed to accept comments.

Motion: Klein made a motion to reopen the meeting to hear comments from the public; Liddle seconded.

Vote: Klein, aye; Liddle, aye; Chair Angie, aye.

Motion Carried.

Members of the public proceeded to share concerns about potential impacts from an expansion at the Inn at Taughannock.

Sally Yates of 7520 Willow Creek Road expressed worries that developing close to the park does not support protecting the unique natural resources; Yates also stated that she thinks the expanded business would harm more people than it would benefit, noting recurring noise complaints that she feels have not been taken seriously by the Inn.

Joup Boor of 7580 Willow Creek stated that the noise pollution from the events held at the Inn is atrocious, adding that there is a lack of information in the application explaining how neighbors would be protected. Boor also listed an increase in dangerous traffic and further negative impacts on wildlife as worrisome.

Derga Boor of 7580 Willow Creek Rd stated that the noise on wedding nights is terrible, and a decibel reader owned by her neighbor recorded illegal levels of noise within the past month. Boor continued to speak about the wildlife, stating that she is a licensed wildlife rehabilitator and is concerned about nocturnal animals and the shrinking bird population; Boor also expressed concerns about increased danger to traffic and pedestrians.

Vivien Rose of 104 Pennsylvania Ave stated that she worked for the Parks Service for 23 years and believed that any action that could degrade a national area should be avoided, adding that the Inn already hosts many weddings within the park instead of on their property. Rose shared concerns that the proposed development does not meet the guidelines of the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

The applicants proceeded to respond to concerns from the public.

Demarest acknowledged that weddings are held in the park before sharing his belief that traffic reports are blown out of proportion; Demarest also stated that the noise at events is monitored to ensure that limits are not exceeded.

Mazzacone stated that fireworks are scheduled about six times a year, with each display lasting around 3 minutes, and an email chain was developed to notify neighbors of fireworks.

Mazzacone explained that many weddings held within the park are small, and these weddings are planned by locals as affordable options.

Mazzacone stated that the music at events is monitored continuously and lowered when requested, and suggested that noise was coming from elsewhere, adding that hotel guests do not complain about noise.

Mazzacone explained that music at events lasts for about 2.5 hours, and some level of music needs to be provided to honor event contracts.

Motion: Klein made a motion to adjourn; Liddle seconded.

Vote: Klein, aye; Liddle, aye; Chair Angie, aye.

Motion Carried.

ADJOURNED 8:58 PM

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Duell', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mollie Duell

Planning Board Secretary