



**Planning Board  
Zoom Hybrid Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
September 5, 2023  
Approved: September 19, 2023**

**Board Members Present:** Chair Pete Angie, Linda Liddle, Mo Klein, Rebecca Schneider  
**Quorum Present**

**Applicants Present:** Jessica Janssen, John Gaetano, Carl Mazzacone, Randy Marcus, Ivan Garcia, Jason Demarest,

**Town Legal Present:** Nate VanWhy

**Town Staff:** Niels Tygesen, Mollie Duell

**Members of the Public:** Dale Strok, Mike Strok, Nancy Cool, Nancy Goldberg, Stephanie Monroe, Sue Sappington, Cindy Reckdenwald, Judy Abrams, Sherman Kelly, Nancy Zahler, Lucy Gold, Gigi MacTaggart, Ryan James, Damien Vogtman, Virginia Augusta, Michael Malpass, Charles Schlough, Janice Frossard, Matthew Clark, Vivien Rose, Sara Abernethy, Meredith Harris, Michelle Vogtman

**Proceedings**

Chair Pete Angie called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM at Town Hall.

**Approval of Agenda**

Chair Angie added two items to the agenda following privilege of the floor: first, reviewing the amended deed restriction for the Bartishevich minor subdivision; second, scheduling a public hearing for the Jacksonville Park special permit application.

Schneider requested an update from the Town Board to clarify details about training requirements.

**Motion:** Schneider made a motion to approve the amended agenda; Liddle seconded.

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

**Motion Carried.**

**Approval of Past Minutes**

**Motion:** Schneider made a motion to approve the July 18 meeting minutes; Liddle seconded.

**Vote:** Schneider, aye; Liddle, aye; Chair Angie, aye; Klein, abstain.

**Motion Carried.**

**Motion:** Schneider made a motion to approve the August 1 meeting minutes; Liddle seconded.

**Vote:** Schneider, aye; Liddle, aye; Chair Angie, aye; Klein, abstain.

**Motion Carried.**

**Motion:** Schneider made a motion to table the approval of the August 15 meeting minutes; Liddle seconded.

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

**Motion Carried.**

**Privilege of the Floor**

No members of the public addressed the Board pertaining to items not on the agenda.

## **Old Business Items**

### **MNSUB2304-02, Bartishevich 2 Lot Minor Subdivision**

The Planning Board reviewed the draft declaration of restriction provided by Bartishevich's legal team. The resolution granting approval for the minor subdivision of Bartishevich's parcel was conditioned that a deed restriction would be created for the newly subdivided parcel which contains forested lands maintained under a conservation easement.

Schneider suggested adding language about Finger Lakes Finger Lakes Land Trust, who manages the conservation easement.

**Motion:** Schneider made a motion stating that the Planning Board accepts the Declaration of Restriction that has been submitted, with the caveat that the phrase "unless the Town of Ulysses, in consultation with the Finger Lakes Land Trust, grants express permission to remove such restriction" is added. Liddle seconded the motion.

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

**Motion Carried.**

Nate VanWhy clarified that the restriction is a declaration of restriction, as opposed to a deed restriction.

### **SPP2306-01, Jacksonville Park, Scheduling a Public Hearing**

Liddle stated that the BZA approved 2 out of 3 variances requested.

**Motion:** Klein made a motion to schedule a public hearing for the Jacksonville Park special permit and site plan for the September 19 meeting; Schneider seconded.

**Vote:** Klein, aye; Schneider, aye; Liddle, aye; Chair Angie, abstain.

**Motion Carried.**

### **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. The Board, during the August 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, approved a motion to continue the hearing and keep the public comment period open until the next meeting.

CEO Jessica Janssen described the issue regarding lighting at the existing parking lot. Janssen stated that staff has worked with a resident neighboring the facility in order to minimize the impact of existing lighting.

Schneider stated that the Planning Board is satisfied with the applicant's efforts to mitigate concerns about stream buffers and lighting.

Janssen added that the light that had been aimed toward the neighboring resident's property has already been changed, additionally, a fence will be constructed to limit light from car headlights shining

beyond the CARS property. Furthermore, planned landscaping will add another barrier for the lights. Liddle asked how long it would take for the vegetative buffer to grow large enough to function as an effective buffer.

Ivan Garcia, the architect for the project, stated that the vegetative buffer would consist of conifers starting at 4-5 feet, with a caliper greater than 2.5". Garcia described the planned fence on the southern edge of the existing parking lot, which will be a 4-foot-tall dog-eared wood fence.

Sue Sappington of Curry Road expressed support for the additional building.

**Motion:** Schneider made a motion to close the public hearing; Klein seconded.

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

**Motion Carried.**

Board members discussed the draft resolution.

**Motion:** Klein made a motion to approve **Planning Board Resolution 2023-015, A Resolution for Site Plan and Special Permit for the New Women's Residential Addiction Recovery Center Located at 6621 Route 227, Town of Ulysses, Tax Parcel 22.-2-4;** with an amendment to omit whereas findings pertaining to solar collection and access, Liddle seconded.

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

**Motion Carried.**

### **DD2211-01: Inn at Taughannock Falls Development District, Public Hearing**

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. On August 15, 2023, the Board gave direction to schedule a public hearing on the proposal for September 5, 2023.

Chair Angie summarized the goal of the rezoning request to rezone the parcel that the Inn is located on from B1: Business, to DD: Development District. The Town Board will make the final decision for this request; the Planning Board will advise this action.

Jason Demarest presented the current plans for the structure, showing images of how the space would be affected from different types of structures. Demarest shared a rendering of one larger building on the site, followed by a rendering of multiple smaller buildings. Demarest explained that one larger building is seen as an advantage because it would offer better support for the functions of a hotel, while reducing the footprint that would be made by multiple smaller buildings.

Demarest stated that Taughannock State Park had no plans for the park land neighboring the Inn, and neighboring residents would not be affected by the new structure.

Demarest noted that there is no finalized design for the proposed structure yet, and the renderings shown are intended to depict the mass of the structure rather than the aesthetics.

Demarest explained that the rendering showing the multiple smaller structures would be compliant with current zoning, but take up more open space.

[Public comment began at 7:52 PM \(Meeting Video Marker 52:10\).](#)

Nancy Goldberg of 1709 Taughannock Boulevard stated that she felt her quality of life has changed since the previous expansion of the Inn, sharing concerns that traffic blocking her driveway during fireworks worried her about emergency vehicles being able to access her home if needed.

Sarah Sappington of Curry Road stated that she has worked as an event staff member at the Inn for three years, speaking in favor of the proposal while acknowledging that events could be loud. Sappington noted that she has not witnessed any issues with traffic.

Cindy Reckdenwald of Perry City Road stated that she has also worked at the Inn for the last three years and agrees with Sappington; additionally she feels that the owner cares about the community.

A member of the public acknowledged change is inevitable, but stated that he hopes that the local community will be able to access services offered by the Inn, and the changes will benefit the community.

Nancy Cool of 1695 Taughannock Boulevard, stated that she is not notified when fireworks are planned, and she requires advance notice in order to give her pet dog medicine to prevent seizures.

Durga Bor of 7580 Willow Creek Road stated that those in favor of the proposal do not live near the Inn. Bor expressed concerns about dangerous traffic, as well as the negative impact on wildlife caused by noise.

Joep Bor of 7580 Willow Creek Road shared concerns over the application materials missing information about how the proposal would affect neighboring residents. Bor stated that the music volume is a frequently an issue, and noise disturbances from fireworks negatively impact the wildlife in the area.

Sally Yates of 7520 Willow Creek Road stated that her main concern is the additional impacts that from the noise, and that increased activity at the Inn will generate bigger and louder events. Yates claimed that there have not been sufficient efforts to minimize noise from events.

Dale Strok of 1683 Taughannock Boulevard stated that the traffic in the area is too fast, and speed limits need to be lowered in multiple areas neighboring the Inn. Strok also expressed concerns about noise, as well as the amount of water that would be needed for the proposed hotel.

Stephanie Monroe, the director of sales and events at the Inn, spoke about the Inn's contributions to the community while urging meeting attendees to consider the benefits of the proposal.

Kitty Abrams of 1679 Taughannock Boulevard asked why fireworks are needed, stating that neighbors do not appreciate the displays, and warnings in advance do not mitigate the negative effects of the noise.

Gigi MacTaggart of 8684 Falls Road expressed support for the proposal and noted that she works as an event planner at the Inn. MacTaggart described her activities during events, which include monitoring the decibel reader and speaking to musicians about excessive volume levels.

Vivien Rose of 104 Pennsylvania Ave stated that she believed the Planning Board should recommend disapproval of the proposal to the Town Board, referencing objectives from the 2009 Comprehensive Plan.

Virginia Augusta of 2057 Trumansburg Road, the Halsey House Bed and Breakfast, stated that she is not entirely opposed to the proposal, but is concerned about the scale of the proposed building, as well as how having more facilities on site could limit guests from traveling to support other local businesses.

Sherman Kelly of 1679 Taughannock Boulevard stated that he has been visiting the park since the 1960s, and he moved to the area because he appreciated the quiet lakefront. Kelly questioned why fireworks

were necessary for a wedding.

Karen Meador of 1617 Taughannock Boulevard showed support for the proposal, suggesting that much of the traffic that the community is concerned about is related to the state park, as opposed to the Inn. Meador stated that a taller building that would preserve green space would be better than multiple smaller buildings.

Delores Higareda of 35 Bradley Street expressed appreciation for the improvements that have been made at the Inn, but shared concerns that rezoning the area to a development district could result in the Town losing control of developments.

Joe Noon expressed support for the proposal, stating that the renovations so far have been tasteful improvements, and the applicants seem to be doing everything they can to make the proposed building attractive.

Meredith Harris of 7550 Willow Creek Road stated that her feelings about the proposal are mixed, and although she would like the business to be successful, the noise issue is real, and the traffic near the entrance on Gorge Road off of Route 89 is already too dangerous.

Matthew Clark of 2057 Trumansburg Road stated that he would like the Inn to be successful, but is concerned as an owner of the Halsey House that a large hotel would dwarf their business. Clark also shared concerns that the expanded site would encourage people to spend more time and money at the Inn instead of at other local businesses.

Michelle Vogtman of 6200 Podunk Road expressed support for the proposal and stated that there are not enough hotel rooms in the area to accommodate tourists.

Mack Travis of 306 North Cayuga Street expressed support for the proposal, noting the renovations so far have been done well, and more hotels are needed in the area.

Zaun Marshburn of 4888 Seneca Road stated that he was concerned about the disconnection between the Inn and the neighboring residents, and suggested a variance would be more appropriate for what the developers would like to accomplish.

Sarah Adams noted that Cayuga Lake was closed on July Fourth and Labor Day for harmful algae blooms, indicating concern that an expansion at the Inn could contribute to a rise in water quality issues.

Randy Marcus stated that many concerns raised throughout the meeting are not appropriate for the proposal. Marcus noted that the applicants have decided to pursue rezoning as a development district because they have already been denied variances from the BZA.

Schneider noted that comments from the public were diverse, and her primary concern is the potential impact that a hotel of this size could have on the environment. Schneider stated that the noise complaints need to be further examined. Schneider spoke about water usage, raising concern that the amount of water required for the proposed building could not be supplied. Schneider suggested that the proposed structure is out of balance with the surrounding environment as opposed to multiple smaller structures meant for lodging.

Klein stated that he can hear fireworks from Kraft Road.

Liddle suggested that due to the vulnerability of the unique natural area surrounding the Inn, it would be preferable for a new hotel to be located away from the park and offer a shuttle service to the event space.

Schneider suggested obtaining further analysis of stormwater treatment plans from a consultant to ensure that they are sustainable, explaining that typically a facility of this nature would require a large

drainage field for wastewater, which would not be possible next to Cayuga Lake.

Schneider stated that ecotourism can become detrimental to a community when resources are not used sustainably, leading to locals being forced to leave the area.

Chair Angie asked if reducing the requests for setback relief would limit concerns; Schneider responded that she is not sure yet.

Discussion ensued over what is already allowed under the current zoning of the property, and what issues are within the focus of the Planning Board.

Chair Angie stated that character needs to be considered, referencing Objective 2.1 in the 2009 Comprehensive plan, and the Planning Board should aid in codifying design standards in updated laws. Angie reviewed Ulysses Town Code Article III, Section 212-20, Rezoning for Development Districts or other rezoning actions. Angie suggested that the goal of the developers could be met under existing zoning, and the scale of the proposed structure is too large to be in character with the surroundings. Angie shared concerns that allowing the proposed structure could set a precedent for other large hotels that may not be viable.

The Planning Board agreed that this would be a much different proposal if the Inn was located elsewhere, such as Route 96.

Klein stated that no matter the decision, areas of the road with hazardous traffic need to be addressed.

Chair Angie asked if this could be an opportunity to adjust regulations for noise.

Schneider noted that there is already an issue with enforcing the existing noise regulations. Schneider suggested that fireworks displays are taking place too frequently, and the noise from the explosions is over the allowed decibel limit.

Goldman stated that the problem with creating new noise regulations is that the Town may be unable provide enforcement.

The Board briefly discussed the discontinued summer concert series at Taughannock State Park in relation to noise; no one was certain why the concerts were discontinued.

Klein noted concerns about the potential impacts to wastewater. Klein acknowledged that while there is a need for economic development, the proposed changes seem unnecessary and could be achieved with existing zoning.

The Board welcomed further public comment on the proposal, ([Meeting Video Marker 2:36:25](#)).

Sarah Abernathy, the owner of New Park Event Venue and Suites on Taughannock Boulevard, expressed support for the proposed hotel, stating an indoor event venue would provide a solution to containing noise. Abernathy suggested that more on-site lodging would result in less traffic, since guests can walk back to hotel rooms after events.

Virginia Augusta stated she has not been asked for rooms when the Inn was full, and explained that although she is not completely against the project, she believes more effort to maintain a partnership should be made between businesses.

Dale Strok stated that he believes one larger hotel would be better than five smaller buildings, but he would like to know the facts about why concerts were discontinued in the park.

Michael Malpass of 8 Prospect Street stated he was opposed to a taller construction because it seems to be out of character with the surroundings, as well as Ulysses in general. Malpass expressed concern over the number of potential environmental impacts from such a large construction.

Durga Bor asked why the renderings of the hotel shown at tonight's meeting look completely different from images that were recently published by the Ithaca Voice.

Vivien Rose of 104 Pennsylvania Avenue asked for clarification about the voting process for approving this decision; Rose stated that Taughannock Falls needs to be protected.

Mack Travis addressed Bor's question and explained that the designs are not finalized; the rendered structure is only a placeholder for the building's mass. Travis continued to speak in support of the proposal.

Meredith Harris of 7550 Willow Creek Road asked if the taxes could be restructured, noting that her taxes are slightly less than half of the Inn's taxes.

Goldman responded no, Tompkins County is responsible for assessing properties.

**Motion** Klein made a motion to close the public comment period; Schneider seconded.

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

**Motion Carried.**

Carl Mazzacone responded to concerns from meeting attendees.

Mazzacone stated that there are no other location options for constructing the proposed building.

Mazzacone briefly elaborated on some of the renovations that he has made to the Inn so far.

Mazzacone noted that he has always wanted to build an event center, which would contain noise more efficiently. Mazzacone stated that noise levels are monitored by the staff at the Inn, suggesting that the complaints from neighboring residents are exaggerated.

**Motion:** Klein made a motion to continue the discussion at the next Planning Board meeting; Liddle seconded.

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

**Motion Carried.**

### **Town Board Liaison Report**

Schneider asked about the trainings required by the Town.

Tygesen explained that the deadline for completing the training certifications is September 25, but there are two 30-day extensions provided that make the final deadline towards the end of November.

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

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

**Motion Carried.**

**ADJOURNED 10:02 PM**



Mollie Duell

Planning Board Secretary