

**Planning Board
Zoom Hybrid Meeting
Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2023
Approved: November 21, 2023**

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

Quorum Present

Applicants Present: Robert Thomas, Tom Palmer

Town Board Members Present: Rich Goldman

Town Staff Present: Niels Tygesen, Mollie Duell

Members of the Public Present: Crystal Buck

Proceedings

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

Approval of Agenda

Liddle added a discussion about updates to training requirements at the end of the meeting.

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

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

Motion Carried.

Approval of Past Minutes

Motion: Schneider made a motion to approve the October 17 Planning Board meeting minutes as written; Liddle seconded.

Vote: Gragg, aye; 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

SPR2310-01: Palmer Garage, Site Plan Review

The applicant, Jeff Fredrickson, on behalf of the owner, Tom Palmer, proposes to construct a new 576sf detached accessory building for use as a garage. Per the Code of the Town of Ulysses [CTU 212-43](#), accessory buildings associated with single-family residences are permitted in the LS zone, but require site plan review when within a slope overlay area, pursuant to the provisions listed under [CTU 212-19](#).

Chair Angie noted that an updated site plan adding stormwater management plans has been submitted. Jim Wavle of Crown Construction described the new plan, which includes installing a drip trench, which egresses into a swale ditch, then a French drain.

Schneider and Chair Angie agreed that the amendments to the site plan provide a good solution for potential stormwater issues.

Chair Angie noted he had visited the site earlier in the day and saw a grassy area uphill from the site where the garage will be constructed. Chair Angie suggested allowing the grass to grow longer or adding perennial vegetation to decrease the flow of water toward the structure.

Motion: Klein made a motion to approve [Planning Board Resolution 2023-023, A Resolution of Final Site Plan Approval of the Palmer Garage Located at 14 Willow Point Road, Town of Ulysses, Tax Parcel 17.-1-6](#); Gragg seconded.

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

Motion Carried.

New Business Items

MNSUB2310-02

The applicant and property owner, Robert and Elizabeth Thomas, applied for a minor subdivision for the subject site to subdivide the existing 13.4 acre lot into two lots; 'Parcel A', approximately 6.75 acres, and 'Parcel B', approximately 6.65 acres. The A/R zone requires a minimum lot area of 2 acres, 200 feet of lot depth, and 400 feet of lot width at the front property line per the [CTU 212-29](#).

Robert Thomas stated the purpose of the subdivision is to create a new parcel that he may build a home on to retire.

Schneider noted Tygesen provided the description of the Unique Natural Area on the property; development is restricted within designated Unique Natural Areas.

Liddle reminded Thomas that the future new building would require Planning Board review.

Chair Angie explained a public hearing would be required for the minor subdivision.

Motion: Klein made a motion to schedule the public hearing for MNSUB2310-02 on November 21, 2023; Gragg seconded.

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

Motion Carried.

Tompkins County Ag District 2 8-Year Review, Cornell Co-op Extension

[Tompkins County has two Agricultural Districts](#), Ulysses is within Ag District 2. Per the [Cornell Co-op Extension website](#), "The purpose of Agricultural Districts is to encourage the continued use of farmland for agricultural production. The program is a combination of incentives and protections to forestall conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, on behalf of the County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board and County Legislature, facilitates the review of Agricultural Districts. These comprehensive reviews take place every 8 years for each district. District 2 was last reviewed 2016". Crystyl Buck, Farmland Protection and Ag Marketing Educator with Cornell Co-op Extension, requested a meeting with the Planning Board to discuss Ag districts, the 8-year review process, and solicit input on specific parcels the Town thinks should be added to or removed from the district.

Crystal Buck described the process of adding or removing a parcel to the Ag District. There is an open enrollment period to request adding property to the district; removal must be requested during the 8-year review.

Buck described the benefits of being in an Ag District when operating a commercial farm, including protection from nuisance suits from neighbors. The purpose of the district is to allow farms to be economically viable, operating outside of zoning restrictions when appropriate.

Buck explained public notice requirements related to Ag Districts.

Buck reviewed general information about limitations on local benefit assessments.

Buck noted that a real estate disclosure will be on every property for sale in the district, which a buyer must sign.

Chair Angie asked how districts overlap with municipal zoning.

Buck explained that in Ulysses, there is notable overlap between agriculture and higher density areas.

Schneider asked about soil quality; Buck responded that this is not considered as a requirement.

Schneider asked about water pollution associated with agriculture in relation to lawsuits.

Buck stated that DEC regulations would apply, but farms would still be protected from a nuisance suit.

Chair Angie asked how being in a district affects property values.

Buck stated she is not sure of any study analyzing this, but acknowledged there could be an influence on property values.

Discussion ensued over how neighbors of farms are affected by district operations.

Buck explained that the districts are designed with the goal of avoiding having holes in the map.

Properties surrounded by parcels in the Ag Districts could be added to make the area more whole.

Additionally, parcels that receive agricultural assessment are strong candidates for joining the district.

Finally, active farmland with lower density zoning should be considered.

Buck noted this is a preliminary review, aiming to gain insight from the Planning Board.

The Planning Board reviewed the proposed Ag Map District 2 for Ulysses.

Discussion ensued over a particular area located near Taughannock Creek that is being considered for addition to the district.

Chair Angie asked what the reason for consideration would be other than filling out the district, referencing the fragility of the environment in this area.

Buck stated the only logic is filling in holes in the map.

Schneider stated forests should not be cleared for agriculture, drawing focus to the steep slope overlay zone, where maintaining vegetation, especially large trees, is crucial for preserving the structure of the slope.

Gragg spoke about the Waterburg hamlet area, noting while it is still quite forested, there is an emerging trend of land being bought to clear and convert to farmland.

Gragg stated farming that is already taking place is not a problem, but continuing to clear trees could become an issue.

Schneider agreed with Gragg's statement, but acknowledged the Town is only legally able to limit the clearing of trees in the lakeshore, conservation, and steep slope zones as written in [212-48.B.3](#) and [212-55.B.4](#).

Schneider suggested considering this issue in other zones during the current comprehensive plan review.

Buck stated that she will review conservation, lakeshore, and steep slope overlay zoning.

Buck asked if inactive parcels should be removed; Chair Angie responded yes.

The Board discussed assessment benefits with Buck.

Chair Angie stated relaxing zoning in the conservation district is concerning.

Buck confirmed that such properties in the district would be exempt from some zoning requirements such as mandatory site plan reviews.

Chair Angie suggested continuing the discussion when a map of the district including zoning is available.

The Planning Board agreed to continue discussing the district review at the next meeting on November 21.

Schneider asked what maps of other towns in the county look like with forest compared to farmland.

Buck explained each town is slightly different. The Town of Ithaca shows more development, while Danby has more forested area, while Newfield and Enfield are the most similar Towns to Ulysses. Chair Angie requested looking at an Ag map of Seneca county as well. Discussion ensued over development districts being included in Ag Districts. Buck described the general timeline for the remaining review process.

Town Board Liaison Report

Goldman described the training requirements for all town board members, noting a compromise has been reached. If training in certain subjects has been completed for other employers external to the Town and certificates have been issued, these may meet the Town's training requirement.

Goldman explained ethics and civil rights training would need to be done online.

Board members discussed training opportunities specifically related to the Planning Board.

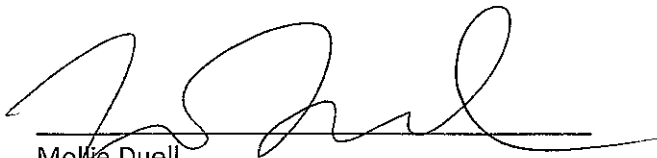
Goldman stated all training should be completed by the end of the year.

Motion: Schneider made a motion to adjourn; Gragg seconded.

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

Motion Carried.

ADJOURNED 8:14 PM



Mollie Duell
Planning Board Secretary