

DRAFT

Planning Board October 23, 2019 Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held at the Aurora Firehouse meeting room at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Chairperson Pat Bianconi, Pat Foser, Thea Miller (alternate), Michele Murphy, and Pam Sheradin

Absent: Frank Zimdahl

Others Present

Village Officials: Clerk Ann Balloni, Mayor Bonnie Bennett (8:30 p.m.), Attorney Tom Blair, CEO Patrick Doyle, ZBA member Laura Holland, and Engineer Ken Teter

Inns of Aurora: General Manager Sue Edinger, Engineer Rob Seeley, and Attorney Wendy Marsh

Members of the Public: Mike Bricco, G. Alan Clugston, Kathleen Connelly, Carolyn Connors, Michael & Sandy Groth, Steve Moolin, Julie Orman, David Reynolds, Julia Rossman, Louise Rossman and Cindy Wilcox

Call to Order: Ms. Bianconi called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Changes to the Agenda: Ms. Bianconi informed the Board that Mayor Bennett would like to address them at the end of the meeting.

Approval of Minutes: On motion by Ms. Foser, seconded by Ms. Murphy, the Planning Board voted to approve the September 25, 2019 minutes.

AYES: Bianconi, Foser, Miller, Murphy, and Sheradin

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Announcements: Ms. Bianconi reminded the Board of the upcoming training at BOCES in Auburn on November 13 at 7:00 p.m.

The Planning Board discussed alternate dates for the November and December meetings due to the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.

On motion by Ms. Foser, seconded by Ms. Murphy, the Planning Board voted to schedule the November meeting on Monday, the 25th and the December meeting on Thursday, the 19th.

AYES: Bianconi, Foser, Miller, Murphy, and Sheradin

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Visitor Welcome: Ms. Bianconi welcomed all visitors and there were no comments.

Public Hearing: Application #19-10 from the Inns of Aurora to convert Taylor House to a conference center at 396 Main St (Tax Map #182.13-1-21)

On motion by Ms. Murphy, seconded by Ms. Miller, the Planning Board voted to open the Public Hearing for Application #19-10 at 7:10 p.m.

AYES: Bianconi, Foser, Miller, Murphy, and Sheradin

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Michael Groth: Mr. Groth read from a letter (attached) received in the Village Office on October 23, 2019. Mr. Groth addressed concerns with the proposed 18-space parking lot behind the Fargo, sited across the street from his residence. Specifically, Mr. Groth referred to the lot site, the number of spaces and lot access.

Ms. Bianconi read a letter from Michael and Ann Fitzgerald (attached), whose property abuts the proposed parking lot, noting concerns with lighting, signage, and fencing.

Site Plan Review

Ms. Edinger referred to the 2015 traffic/parking study, conducted by BME Associates, recommending “pocket parking” within the village and siting behind the Fargo as a preferred location.

Mr. Seeley discussed increasing the existing patio by 250 sq ft, adding a walkway and re-paving with bluestone. A retaining wall with a guardrail is planned along the west side of the proposed parking lot. A fence and evergreens are planned between the parking lot and Mr. Fitzgerald’s property.

Lighting for the parking lot is night sky compliant, a total of 6 8’ high poles. 3’ lights like at Wallcourt Hall and Zabriskie House are planned for the walkway. New plantings are planned for the north edge of the parking lot to decrease headlight glare onto the patio.

Carolyn Connors (Cherry Ave resident), Michael & Sandy Groth, and Cindy Wilcox (Court St residents) expressed concern with the amount of traffic generated from the proposed parking lot onto Court St. Ms. Connors noted that Cherry Ave is one-way so egress out of the parking lot is limited to Court St. Mr. and Mrs. Groth questioned if other locations that are further from residential areas were considered.

Ms. Edinger again referred to the BME Study and added that many conference attendees will walk to Taylor House from the various guest houses in the area. Ms. Edinger did concede, however, that walking is dependent on weather and ability. When questioned on the number of conferences expected Ms. Edinger replied “1-2/week.”

Ms. Edinger noted that the Planning Board could have required a 32-space parking lot, per the Village Zoning Law, but used their allotted discretion and accepted the 18-space plan. Ms. Bianconi added that the lot area could fit 20 spaces but was decreased to 18 spaces due to the location of the transformer.

Ms. Edinger further noted that the BME study recommended retaining the historic setting of Taylor House as another reason for siting the parking lot behind the Fargo. Ms. Edinger addressed a question about re-locating so that ingress and egress is on Main St by explaining that would involve New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and they would probably not approve a curb cut at that location. Mr. Seeley added that it would create a grading problem and is not in keeping with the pocket parking plan.

Ms. Connors and Ms. Groth complained of Inns of Aurora vehicles parked behind the barn on Court St. Ms. Edinger agreed that they should not be parking there and will address the issue.

Mr. Groth stressed the negative impact on the character of the Court St neighborhood with the addition of an 18-space parking lot and added that, with the renovations for Wallcourt Hall and Zabriskie House, parking already existed, so the impact on the neighborhood wasn't as great. Mr. Groth added that aesthetics is being given more consideration than safety.

Mr. Blair remarked that the parking lot was considered during the State Environmental Quality Review, conducted in September by the Planning Board. The Planning Board issued a negative declaration, concluding that the project has minimal environmental impact.

Mr. Doyle noted that the Inns of Aurora demonstrated adequate parking for their project and Ms. Bianconi reiterated that the environmental review found no significant impact on the character of the neighborhood.

Ms. Marsh added that the upcoming Generic Environmental Impact Statement will address future parking considerations and may result in parking away from the center of town. Ms. Marsh and Ms. Edinger adamantly stated to the Planning Board that the site plan for application #19-10 is submitted as is and will not be amended.

Mr. Seeley gave a brief description of the revised drainage plan of the parking lot to include an innovative system of basins under the parking lot with attached pipes leading to lawn sprinklers. Mr. Seeley explained that the plan will not increase or decrease run-off, it will be the same as pre-construction.

Mr. Teter questioned the viability of the emitters during the winter and if they are susceptible to freezing, rendering them incapacitated. Mr. Seeley replied that the catch basins work as a pressure release in the lawn as a back-up for overflow.

Mr. Blair offered a few suggestions to the Planning Board for consideration:

1. Close the Public Hearing and render a decision tonight
2. Close the Public Hearing with the understanding that a decision is required within 62 days
3. Adjourn the Public Hearing to the November Planning Board meeting to allow for additional public comment and decide then if a decision is warranted

Mr. Blair reminded the Planning Board that revising the SEQR is limited by the Village Historic District criteria and the Village Comprehensive Plan and any decision requires rationale for how the Board came to the determination.

The Planning Board discussed the three options that Mr. Blair suggested.

On motion by Ms. Murphy, seconded by Ms. Miller, the Planning Board voted to adjourn the Public Hearing to the November 25, 2019 meeting.

AYES: Bianconi, Foser, Miller, Murphy, and Sheradin

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing for Application #19-30 from the Aurora Free Library for renovation and excavation at 370 Main St (Tax Map #182.13-1-21)

On motion by Ms. Foser, seconded by Ms. Miller, the Planning Board voted to open the Public Hearing for Application #19-30 at 8:20 p.m.

AYES: Bianconi, Foser, Miller, Murphy, and Sheradin

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment: No comment.

On motion by Ms. Foser, seconded by Ms. Murphy, the Planning Board voted to close the Public Hearing for Application #19-30 at 8:21 p.m.

AYES: Bianconi, Foser, Miller, Murphy, and Sheradin

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

Application #19-15 from Jim Kirkwood for revised exterior renovations at 331 Main St (Tax Map #181.16-1-25) – Sketch Plan Conference for Revisions

Mr. Bricco explained the need for increased excavation for tile and catch basins due to drainage concerns and additional plans on the property for grading, a retaining wall and sidewalk, an in-ground swimming pool and a platform addition to the dock. Mr. Bricco noted that an application has been submitted to the DEC for drainage repair that will also attempt to address drainage problems on the Koepp/Place property, to the south. Mr. Bricco added that the dock platform requires an area variance.

Mr. Bricco, Mr. Doyle and Mr. Teter discussed the need to replace the sewer line and reroute the geothermal pipe. Mr. Doyle noted that the excavation for the deck portion has to be completed and Mr. Teter added that it is an environmental concern and must be corrected asap.

Ms. Bianconi reminded Mr. Bricco to consult the Site Plan checklist in the Village Zoning Law and reiterated that a complete plan must be submitted by November 14 in order to have time to notice the Special Use Permit Public Hearing.

On motion by Ms. Murphy, seconded by Ms. Sheradin, the Planning Board voted to schedule a Public Hearing for Application #19-15 on November 25, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

AYES: Bianconi, Foser, Miller, Murphy, and Sheradin

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Application #19-30 from the Aurora Free Library for renovation and excavation at 370 Main St (Tax Map #182.13-1-21) Site Plan Review and Special Use Permit

Ms. Miller stated that she will not be voting as she is a member of the Aurora Free Library Board.

Mr. Moolin noted approximately 30 cubic yards of excavation to waterproof the building. 40' of trenching and excavating on the west side requires removal of shrubs and temporary replacement front doors will be in place during reconstruction. The project also includes renovating the old basement jail which includes replacing the window bars with a hinged window. Additionally, they are installing new floors in the reading rooms.

Ms. Bianconi noted that the project is a Type 2 Action requiring no further environmental review and that the Community Preservation Panel issued a Certificate of Appropriateness at their October 2, 2019 meeting.

On motion by Ms. Foser, seconded by Ms. Sheradin, the Planning Board voted to deem Application #19-30 complete.

AYES: Bianconi, Foser, Murphy, and Sheradin

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Miller

Motion carried unanimously.

The Planning Board reviewed the Site Plan Check List and Special Use Permit criteria in the Village Zoning Law and had no concerns.

On motion by Ms. Foser, seconded by Ms. Murphy, the Planning Board voted to approve application #19-30 as submitted.

AYES: Bianconi, Foser, Murphy, and Sheradin

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Miller

Motion carried unanimously.

Application #19-32 from David Reynolds for a new carport at 75 Court St (Tax Map #181.12-1-17.1) – Site Plan Review

Mr. Reynolds described an attached carport, via the roof, on the south side of the house with a planned garden in the through area. The carport will be open on all sides and has the same roof pitch as the house. Driveway access is via the front curb cut.

Ms. Bianconi noted that the project is a Type 2 Action requiring no further environmental review and that the Community Preservation Panel issued a Certificate of Appropriateness at their October 2, 2019 meeting.

On motion by Ms. Sheradin, seconded by Ms. Miller, the Planning Board voted to deem Application #19-32 complete.

AYES: Bianconi, Foser, Miller, Murphy, and Sheradin

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Bianconi confirmed with Mr. Doyle that the project meets all setback and dimensional requirements.

Ms. Sheradin confirmed with the applicant that construction is limited to weekdays.

The Planning Board reviewed the Site Plan Check List in the Village Zoning Law and had no concerns.

On motion by Ms. Miller, seconded by Ms. Foser, the Planning Board voted to approve Application #19-32 as submitted.

AYES: Bianconi, Foser, Miller, Murphy, and Sheradin

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Miller left at 8:50 p.m.

Application #19-33 from the Inns of Aurora for renovations at Wallcourt Cottage, 1 Orchard Lane (Tax Map #182.13-1-1) – Site Plan Review

Ms. Edinger described adding two windows on the west side, a new door west of the garage and enlarging the porch 4' to the west.

Ms. Bianconi noted that the project is a Type 2 Action requiring no further environmental review and that the Community Preservation Panel issued a Certificate of Appropriateness at their October 2, 2019 meeting.

On motion by Ms. Foser, seconded by Ms. Murphy, the Planning Board voted to deem Application #19-30 complete.

AYES: Bianconi, Foser, Murphy, and Sheradin

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

The Planning Board reviewed the Site Plan Check List in the Village Zoning Law and had no concerns.

On motion by Ms. Foser, seconded by Ms. Sheradin, the Planning Board voted to approve application #19-33 as submitted.

AYES: Bianconi, Foser, Murphy, and Sheradin

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Application #19-34 from Theresa Mendez for a Home Occupation at 358 Main St, Apartment 1 (Tax Map #182.13-1-23.111) – Schedule Public Hearing for Special Use Permit

On motion by Ms. Murphy, seconded by Ms. Foser, the Planning Board voted to schedule a Public Hearing for Application #19-34 on November 25, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

AYES: Bianconi, Foser, Murphy, and Sheradin

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Bennett: Mayor Bennett discussed the solar regulations that the Village Board is working on as an amendment to the zoning law and explained that the Village Board is deadlocked on the issue of allowing a large solar array on Ag/Res land in the south end of the Village.

Wells College has requested that the Village change the zoning from Ag/Res to Institutional on their Poplar Ridge Road land as the current draft of the law allows for large solar arrays in the Institutional zone, provided that it meets setback criteria.

A consultant, hired by the Village from Barton & Loguidice, recommended allowing a large solar array on the former Wells College dump site or encourage Wells to apply to the Town of Ledyard where large arrays are allowed. Wells nixed both recommendations.

Solar panels have a 25-year lifespan and arrays, depending on the lease, can tie up land for up to 100 years. Mayor Bennett asked that the Planning Board consider planning for land use in the village and remember that the Village has Right-of-First Refusal on the land owned by Wells College on Poplar Ridge Road and along the south end of the lakeshore.

Ms. Bianconi requested copies of the Barton & Loguidice report for the Planning Board members and Ms. Balloni said that she would email them the electronic copy.

Adjournment: On motion by Ms. Foser, seconded by Ms. Sheradin, the Planning Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m. pm.

AYES: Bianconi, Foser, Murphy, and Sheradin

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Balloni
Village Clerk