

# ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

## APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

March 10, 2011

County Courthouse, 48 Court Street, Room 226, Canton, NY 13617

### I. Initial Business

- A. **Roll Call and Determination of a Quorum.** Welch called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. **Members present:** K. Bissonette, J. Bunstone, M. Gazin, T. Jenison, L. Mattice, D. Mullaney, B. Murray, and D. Welch. **Members Absent:** K. Bellor, W. Dashnaw, W. Davis, R. Matthews, J. Miller, W. Palmer, and D. Sunderland. **Staff present:** K. Zimmerman, J. Pfothauer, M. Larson. **Other Members of the Public:** J. Buckholz and J. Woods, City of Ogdensburg.

Welch welcomed all those in attendance and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

- B. **Action on the Agenda.** Pfothauer said the office received a referral for site plan review from the City of Ogdensburg, and it would be added to the agenda for review. The modified meeting agenda was unanimously adopted (Mullaney/Mattice).
- C. **Action on the Meeting Minutes.** The February 10, 2011 meeting minutes were unanimously approved (Jenison/Mullaney).

### II. Public Forum

None.

### III. Presentation

City of Ogdensburg Planning and Development Director Justin Woods began his presentation with an overview of the City's Community Partnership Initiative. Woods said there are complex and difficult problems the City is trying to address. To date, City representatives have met with 30 groups throughout the city to engage residents in a dialogue to identify and develop community solutions above and beyond what the municipal government can do. These community conversations followed a 2009 summit with 200 participants. Woods said the City is seeking to build a stronger social fabric to develop the capacity to address community issues better. The City wants to create an environment where residents can discuss problems and create solutions. Woods said the framework for the initiative comes from the City's strategic management plan.

Woods reviewed the City's vision and the conversation between the Cheshire Cat and Alice from *Alice in Wonderland*, and used the scene as the analogy for the City's

initiative: The City is engaging the public to determine what path to take to reach its destination.

Woods said residents were asked about their perceptions of Ogdensburg, and said overall, residents are stuck on focusing on the past when life was better in the city. Woods said the Community Partnership Initiative is attempting to address issues by taking a more direct approach of building a culture of accountability and community investment. Woods said residents are learning to let go of their attachments to issues that lead to the City's demise.

Jenison asked if the City has facilitated focus groups with organizations outside city limits. Woods said they have not, and listed the names of organizations who have participated in discussions to date. Woods said they didn't intend to facilitate a discussion with the County Planning Board tonight, but would be willing to do that. Woods also said three county legislators who represent the city have participated in discussions. A comment was made that Ogdensburg was once a tight-knit community that had a higher level of participation in civic projects. Over time, civic engagement changed. Gazin added that local organizations informally coordinated community events. Gazin said after the City got involved in managing the Little League, or the Ogdensburg Command Performances, local involvement declined. Woods said city residents may have to become more engaged in community issues out of financial necessity.

Zimmerman said he agreed with Jenison's recommendation to meet with outside stakeholders, and noted the greater Ogdensburg community extends from Morristown to Waddington. Zimmerman suggested the City ask outside residents what would happen to them if Ogdensburg remained stuck in the past. Zimmerman also said urban renewal with the Ford Street extension, creating mixed-used zoning districts, and being adjacent to municipalities without land use regulations didn't help. Woods explained the origins of expanding an existing water district, and said increasing its capacity has led to trail expansion projects and Brownfield sites along the St. Lawrence and Oswegatchie rivers. Woods said land redevelopment will require access to the City's water and sewer systems. Woods said the City is also considering shared assessments with adjacent municipalities to ensure waterfront assessments are consistent.

Jenison recommended the City examine what attracts non-residents to the area. Jenison said after Hacketts closed, traffic on State Highway 68 declined; the store was unique and had a regional draw. Jenison said the City needs to create regional destinations. Jenison also said the Remington Museum is an incredible facility that is largely unknown nationally. Zimmerman added that based on his previous conversations with a former county legislator, Ogdensburg is known as a fun location for dinner and drinks. Murray said he lives in Lisbon, and recently vacationed in Boston which offers many choices to eat and visit. Murray said the choices to eat dinner in Ogdensburg are limited, and said they recently took friends out to eat in Watertown. Murray said the city needs to offer a greater variety of restaurants. Welch said Jefferson County's population center is Watertown, and Clinton County has Plattsburg. In St. Lawrence County, however, it's more decentralized with five population centers.

Woods was asked what some of the residents' responses have been. Woods said residents ask for direction and specific activities to implement. Woods said that instead of offering solutions, the City is facilitating the discussion. Jenison replied that local organizations may have run out of ideas; residents need specific projects that lead to quick, measurable results. Bunstone said the City has two arenas that run half a day, and both should be scheduled to run for full days. Bunstone said Canadian residents are not interested in traveling to Potsdam for rink time, but would be willing to travel to Ogdensburg. Woods replied that the City's most used recreational area is a skate park that children designed and helped with fund raising.

Zimmerman recommended the City hold onto the positives, and facilitate quick, positive reinforcements. Jenison asked if anyone in the city rents out kayaks and boats. Woods said there are a lot of scuba opportunities in the river. A comment was made that Ogdensburg currently has a deficit of entrepreneurial spirit. Gazin said the City was established with entrepreneurs; now most residents work for institutions, prisons, schools, hospitals and the government. Zimmerman said the City should engage established, well-to-do residents in the dialogue. Gazin recommended the City promote its industrial park to lure high tech businesses. Woods explained the City currently has a grant to train young adults in the construction trades. Participants will work with a contractor, and be paid to rehabilitate homes in the city with grant funds.

Woods also announced the City will roll out its revised website that includes RSS feeds to inform the public. Both Woods and Buckholz concluded the presentation by reviewing community planning projects that are underway through 2012.

#### **IV. Projects Reviews**

##### **A. Projects returned for local action under MOU.**

Ogdensburg (C): Site Plan Review for Fastenal office space. Pfothenhauer described the location of the property and said it was originally built for a car dealership. Pfothenhauer said Parkway is located in the front of building, and will enter into a lease agreement with Fastenal for the rear of the building. Fastenal will occupy 2,200 sq. ft, and the total square footage of the building is 7,500 sq. ft. The applicant proposes five parking spaces in the front. Pfothenhauer said staff considers the site plan an in-kind use of existing space. Mattice asked for clarification to the location of the leased space in the building. The Board unanimously agreed to return the project for local action.

##### **B. Full Review Projects.**

Massena (V): Harrowgate Properties, Site Plan Review for a 15,000 sq. ft. expansion to the Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facility. Pfothenhauer began the presentation by identifying the project's applicants, engineers and the developers of the property. Pfothenhauer described the property's location, and described the proposed expansion of the facility. Pfothenhauer said a fence will enclose the perimeter of the

property, and will not include razor wire. Pfothenhauer then described the oblique imagery that was included with the staff report. Pfothenhauer noted the presence of a forested area that separates the facility from an adjacent school. While the stormwater retention pond may cut into the forested buffer, Pfothenhauer recommended no off-site impacts to existing vegetation.

Pfothenhauer described the proposed location for a dumpster on a separate parcel. While the property is owned by the same individual, it could be sold separately at a later time. Pfothenhauer recommended the dumpster be located on the same lot. Zimmerman said the alternative could be recording an easement for the dumpster if it remains off-site. Jenison asked where the stormwater retention pond would be located. Pfothenhauer described its location in the second photo. Pfothenhauer said the developer will fill in the existing retention pond and regrade it for the new one. Jenison recommended the retention pond be fenced as it could serve as an attractive nuisance when frozen, and could be used as skating pond by nearby students.

Murray said that if the applicant's security contractor hasn't signed off on the site plan, it may be rejected for proposing an off-site dumpster location. Jenison asked for a description of other land uses in the vicinity, and whether the building would be lit up at night. Pfothenhauer said staff is recommending all outside lighting be dark sky compliant. Gazin asked for clarification to the property boundaries and the locations of the property's features. Gazin also asked how long the lease will last. Murray replied a typical lease with the federal government is five years with the option to renew. A comment was made that the expansion will reduce the size of the existing parking lot. A question was asked what new use would go into the original building once ICE relocates into the addition. A recommendation was made that any new use in the original building can't require more than five parking spaces. The Board unanimously voted to conditionally approved the site plan for a 15,000 sq. ft. expansion to the ICE facility (Gazin/Mullaney).

Gouverneur (V): Family Dollar Store, Special Use Permit, Site Plan Review and Area Variance for a Family Dollar Store in the B-2 zoning district. Pfothenhauer described the project's location and the surrounding land uses, and said three residences would be demolished to accommodate the new retail business. Pfothenhauer said the area variance is needed to reduce the amount of parking required for the store. Pfothenhauer described the property's bio-retention area for Jenison. Pfothenhauer said the applicant is proposing an island in the parking area, and staff recommended it be landscaped to make it more visually prominent. Pfothenhauer said the DOT hasn't signed off on the applicant's proposed curb cut, but noted it is currently being used by an existing residence. Pfothenhauer said the applicant proposed an excessive number of exterior metal halide lights that could spillover onto adjacent residential uses, and reviewed the location of the proposed dumpster and air conditioning unit. Pfothenhauer concluded his presentation by offering a non-binding suggestion to move the building closer to the front lot line to help eliminate the appearance of a "sea of parking," and noted that such a modification would require a reduction of the 70' front yard setback requirements. The Board unanimously

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establish a Family Dollar Store in the B-2 zoning district. (Jenison/Bunstone)

Hammond (V): Hammond Volunteer Fire Department, Site Plan Review for a Community Center on Mill Street. Pfothenauer said this project was written up as a suggested return for local action. Pfothenauer described the property's location, and said the community center would be located behind the fire station. Pfothenauer said there are no setback requirements as zoning isn't in place in Hammond. Pfothenauer described the project as a good infill use, and was in an appropriate location. Pfothenauer noted only five spaces will be provided on site and explained parking will be available at the fire station, and residents are used to parking on the street. A comment was made that parking will need to be demarcated. Pfothenauer was asked if the walk-in cooler would include a compressor. If so, a solid fence and vegetation was recommended to help buffer any noise pollution. Pfothenauer said staff recommended the project be returned for local action. Mattice asked what the existing pole barn on the property was for. Gazin said the pole barn is used for barbecues, and as a pavilion. Gazin also said the sheds in the back are used for carnival concessions. The Board unanimously agreed to return the project for local action.

Canton (V): Map Amendment to rezone Harrington Court and Remington Avenue from C-2 to R-2. Pfothenauer described the property's location, and said the applicant was looking to rezone the parcels from commercial to residential. Pfothenauer also said the public health department has to weigh in due to the number and size of parcels that will be rezoned. Jenison asked for clarification to the number of vacant parcels that will be rezoned residential. Bisonette said the soil on those lots is very close to bedrock, and getting water and septic to the location will be costly. A comment was made that there was a possibility of a pedestrian bridge crossing the river with the infrastructure running underneath it. Jenison said he didn't like the cul-de-sac, and said it would be difficult to plow. Pfothenauer said it was presently a paper street. Bisonette described the history of this subdivision. Murray said a pedestrian bridge was considered because running the infrastructure underneath the CSX rail line bridge was too costly. The Board unanimously agreed to return the project for local action.

## V. Reports

- A. **Executive Committee.** Welch reported the Executive Committee met on February 24<sup>th</sup> to review the agenda, and discuss tonight's full review projects.
- B. **Board of Legislators.** Bunstone said the IDA will deliver an hour long presentation to the Board of Legislators on April 18<sup>th</sup> at a Services committee meeting. The time for the presentation has not been determined yet. Bunstone also said the County will begin preparing the 2012 budget.
- C. **Staff Report.** Pfothenauer said the Office is currently preparing viewshed maps for the Hammond wind committee. Some staff will attend the Tug Hill local government

**VI. Other Items**

- A. Policy Guide Revisions.** Welch recommended the timeline to submit the revised Policy Guide to the Board of Legislators be tabled for next month.
- B. Correspondence.** Pfothenauer reported the Office received notice from the Town of Canton Planning Board that the Smile Care Associates dental office off State Highway 310 was unanimously approved.
- C. Next Meeting Dates.** The Executive Committee will meet on March 31<sup>st</sup> in the County Planning Office conference room, located in Room 255. The next full board meeting will be Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm in Room 226 of the County Courthouse, located at 48 Court Street in Canton.

**V. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Mullaney

Secretary

Minutes prepared by M. Larson