

**ONEONTA, NEW YORK – NOVEMBER 20, 2013 - 7:00 P.M.
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION PG. 1**

PRESENT: Chair Dennis Finn
Commissioner Gary Herzig (Vice Chair)
Commissioner Becky Thomas
Commissioner Anna Tomaino (arrived 7:01 pm)
Commissioner Barry Holden
Commissioner Edmond Overbey
Commissioner Michelle Eastman
Council Member Maureen Hennessy (arrived 7:02 pm)

ABSENT: None

Chair Finn called the regular meeting to order and asked the Clerk to call the roll.

Commissioner Tomaino arrived at 7:01 pm.
Council Member Hennessy arrived at 7:02 pm.

PETITIONERS

Chair Finn asked if there were any petitioners for matters other than items listed on the agenda. Hearing no response, the Chair asked the Clerk whether there was any correspondence.

CORRESPONDENCE

City Clerk Kendall read a “Petition to Keep Affordable Housing in the City of Oneonta, New York,” submitted to the Commission and signed by 24 residents urging the Commission not to approve the Bank of Cooperstown project.

Chair Finn then asked for a motion to approve the minutes from October.

MOTION, made by Commissioner Herzig and seconded by Commissioner Tomaino that the commission approves the minutes of the regular meeting held October 16, 2013.

Voting Ayes: Chair Finn
Commissioner Herzig
Commissioner Thomas
Commissioner Tomaino
Commissioner Holden
Commissioner Overbey
Commissioner Eastman

Noes: None

Absent: None

MOTION CARRIED

AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Finn stated the commission would consider the single item on the agenda.

Scott White: 34 Main Street (300.10-1-27); 36 Main Street (300.10-1-26); Bank of Cooperstown; Short Environmental Quality Review; Site Plan Review.

The applicant represents the potential buyer of these 2 properties. It is their intention to demolish the existing buildings, combine the 2 lots, and construct a new branch of the Bank of Cooperstown.

Chair Finn asked Mr. White to discuss the proposal. He described the proposed building that would include a clock tower, clapboard sheathing, and lawn in front. He indicated there would be no parking in front of the building. He indicated that he had spoken with Jacqueline Hamblin, owner of the neighboring property at 38 Main Street, and Diane Hamblin and that the plans presented take into account their concerns.

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Chair Finn asked whether anyone present wished to address the Commission about the proposal. Diane Hamblin, 38 Main Street, read a letter to the Commission expressing concern about changes to the neighborhood including the project under consideration but indicating that she felt Mr. White and the bank intend to be good neighbors. Ms. Hamblin presented a copy of her letter, additional historical information on the area and historical photographs for the meeting record.

Darlene Davis, a long-time tenant at 34 Main Street, stated that she spoke in support of her neighbors. Although she was able to find a new apartment, she stressed that it is very difficult for professional people to find affordable apartments in the City of Oneonta. Because the Hamblins are in favor of the proposal, she would also like to express support; however she wished that she had been contacted about the project before reading about it in the newspaper.

Chair Finn then asked Jeff Francisco of Delaware Engineering for any further comments. Mr. Francisco discussed drainage improvements, including clearance of an existing swale in the rear of the property that will cause water to flow to existing drainage. The new parking lot will end about 16' off the property line (currently the 34 Main Street parking area goes right to the property line. Ms. Hamblin stated that she understood that a clear channel was supposed to run along the rear of all the properties from 34 Main Street toward the river to accommodate potential flood waters; however at present parking lots for 34 Main Street, 32 Main Street and 26 Main Street go all the way to the property lines, preventing drainage.

Commissioner Herzig asked Mr. Francisco if he had any concerns about drainage as a result of this project. Mr. Francisco stated that he did not. Chair Finn asked whether this applied to other adjacent properties such as Alfresco's. Mr. Francisco stated that he had not examined that area

as it was not part of this project and was also fenced. Commissioner Herzig asked for confirmation that this project would not have an adverse impact on the adjacent properties and Mr. Francisco stated that it would not and that there is another flood gate behind Alfresco's.

Mr. Overbey asked who would be responsible for maintaining the swale. Ms. Hamblin stated that it was her understanding that the city had taken responsibility for maintaining the area along the flood control berm, but had not actually been doing so. It was stated that the state owns the swale, but the city has been mowing it. Mr. Francisco reiterated that the swale is overgrown and the Bank of Cooperstown will clear shrubs and undergrowth so that it functions properly.

Chair Finn asked whether the City Engineering department had anything to add regarding maintenance of the swale. Greg Mattice, Senior Engineering Technician, responded that he had taken notes on the conversation and would look into where the property line is. Mr. Francisco added that there are concrete markers indicating the property lines in this area.

Code Enforcement Officer Chiappisi outlined the process that has been followed in compliance with state Environmental Quality Review requirements. In response to questions from Board members he indicated that the County Planning Office, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the NYS Department of Transportation are reviewing the plans but have not completed that review. He indicated that the Planning Commission can make a Negative Declaration contingent upon the results of those reviews.

Chair Finn asked that the City Clerk to read the SEQR questionnaire and record the Commission's responses. The Chair indicated that Commissioners Eastman and Thomas had recused themselves from participating in the review and subsequent motions due to a potential conflict of interest. All of the questions were answered in the negative.

MOTION, made by Commissioner Herzig and seconded by Commissioner Overbey that the Commission declare itself the Lead Agency for Scott White/Bank of Cooperstown's proposed project at 34 Main Street and 36 Main Street and that the Commission make a Negative Declaration on the project, contingent upon the results of reviews by the NYSDEC, NYSDOT and Otsego County.

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Voting Ayes: Chair Finn
Commissioner Herzig
Commissioner Tomaino
Commissioner Holden
Commissioner Overbey

Noes: None

Abstentions: Commissioner Eastman
Commissioner Thomas

Absent: None

MOTION CARRIED

Chair Finn then moved to consideration of the Site Plan for the project.

MOTION, made by Commissioner Herzig and seconded by Commissioner Tomaino that the Site Plan for Bank of Cooperstown, 34 Main Street and 36 Main Street, conditional upon final SEQR approval.

Voting Ayes: Chair Finn
Commissioner Herzig
Commissioner Tomaino
Commissioner Holden
Commissioner Overbey

Noes: None

Abstentions: Commissioner Eastman
Commissioner Thomas

Absent: None

MOTION CARRIED

Chair Finn then noted that at a future meeting the Commission may wish to hold a discussion with individuals who are in the early stages of planning projects in order to outline the planning process. It was agreed that this would be useful for the Commission and educational for community members,

There being no further business to come before the commission, Chair Finn adjourned the regular meeting at approximately 7:43 p.m.

DOUGLAS KENDALL, City Clerk

/dk