

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FORT EDWARD PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2024 AT TOWN HALL COMMENCING AT 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Belden called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

Pledge of Allegiance

PRESENT: Chairman Belden
Valerie Ingersoll
Joe McMurray
Zachary Middleton

ABSENT: Max Fruchter
Dolores Cogan
Donald Sanders, Jr

OTHERS PRESENT: Ashton Legodais, Preston Gulick, Evan Callahan, Sage Ezell, Mitch Quine, Matt Carletts, Robin Cohen, Town Engineer Chris Koenig and Planning Board Clerk Aimee Mahoney

MINUTES: MOTION by Zachary Middleton, Seconded by Joe McMurray to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 10, 2024 **ALL AYES**

BUSINESS:

**Public Hearing – 7:05 P.M.
Cohen – Taxi Business
276 Broadway**

Chairman Belden opened the Public Hearing at 7:05pm

The following notice was published in The Post Star on January 7, 2024:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, the Town of Fort Edward Planning Board will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, January 24, 2024 at 7:05pm to hear comments regarding the Site Plan application submitted by Mitchell Cohen located at 276 Broadway in the Town of Fort Edward. The purpose of the application is to use the building for a taxi business. Tax Map #163.14-1-30

At the meeting anyone that wishes to comment will be heard.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

Chairman Belden: We will keep the Public Hearing open until our meeting on February 14th while the applicant goes to County Planning and Town Zoning Board of Appeals.

- Will they be working on the cars there as well?

Robin Cohen: No they will be sent out for maintenance.

Chris Koenig: No auto maintenance on the property can be a condition of the site plan approval.

Dolan Solar

Chairman Belden recused himself and Valerie Ingersoll is Acting Chairperson

- Discussion can be held but no decisions can be made due to not having a quorum.

Evan Callahan: We would like to discuss what we are proposing for view shed mitigation and we also submitted an updated Site Plan. There are 3 changes, the first one being circling of the adjacent residences, the second one is a National Grid easement that popped up on the access road so we moved our fence line in a little. The only other change is the addition of planting module 3 (least dense) along Woodard Rd.

Chris Koenig: I want to make sure the Board is clear on what these planting buffers are. The Somers project was straightforward with a couple varieties of spruce trees which is easy to visualize. These are more complex and I want to make sure the applicant is depicting that so you can understand what it is. Do you have any pictures of recently installed modules like this?

Mitch Quine: We can send renderings from other projects for reference.

Chris Koenig: This shows what the mix of species would be; large deciduous trees and sugar maples. How is a sugar maple going to screen the project; when you plant a sugar maple it's a sapling and doesn't screen anything?

Mitch Quine: It is meant to go in as a mix with some growing slower and some faster which overall presents a natural look particularly for where we are screening right along the road. The reason we used these buffers is because these are the ones we used last time we received approval for the Dolan project. Do you want us to switch to what we used for the Somers project?

Chris Koenig: There were not as many visual impacts with the first Dolan project but now everything is being pushed closer to County Rte. 46, Patterson Rd. and the corner by Woodard Rd.

Zachary Middleton: If you have a row of evergreens there it will look just as out of place because they are not natural in that area; it is all hardwood forest.

Chris Koenig: If the preference is to make it look more natural and in line with the setting then this would be the best bet but if you want more of an immediate hard boundary then the evergreen trees would do that.

Mitch Quine: When we initially put the Dolan plan together back in 2021 we went with this based on consultation with our Engineer at the time and they recommended this for the area. We are happy to accommodate whatever the Board decides.

Chris Koenig: I am fine with the way the hedgerow is planned but I think more of the dense type around the project would be better suited.

Mitch Quine: Along Patterson Rd. we have the mid density type and it sounds like along the road we need to switch to the evergreens?

Zachary Middleton: I wouldn't do that along Woodard Rd. because right now the existing line is a hardwood mix.

Mitch Quine: Along Woodard Rd. we will stick with the hardwood mix and along County Rte. 46 and Patterson Rd. we can switch to evergreens. Does that work?

Chris Koenig: How far is the residence on Planting Area 1 away from your buffer?

Mitch Quine: It is about 250' from the fence line to the house and approximately 150'-200' to the property boundary.

Chris Koenig: Planting Area 1 is my biggest concern due to that resident not involved in the project being impacted; it's going to feel like it's in their backyard and there will be no screening off the bat. If you wanted to add additional plantings along the property boundary or try and do as much as you can to screen that residence.

Mitch Quine: We could supplement in front of the currently proposed hardwood plantings, we could do a single row of evergreens that will do some initial blocking and then the hardwood stuff would grow up behind it.

Zachary Middleton: What are you going to do when the hardwoods get high enough? Are you going to go through and cut them all?

Mitch Quine: That would be up to the Operations & Maintenance team. We would only top the trees if there was an issue.

Chris Koenig: What does the drainage ditch provide now for screening?

Mitch Quine: Nothing

Chris Koenig: My suggestion would be to continue the Type 3 screening all up around the fence line. My opinion is to make it dense around the whole thing; the module 3 doesn't really do

much. The Board can discuss that but if you are planting hardwood hedgerows it should be dense hedgerow without all the gaps in between and clumps of vegetation. The densest screening should be along the road.

Mitch Quine: Switching from module 3 to module 2 just in terms of cost of the trees is not a big deal but when we get into module 1 on 100's of feet it gets expensive.

Zachary Middleton: My opinion is that solar panels are becoming so normal and sometimes when we try and put so much in front of them it looks more out of place. I would be fine with not having module 1 along the road where there isn't a residence. I don't have an issue with keeping it as a 2 or 3.

Joe McMurray: I agree with Zach, there is a big disadvantage with evergreens. Mine are planted 10' apart and they shield it well but the wild grapevine will grow around them and kill them.

Chris Koenig: Are any of the streams you are crossing State regulated?

Mitch Quine: No

Valerie Ingersoll: I have a question about the emails with Highway Superintendent Brian Brockway. He is concerned with Patterson Rd. and Woodard Rd. during construction; do we need something in writing that the Town is not liable for any damage to the roads during construction.

Brian Brockway: Does he want a performance bond?

Evan Callahan: He didn't say.

Chris Koenig: Normally the Town would require a Road Use Agreement or a Performance Bond to make sure they have some accountability to make the repairs. The Planning Board can make that a condition of the approval. What do you think the delivery routes will be?

Mitch Quine: We will be coming in from Route 4 to Patterson.

Chris Koenig: That is something that can also be outlined in that agreement; having designated routes for truck driving.

Evan Callahan: We received our SHPO no effect letter today.

- **County Planning – January 30, 2024**
- **Planning Board – February 14, 2024**

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION by Joe McMurray, Seconded by Zachary Middleton to adjourn the meeting at 8:04pm
ALL AYES

Dated: January 29, 2024

Aimee Mahoney, Clerk