

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FORT EDWARD ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2026, AT TOWN HALL
COMMENCING AT 6:00 P.M.**

Chairman LaFay called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

PRESENT: Chairman LaFay
Dolores Cogan
James Maskell
Phillip King
Richard Fisher

OTHERS PRESENT: Lori Leemans, Ashley Leemans, Frank Leemans, Town Engineer Chris Koenig, Town Attorney Bill Nikas and Zoning Board Clerk Aimee Ives.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: MOTION by James Maskell, seconded by Phillip King to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 21, 2026, **ALL AYES**

BUSINESS:

**Use Variance
Lori & Ashley Leemans
116 State Route 197
Continued Public Hearing**

Chairman LaFay: What time will the noise be ending?

Lori Leemans: We will be in compliance with the noise ordinance for the Town by enacting a policy that all loud music and loud noises must be done by 10:00pm; the Town Ordinance is 11:00pm.

Rick Fisher: How far are you from the crest of the hill on Rte. 197? Cars go extremely fast along that stretch of road.

Frank Leemans: We are about ½ mile away.

Lori Leemans: We will be working to get a speed limit reduction along that portion of the road, 55mph is way too fast.

Chris Koenig: As far as parking goes, we asked for 1 space for every 2 guests which would be 25 and they have shown they have adequate parking.

Chairman LaFay: Can you explain the educational component?

Ashley Leemans: We will be holding workshops to educate community members in environmental stewardship and ecology. Some will be free and some may have a low cost to

attend. Interpretive signage will be installed on the property to educate visitors about pollinators, native plants, wildlife species, and permaculture techniques. We will be upcycling materials for use in gardening and the pond will be used to educate on aquatic ecology and water quality.

Dolores Cogan: What are the dimensions of the proposed signage?

Lori Leemans: We are not currently proposing any signage on the road. If we decide we need one, we will come back before the Board.

Chris Koenig: What material are you using for the driveway?

Frank Leemans: It is currently shale, fabric and Item 4 on top. We will be using the same material for widening the driveway to meet the 2-lane requirement.

Chris Koenig: Check with NYS Department of Transportation.

Ashley Leemans: We are planning to widen the first 100' of the driveway, not the entire 400'; is that acceptable?

Chris Koenig: Yes, the purpose of that is for safety getting in and out onto State Rte. 197.

Attorney Nikas: Why is this not being treated as a Special Use Permit as opposed to a Use Variance? This could be considered a Social Hall.

MOTION by James Maskell, seconded by Phillip King to treat the application as a Special Use Permit after further discussion **ALL AYES**

Chris Koenig went through SEQR Part II for this unlisted action:

MOTION by Dolores Cogan, seconded by Rick Fisher to declare a negative declaration for SEQR review due to no potentially large adverse environmental impacts as a result of this unlisted action **ALL AYES**

MOTION by James Maskell, seconded by Phillip King to approve the special use permit contingent on payment of fees **ALL AYES**

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION by Richard Fisher, seconded by James Maskell to adjourn the meeting at 6:40pm **ALL AYES**

Dated: March 20, 2026

Aimee Ives, Zoning Board Clerk

