

ULSTER COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Minutes – Wednesday, January 8, 2025

The Ulster County Planning Board Meeting 7:00 p.m. Legislative Chambers, 6th Floor County Office Building

The Executive Committee Did Not Meet

Chairman Baden called the meeting to order and Mr. Leibowitz read the roll call.

- 1. ROLL CALL – Present:** R. Pecora, M. Cohen, S. McCarthy, H. Hansen, C. Lanzetta, D. Boggess, E. VanDeMark, M. Baden, J. Brown, S. Hubbard, C. Valianti, M. Watkins, F. Almquist, V. Markowitz, V. McLaughlin, L. Molyneaux, D. Doyle, R. Leibowitz, B. Samuelson, M. Ananew
Absent: M. Rudikoff, V. Messner **Excused:** D. Onderdonk, J. Ferraro, W. Murray **Guests:** Caylin Sanders-Rte 9W, Ken Casamento-Woodland, Karen Bohnenberger-9W Ridge, Dave Roberts-Woodland Pond, Laura Hartman-9W Ridge, Vicki Lucarini-Lightstar, Rejis Obijiski-Whitestone Lightstar, Steve Ellman-Kingston Wire, Mary Jo Frederich

- 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The December 4th minutes were approved. Motion made by Mr. McLaughlin, seconded by Mr. Watkins. All were in favor.

- 3. EDUCATION & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

Chairman Baden noted that DEC is doing a webinar on January 15th at 2:00PM on the new Wetlands Law that was effective January 1st. He added that information on the webinar was emailed to the Board and you must pre-register to get the link.

Mr. Baden stated that Association of Towns has scheduled the first Learn at Lunch for the year and this was emailed to the Board as well.

Chairman Baden stated he would make a list of offerings each month to be included in the meeting packet.

- 4. COMMUNITY REPORTS**

Mr. McLaughlin stated the Village of Saugerties started construction on installing Tesla EV charging stations. He was not sure how long they will take to complete.

- 5. PLANNING BOARD REPORTS**

- a. Chairperson Report

The Chairman gave a reminder that if your term on the Board was up at the end of December, your local board needs to send in a resolution to reappoint. He added that you can continue to serve on the Board until reappointed or replaced. Mr. Baden also requested if you do not have an alternate, please help find one. It is important for this board to have a quorum.

Chairman Baden noted that 2025 mileage forms are available and will be due after the March meeting.

- b. Committee Reports - None

- 6. PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

- a. Financial Report

Mr. Doyle noted that the County adopted the 2025 budget. Funds from 2024 are being carried over for studies that weren't completed. Mr. Doyle noted that additional money to do an assessment on water and sewer countywide was added to our budget by the Legislature. An RFP will be issued, and we will hire a consultant to do that work and we will manage the paperwork. Mr. Doyle stated there is approximately \$10 million worth of work going through the department right now.

b. Environmental Notice Bulletin & Grant Opportunities

Mr. Doyle informed the Board that the County was lead agency for the 911 Center, which is now called the Emergency Communications Center, on Paradies Lane in New Paltz. A negative declaration was issued and sent out to interested agencies. Mr. Doyle noted it is a significant project in terms of money and public safety and added we are hopeful for it to be operational in 2026.

c. Communications – No Member Comment

d. Director/Staff Reports

Mr. Doyle informed the board that we are having difficulty filling the Sr. Transportation Planner position but hope to fill it in the next several months. He noted that we have hired a consultant to work on the Long-Range Transportation Plan. The Plan guides the development and investment of Federal funds in transportation and is updated every 5 years as required by federal law.

7. SPECIAL TOPICS DISCUSSION

Mr. Samuelson informed the Board that on Monday, the Farmland Protection Board voted to submit the Ag Farmland Protection plan to the Legislature as required by NYS law. Mr. Samuelson stated he and Mr. Doyle will work on SEQRA documents for plan, there will be a public hearing in March, and we are looking at April or May for adoption. Mr. Samuelson added the Plan was last updated in 1997. Mr. Doyle noted that most comments received were favorable. Mr. Baden asked how the turnout was at SUNY New Paltz. Mr. Samuelson stated about 30-40 were present, including farmers from around the county and some legislators. Ms. Lanzetta stated there is a link to a video of the presentation available. She added the consultant, Nan Stolzenberg, did a good job with the presentation and commended Burt Samuelson for all his work. Mr. Doyle stated the video is available on the Participate Ulster website.

Mr. Doyle stated the County Planning department wrote a green buildings grant, through NYSEDA, for the design of a carbon neutral building (zero emissions) for the heating, ventilation, AC and solar work for the Emergency Communications Center. The County was awarded a \$2 million grant that will take care of the cost of those systems for that building.

Mr. Doyle stated we are currently in contract for a pocket park off the Midtown Linear Park at Cornell Street. Design work/construction drawings will allow us to look for funding for construction. Funding for design work is available from a grant from Community Foundations relative to construction of the Midtown Linear Park.

Mr. Doyle stated we received a release from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to remove rails and ties on the Shandaken Rail Trail. We convinced them that our mitigation measures were enough to release us for that removal.

Mr. Doyle stated we will be starting the Leading with Lead program to remove lead for children at risk and we have a septic grant for priority water bodies in the county.

Mr. Doyle stated there are two rounds of ADU (accessory dwelling unit) projects, one is direct to RUPCO and the other is a contract between us and RUPCO. He added there are a number of other housing projects going through review, noting that our office is intensely focused on housing needs.

Mr. Samuelson noted that we also received \$30,000 for water and sewer engineering reports for two mobile home communities located in Esopus and Lake Katrine.

Mr. Baden informed the Board that New York Planning Federation (NYPF) will be doing their annual conference in April and sent notice for nominations for various awards given at that conference. He asked the Board to see if there is a local board or person who is worthy, adding that it's good to recognize someone on a volunteer basis. The Chairman mentioned the Kingston Zoning Statute won a national award and added that maybe we should nominate them to NYPF.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Baden stated that if anyone would like to speak to please be considerate of the Board's time. He explained the Board's function and what our recommendations mean. The Chairman asked speakers to give their name and which project they were referencing.

Vicki Lucarini, of 170 Ledge Road, Town of Ulster was present regarding the Lightstar Renewable project on Tuytenbridge Road. She is against granting the special use permit for a solar array that would be on 42.8 out of 69 acres of forest land. She stated that it goes against the Town's comprehensive plan, adopted in 2007, which identifies the area as a natural resource not to be developed. The Scenic Hudson solar mapping tool identifies it as a prime forested area not to be developed with solar. She noted that with the proposed 9W development on same ridge it will result in clear-cutting 100 acres of forest. We should not be cutting down any more trees. Climate change, drought, solar arrays do not remove carbon from the air. Ms. Lucarini stated the County should encourage the Town to place solar on places that do not require cutting down a large number of trees.

Mary Jo Frederich, of Glenerie Blvd, stated we have all these different projects piece meal and encouraged people to add everything up. There is the iPark project that includes 800 housing units, a 100-room hotel across from Adam's that was approved a few years ago, and now we have a 298-unit multifamily behind Adams. She noted that she read the Route 9W Mobility Study, which includes that area, if you look at the proposed projects as one plan, you might see it is unacceptable for the community. She added, in the Vision Plan for Ulster County from 2007, it specifically says we should protect the ridge, and the two proposed projects on Route 9W will impact the ridge.

Laura Hartmann, Town of Ulster resident and Chair of TownofUlsterCitizens.org, was present regarding the solar farm and luxury development project. She said Town of Ulster Citizens supports the installation of solar panel projects and their environmental benefits. The Town has plenty of rooftops, parking lots and vacant parcels to locate solar without the need to fell a forest. The Town of Ulster Comp Plan states to protect ridgelines from inappropriate development. She noted many negative environmental impacts, traffic impacts and congestion, pollution and effect on emergency services. Ms. Hartmann urged the Board to recommend the Town of Ulster reject both projects due to cumulative impacts on the Town and its citizens. Consider these projects together.

Regis Obijiski, is affiliated with Town of Ulster Citizens, stated he was present for both projects, Whitestone and Lightstar. He said Dennis Doyle was quoted in the Freeman four years ago regarding unaffordable housing and rental apartments. Pattern for Progress came out with a good housing report this year and he noted statistics from the MIT Living Wage Calculator. He asked who the target buyer is for these units, certainly not Ulster County residents seeking their first homes. This project is out of reach of the people who live here. The wealth gap widens and swallows the people who live here. Besides the environmental issues, the sociological reality needs to be addressed. He agreed with the comments of his colleagues.

Caylin Sanders, a town of Ulster resident, was present for the two projects proposed for the 9W ridge. She called attention to the Town's 17-year-old comp plan that makes specific mention of the forested ridge and states to protect it from inappropriate development that would tarnish the rural character of the area and disrupt scenic views. Ms. Sanders stated the plan urges us to create a Ridge Protection Overlay area, which hasn't been done in 17 years. The ridge is vulnerable due to storms and climate issues, it's not just about views. Per the Lightstar Renewables applicant, this forest contains nearby eagles' nests, wetlands and arrowheads; so clearing should be minimal and that includes the 298-unit multi-family housing project. Mining and transportation of materials adds more carbon with fewer trees to offset the emission. The solar farm will be decommissioned in 25 years, and it will take a century to regrow the forest. She asked the board to reject both projects. She stated we paid for the comp plan with our tax dollars, and we'd like that honored by the Town and this Board.

(Unidentified speaker) Part of the problem is Lightstar sought that property because it's easy to connect to the grid there. They support the goal, but the bigger mission is to expand where they could put this project.

9. ZONING REFERRALS – See Separate Zoning Minutes

After the Town of Ulster Referral #2025008 & 2025009 for Lightstar Renewables:

Ms. Pecora made a motion for the Chairman to write a letter to the Town of Ulster Town Board to consider a moratorium to work on an updated Solar Array Law. Seconded by Mr. McLaughlin. All were in favor.

Chairman Baden acknowledged planning department secretary, Marianne Ananew, and thanked her for her work for the Board and department.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM. All were in favor.

Ulster County Planning Board Minutes



1/8/2025

Kingston City

Referral Number: **2025003** Received: 12/19/2024
Name: **105 Abeel Street** Type of Referral: **Site Plan Review**
Description: Construct 6-unit apartment building (lot to be subdivided into two lots).
Project Location: 105 Abeel Street
Recommendation: **No County Impact** Abstentions:
Motion: McLaughlin
Second: McCarthy Recusals:
Vote: Yes No

Marbletown

Referral Number: **2025010** Received: 12/5/2025
Name: **Local Law A of 2025** Type of Referral: **Zoning Statute Amendment**
Description: Zoning Amendments including ADU revisions and consistency and clarification updates.
Project Location: Townwide
Recommendation: **Required Modifications** Abstentions:
Motion: Watkins
Second: Boggess Recusals: Hansen
Vote: Yes No

New Paltz Village

Referral Number: **2025005** Received: 12/18/2024
Name: **Woodland Pond** Type of Referral: **Site Plan Review**
Description: 10 minor additions to existing campus building totalling an expansion of 21,746 square feet. No new residential units.
Project Location: 100 Woodland Pond Circle
Recommendation: **No County Impact** Abstentions:
Motion: McLaughlin
Second: Pecora Recusals: Baden
Vote: Yes No

Saugerties Town

Referral Number: **2025001** Received: 12/18/2024
Name: **Stone Creek Commons** Type of Referral: **Site Plan Review**
Description: 47-unit affordable apartments with integrated support services and outdoor amenities.
Project Location: 3190 Route 9W
Recommendation: **Required Modifications** Abstentions:
Motion: Watkins
Second: Boggess Recusals: NO: McLaughlin
Vote: Yes No

~Ulster County Planning Board Minutes~

Saugerties Town

Referral Number **2025002** Received: 12/18/2025
Name: **Saugerties Self Storage** Type of Referral: **Site Plan Review**
Description: Expansion of existing self-storage facility by two additional buildings.
Project Location: 3058 Route 9W and 2037 Route 32
Recommendation: **Disapprove** Abstentions:
Motion: McLaughlin
Second: Molyneaux
Vote: Yes No Recusals:

Saugerties Village

Referral Number **2025004** Received: 12/18/2024
Name: **169 Ulster Avenue** Type of Referral: **Site Plan Review**
Description: Conversion of portion of existing structure for retail use.
Project Location: 169 Ulster Avenue
Recommendation: **Required Modifications** Abstentions:
Motion: McLaughlin
Second: Molyneaux
Vote: Yes No Recusals:

Ulster

Referral Number **2025006** Received: 12/3/2025
Name: **Route 9W Multifamily Development** Type of Referral: **Special Permit**
Description: Two, 4-story buildings (74 units each) and 15, 2-story townhouse style buildings with (10 units each).
Project Location: 1530 Route 9W
Recommendation: **Required Modifications** Abstentions:
Motion: Watkins
Second: Lanzetta
Vote: Yes No Recusals: Almquist

Ulster

Referral Number **2025007** Received: 12/3/2025
Name: **Route 9W Multifamily Development** Type of Referral: **Site Plan Review**
Description: Two, 4-story buildings (74 units each) and 15, 2-story townhouse style buildings with (10 units each).
Project Location: 1530 Route 9W
Recommendation: **Required Modifications** Abstentions:
Motion: Watkins
Second: Lanzetta
Vote: Yes No Recusals: Almquist

Ulster

Referral Number **2025008** Received: 1/2/2025
Name: **Lightstar Renewables** Type of Referral: **Special Permit**
Description: 4.1 MW AC Solar array on 42.8 acres out of 68.8 acres.
Project Location: Tuyenbridge Road
Recommendation: **Required Modifications** Abstentions:
Motion: Watkins
Second: Boggess
Vote: Yes No Recusals: Almquist

~Ulster County Planning Board Minutes~

Ulster

Referral Number **2025009** Received: 1/2/2025
Name: **Lightstar Renewables** Type of Referral: **Site Plan Review**
Description: 4.1 MW AC Solar array on 42.8 acres out of 68.8 acres.
Project Location: Tuyenbridge Road
Recommendation: **Required Modifications** Abstentions:
Motion: Watkins
Second: Boggess
Vote: Yes No Recusals: Almquist