

ULSTER COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Minutes – Wednesday, March 5, 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, D. Kossar, D. Onderdonk, S. McCarthy, H. Hansen, D. Boggess, E. VanDeMark, M. Baden, J. Brown, J. Ferraro, C. Valianti, M. Watkins, J. Crispell, V. Markowitz, V. Messner, W. Murray, V. McLaughlin, L. Molyneaux, D. Doyle, R. Leibowitz, B. Samuelson **Absent:** M. Rudikoff **Excused:** C. Lanzetta, F. Almquist **Guests:** John Hughes, Town of Rosendale Planning Board
- 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
The February 5th minutes were approved. Motion made by Mr. McLaughlin, seconded by Mr. McCarthy. All were in favor.
- 3. EDUCATION & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**
Chairman Baden stated there was a handout with training opportunities in tonight's packet.
- 4. COMMUNITY REPORTS**
Mr. McLaughlin informed the Board that the installation of Tesla electric car charging stations by the Price Chopper in the Village of Saugerties is progressing. He also noted that overnight parking bans in the Village will end on March 15th.

Mr. McCarthy stated that the property at the old Louis Smith Chevrolet in the Town of Lloyd on Route 9W going South was purchased for a new project. Mr. Doyle noted that we've had a discussion with them.

Mr. Baden informed the Board that the Village of New Paltz contracted with Municollab, a local Kingston company, who created a software program for organization of files. He added that the Village has been using the program for 2 months and it works well for the process of planning and zoning.

Mr. Doyle asked if any communities were making contingency plans for what is happening with federal funding. Mr. Boggess said Boiceville was told the National Fish and Wildlife Federation grant wouldn't be funded and now they are not sure where it stands.
- 5. PLANNING BOARD REPORTS**
 - a. Chairperson Report
None
 - b. Committee Reports
None
- 6. PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORTS**
 - a. Financial Report

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Mr. Doyle noted we are early in the budget process and have been working through a number of studies and grants. Some grants are large and federally funded but don't affect staff, just service and delivery. For example, we have a \$650,000 CDBG grant that we manage for housing rehab and we are signing contracts but unsure if they will be honored at the federal level. Mr. Doyle informed the Board that all of the County's contracts state if the federal funds aren't available, the contract will cease.

Mr. Doyle stated that we receive approximately \$500,000 per year for transportation work but have not seen any guidance from FHWA. He added that we are optimistic that we will continue to receive funds, and that the County has just completed a Unified Planning Work Program for those funds that we intend to implement.

Mr. Doyle stated the County is doing contingency planning on how to react as far as federal funds. We have not seen absolute indications that funds have been rescinded.

Mr. McLaughlin stated Community Action, as far as Head Start funds, have been frozen.

Mr. Markowitz asked about UCAT funding. Mr. Doyle stated their total budget is between \$7-9 million and between 55-60% is from federal funds. He added they receive state operating assistance as well. Mr. Doyle stated the Transportation Council is doing a Route Optimization Study that is looking at costs associated with UCAT to expand service and added that UCAT service will remain free for at least this year.

b. Environmental Notice Bulletin & Grant Opportunities

Mr. Doyle informed the Board that the County has a Housing Action Fund (HAF) that releases \$3 million per year for affordable housing projects throughout the County. The HAF 2025 opportunities will be released on Friday. If anyone in your community is thinking about a housing affordability component, now is the time to apply for county assistance.

Mr. Doyle noted that UCIDA has a new housing policy. PILOT can apply to the entire project, the IDA does not indicate the level of affordability nor the number of units of affordability.

Mr. Markowitz asked about a housing project in Ellenville. Mr. Doyle informed the Board that the County owns a facility in Ellenville, the Trudy Resnick Farber Center, and the County also acquired the lot across the street. He stated the County will put that parcel up for RFP to build an affordable housing unit (or units); that conversation has to be had in more detail with the Village. Ms. Messner stated right now it is three or four units. Mr. Doyle stated that we are currently looking at the zoning statute and right now three or four units may not be practical given the size of the parcel. He added that we've had preliminary discussions with the Village.

c. Communications – No Member Comment

d. Director/Staff Reports

Mr. Samuelson informed the Board there will be a public hearing on the Ulster County Agricultural Farmland Protection Plan on March 18th at 7:00PM. Mr. Doyle stated we've received nothing but positive comments

and the work done is acceptable to those who it will impact the most. The farm community has made a request for farm coordinator. The County has created a farmland coordinator position within the Department of Economic Development.

The Chairman noted the Ag District 3 update and asked if there was a list of changes. Mr. Samuelson stated they are on the Ulster County Planning website adding that the public hearing has not been scheduled yet. Mr. Baden asked if March was also for Ag District inclusions for new properties. Mr. Samuelson said that applications are received from March 1st to the 30th and we have already received some.

7. SPECIAL TOPICS DISCUSSION

Mr. Doyle stated the proposed Government Operations Center, which is now called the Emergency Communications Center project, went to bid. We are currently going through analysis of bids, and they are inline with our construction cost estimates. He added the construction timeframe is approximately 18 months.

Mr. Doyle stated we continue work on the Shandaken Rail Trail also known as the U&D Rail Trail or the Highmount to Giggie Hollow Rail Trail. He added that we hope to have design approval by June. Mr. Doyle stated the biggest issue is wetland jurisdiction work because of how the laws have changed. We are also concerned about the ability to make SEQRA determinations. Chairman Baden stated that a consultant for New Paltz said they will do an expedited review for project requests that come in that are potentially jurisdictional.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT – No Public Comments

Chairman Baden introduced and welcomed new member, Debra Kossar, from Town of Hurley.

The Chairman reminded the Board that if a referral is being reviewed and they sit on the local board that referred it, they must recuse themselves from speaking on that project.

9. ZONING REFERRALS – See Separate Zoning Minutes

10. ADJOURNMENT

Director Doyle asked the Board to think about anything we aren't working on that we should. Some topics: Farmworker Housing, Affordable Housing, Traffic Safety, Sustainability Issues: climate change for older structures. Other topics that come up at your local board. He asked the Board to send suggestions in by email for discussion.

Chairman Baden stated he wanted to call an Executive Committee meeting before next month's meeting, April 2 at 6:00PM in the Planning office, current officers and past chairs regarding the topics or tasks that we should take on as a board.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10PM. All were in favor.