

ULSTER COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Minutes – Wednesday, October 7, 2026

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

The Executive Committee Did Not Meet

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

1. **ROLL CALL – Present:** R. Pecora, C. Boylan, D. Kossar, G. Marion, C. Lanzetta, L. Nolan, D. Boggess, E. VanDeMark, J. Brown, B. Walsh, C. Valianti, T. Tango, F. Almquist, V. Messner, M. Baden, M. Collier, D. Doyle, R. Leibowitz, B. Samuelson **Absent:** D. Onderdonk **Excused:** S. Cuciti, H. Hansen, C. Villegas, V. McLaughlin **Guests:** Chris Parisio, Charles Gottlieb, Matthew Bialecki, Anne Quinn, Fonda Rothblatt

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The September minutes were approved. Motion by Mr. Brown, seconded by Ms. Messner. All were in favor.

3. **EDUCATION & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

Mr. Samuelson stated Orange County Planning's seminar on BESS has changed the date to the 28th and will be held at the SUNY Orange Middletown Campus. He noted that Dutchess County has training coming up on SEQRA, date and location to be announced. The Chairman made note of the 4-hour training requirement per year. He added that New York Planning Federation (NYPF) has free offerings on their website and noted we are members of NYPF. The Chairman stated that members should send proof of training to the Planning office and any hours over 4 per year roll to the next year. Chairman Baden informed the Board that members receive a minimum of 15 minutes credit per board meeting attended.

4. **COMMUNITY REPORTS**

Ms. Messner stated that Ellenville has been awarded the NY Plays grant for just under \$500,000 for improvements to the Berme Road playground.

Chairman Baden stated he saw on the Town of Rochester's Facebook page that they were awarded the Bronze Certification for Climate Smart Communities. He added that information on how to get certified is available online if a community is interested.

5. **PLANNING BOARD REPORTS**

- a. Chairperson Report

Chairman Baden informed the Board that the Legislature has proposed Local Law 20 of 2026 to change the Planning Department section of Ulster County Charter. Mr. Baden stated the Charter Commission last convened in 2022 and they issued a report in September of 2023 that contained their recommendation of how the Planning Director's position would be filled. He explained that as originally written, our Board would receive resumes, conduct interviews and submit three names to the County Executive who would select from that list. The Charter's 2023 recommendation changed the wording to "at least" three names for consideration. The Legislative Committees in 2023 further changed the wording to the Board could submit three names, and the County Executive could choose one of those or their own person, which our Board protested, and the change did not pass.

Chairman Baden stated the new proposal seems to mirror the Legislature's previous version. He made note of a handout in the Board's folders to review. The Chairman stated that one of the Director's responsibilities is to support the board and so we would like to have some role in the selection process for the Director.

The Chairman noted there is another change we proposed that says if they Board doesn't have a quorum, the County Planning Director can offer comments so as to not hold up a referred project. Mr. Doyle explained that in other counties the Planning Board is advisory to the Commissioner of Planning who has control of GML239-l & m. Chairman Baden added that it would be a good process to have.

Mr. Doyle noted that the public hearing is a good opportunity to make comment. Chairman Baden stated he will bring a letter to the next meeting and noted that he has a conflict on Tuesday nights and offered that someone else could attend the Legislature's meeting in his place.

Ms. Pecora wanted to add to the history behind this topic and stated we are unique in the Charter with the structure of this Board as compared with other counties. She noted years ago she and other Board members met with the Charter Commission, who wanted the County Executive to name the Planning Director as with other department heads. The County Attorney at that time, Bea Havranek, gave her opinion that this board was more qualified to review resumes and make recommendations for the director, which was accepted by the Commission. Ms. Pecora added that the County Executive appoints and can remove any other department head except for Planning.

The Chairman stated he wanted to convene a special meeting of the Executive Committee to discuss this matter and come back to the Board with a draft letter at the November meeting, which will be presented to the Legislature.

b. Committee Reports

The Chairman stated he will be appointing a nominating committee at the next meeting for a slate of officers for 2027 and the Board will vote on it at our December meeting.

6. PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORTS

a. Financial Report

Mr. Doyle stated the County's draft budget was released by the County Executive and the Planning Department's budget remains the same as submitted. The budget will be considered by the Legislature at their December meeting. He added that the County Executive has recommended adding \$200,000 to the Planning budget for food security due to SNAP cuts at the Federal level.

b. Environmental Notice Bulletin & Grant Opportunities

Mr. Samuelson stated he received an email regarding the UC Revolving Loan Fund that is run through the Department of Economic Development and offered to send the email to the Board.

Ms. Lanzetta stated that notice went out for the Greenway McHenry grants for community planning that afford an opportunity for local towns to get help with their planning issues.

c. Communications – No Member Comments

d. Director/Staff Reports

Mr. Doyle stated we made a presentation to the Environmental Committee on the Brownfield program. These are properties that the County hasn't foreclosed on because any owner in the chain of title is responsible for clean-up. Mr. Doyle noted that we do not take the property but do an analysis to see what needs to be done. We are working through the first 18 properties now and are looking to the State for solutions.

7. SPECIAL TOPICS DISCUSSION

- Capital Program

Mr. Doyle informed the Board that when the County submits the operating budget it also submits the Capital Program budget –which includes roads, parks, buildings, trails etc. This Board is responsible to comment, determine the order that projects should be done and make note of anything that is missing. The program reflects the real needs of the county. Mr. Doyle stated that an email was sent to the Board that included the charge under the Administrative Code and a link to the Capital Program. He requested the Board submit comments by December 1st. The Chairman added that the Board reviews the document and sends their comments, the Executive Committee puts together a recommendation and that is sent to the County Executive and Legislature.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Matthew Bialecki, principal architect of Bialecki Architects spoke about the Huguenot Historical Society of New Paltz' proposed Visitor's Center. He had handouts for the board. Mr. Bialecki noted the proposal is in the Huguenot Historical area adding that a fundamental issue is the amount of open space proposed to be developed, over sixty-three percent, and he urged the Board to call for a Positive Declaration under SEQRA. He proposed a simple revision to eliminate the connector road, move the building to Broadhead and save the context of the open space. In addition, eliminate or reduce parking to half of the 85 proposed spaces.

Anne Quinn a resident of Huguenot Street spoke about the Visitor Center and made note of a petition with 200 signatures against the proposed project. She stated it is too big and does not fit. She also made note of the fragile ecosystem of the area.

Fonda Rothblatt lives on Huguenot Street and wants what is best for the historical area of Huguenot Street. Preserve the integrity of the area by asking for an environmental impact statement for the oldest street in the country. The size and location of the building, parking, traffic and road interconnections are concerns.

Chris Parisio, owner of Rosendale Flooring Company in Rosendale, was in attendance regarding his warehouse project on this evening's agenda. He described his project and interaction with the Town of Rosendale and site plan approval.

9. ZONING REFERRALS – See Separate Zoning Minutes

Town of Rosendale referral #2026-130 Rosendale Flooring Warehouse was reviewed first.

Village of New Paltz referral #2026-123 Historic Huguenot Society was reviewed second. The applicant gave a presentation on the project prior to the review.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00PM. All were in favor.