

Planning Board Meeting Minutes  
Village of Ballston Spa  
Held on January 8, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chairman O'Connor

Chairman present: Rory O'Connor

Members present: John Battenfield, Scott Burlingame, Peter Martin, Mike McNamara,  
Attorney Stefanie Bitter

Members absent: None

Chairman O'Connor recognized the new Alternate Members of the Planning Board, Mathew Ercoline and Robert Bush, Jr. He also reminded members to sign up for the Zoning and Planning Conference on February 5. He said the new alternate members need to complete the payroll packet they received. Also for new members, on the New York State website there is a link to a basic Planning Board introduction, and he recommends they check that. He stated that all members must sign the oath with Teri.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman O'Connor requested a motion to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2024 meeting. A motion was made by Member Martin, seconded by Member Battenfield to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2024 meeting. Member McNamara abstained. The motion was approved.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Larry Heid/Speckled Pig – 17 Washington Street (Tax ID #216.32-1-29). Applicant wishes to convert an auto repair shop into a craft distillery with a full service kitchen. Chairman O'Connor stated that for full disclosure, a pre-application meeting was held on November 25 with the applicant. This is something that he has added to the Planning Board procedures, and he believes that the Zoning Board will follow and do the same thing. The meeting was held with myself, the applicant, and the Building Inspector. We went over what they wanted to do and we discussed things at length regarding the items that they were concerned about.

Mr. Heid introduced himself and his partner, R.J. Two families own the Speckled Pig and they acquired this property recently. He stated that they are looking to open a distillery making craft beer, whiskey, and bourbon and to add a full service kitchen which will serve an elevated pub menu. The building currently is about 1900 square feet. They are not making any additions to the exterior walls. They would like to open the facility up to youth and non-profit organizations to hold their meetings.

Chairman O'Connor asked what the condition of the interior is like. Mr. Heid said it was in very good shape. There is no crumbling flooring or anything like that. It has been completely cleaned out. He noted that the metal roof and foundation are also in good condition. Chairman O'Connor asked what the sign dimensions will be. Mr. Heid replied around 5' x 3', which will not require a variance.

Member McNamara stated that he toured the facility today with Mr. Heid. He said it was clean inside. He has questions regarding the rules on grease traps, specifically if they need one out front. Mr. Heid said he would contact the Building Inspector. Member McNamara asked if there would be a grade change. Mr. Heid said they will raise the elevation and continue the sidewalk from the Speckled Pig. Mr. Heid said the entry level at grade will meet all ADA requirements. Member McNamara said he is not looking to send this to engineering for a plan. The lot area is less than 5,000 feet. Will you need to get a ZBA variance for that? The Building Inspector stated that it is pre-existing, so there is no need for a variance.

Chairman O'Connor asked if there will be a back entrance. Mr. Heid replied yes. Member Burlingame asked if there will be lights at the back or side door. Mr. Heid replied there will be lights at the back and along the side. Member McNamara suggested they need put in a gutter system to keep the sidewalk clean, especially with ice coming off the metal roof. Member Burlingame asked if they need a turn radius outside the back door. Building Inspector LaFountain stated that they looked at that and there is enough room. Mr. Heid said that after the plans were drawn up, they are thinking about putting in a side door rather than putting it in the back. Member Martin asked where the dumpsters are on the plan. Mr. Heid stated that they are shown on the revised plan, which he will send us. Member Martin also asked about snow removal. Mr. Heid said it will be placed against the side wall. Member Martin said everything looks great. Member McNamara asked if they plan on using the patio in the winter. Mr. Heid replied no. Member McNamara stated if you remove all the tables and chairs, they could stack the snow in there.

Chairman O'Connor stated that this application needs to go the County for review. Once Mr. Heid sends us the revised plan, we can send it to the County. Member Burlingame stated that before he sends the revised plan, check the egress on the other side of the building because the dumpster might work there. Chairman O'Connor stated that the revised plan needs to show the side lighting and a system that prevents the

snow from sliding off. Mr. Heid said that they were considering adding gutters for protection anyway. Member McNamara asked if the Village can designate a space for parking in the back. Chairman O'Connor stated that he needs to refer to counsel on that. Attorney Bitter said she will look into it. Chairman O'Connor asked if the handicap space will be at the front door. Mr. Heid replied yes, it is very close to street level and they will have to cut in a curb. Chairman O'Connor stated what they have to calculate is the incline that exists to the curb cut and whether it is adequate for a wheelchair. He said we will look into getting the Village to determine what would have to be done to get you a handicap parking place on the Village street. We need the applicant to get us the elevation and what is to going to end up being in terms of pitch so that we can have that reviewed by the engineer to be sure it is adequate. Chairman O'Connor doesn't see that as a major problem, but he does think it needs to be clarified.

Member McNamara stated that on question #9 on the SEQR form, the applicant answered no, but should have answered yes. Mr. Heid replied that he would change it on the executed copy of the SEQR.

Member Burlingame made a motion to declare this application a Type 2 action for SEQR per Section 16.17.5 C2 which is replacement, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of the structure or facility, in kind, on the same site. The motion was seconded by Member Martin. The motion passed.

Chairman O'Connor told Mr. Heid to get us a site plan with the lights shown by next week so we can send it to the County for their review. Mr. Heid said he would do that.

Member Burlingame asked if the planters out front are removeable. Mr. Heid said they are on casters.

Chairman O'Connor opened Public Comment

Larry Woolbright (11 Heritage Place) – He thinks they will do a great job and make it better than it was for years. He thinks they have done a great service to this Village in renovations in the past.

Liz Kormos (89 Hyde Blvd.) – She is happy to see it will be improved. She asked if there are any off street parking requirements. Chairman O'Connor stated that it is considered a restaurant. Member Burlingame stated that if a restaurant is less than 3,000 square feet, no required off-street spaces are required. She said that since the Mayor is here, I assumed that you discussed the appointments and reappointments to the Planning Board with the Mayor. Chairman O'Connor asked what that had to do with this application. Ms. Kormos said that it has nothing to do with this application, but this is Public Comment and I would like to comment. Chairman O'Connor said OK. She

said what she finds distressing is that you replaced a person that was an alternate and you did not let them know that they were not going to be reappointed.

Karen Avenarius (92 Milton Ave) – She is concerned about what is expected for certain people as it relates to handicap parking. It seems there are different rules for different people, and that is a problem.

Chairman O'Connor closed Public Comment

Attorney Bitter stated that the Board cannot make approval contingent on the County response. Chairman O'Connor stated that we cannot vote on this until we get a response back from the County. We need to get the updated site plan before we can submit this to the County.

A motion was made to adjourn at 7:35pm by Member Battenfield and seconded by Member Martin. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Barner  
Building Department Clerk