



Town of New Paltz Planning Board
 Regular Meeting of Monday, April 26, 2021
 Live-streamed/Recorded Remotely at 7:00 PM
 Available on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/3Bkbq6KPID4>
APPROVED MINUTES

Present: Adele Ruger, Chair
 Lyle Nolan, Deputy Chair
 Matthew DiDonna
 Amanda Gotto
 Jennifer Welles

Absent: Amy Cohen
 Jane Schanberg
 David Brownstein, Town Board Liaison
 Stacy Delarede, Building Inspector

Also Present: Richard Golden, Planning Board Attorney
 Andy Willingham, Town Engineer
 Alana Sawchuk, Planning and Zoning Secretary

Welcome

7:03

Chair Ruger opens the regularly scheduled April 26, 2021 meeting of the Planning Board.

Administrative Business

- *Approval of April 12, 2021 Minutes*

Mr. DiDonna moves to approve the April 12, 2021 Minutes. Mr. Nolan seconds. 5 ayes. Motion carries.

- *Town Board Updates*

Mr. David Brownstein is absent.

Public Comment(s)

7:04-7:08

Mr. Kenji Tierney reads a letter that was submitted by the Environmental Conservation Board (EnCB) regarding their site visit to PB21-40, 525 Albany Post Road:

“The building site is proposed in the middle of a ca. 6-acre shrubland/young forest habitat adjoining the 640+ acre “Stony Kill Woods” forest area. Shrubland and young forest are early successional habitats that provide abundant cover and food sources for many species of wildlife. These early successional habitats have significantly declined across the Northeast as many areas of former farmland have reverted to mature forest, leading to declining populations of previously common species. The New York State Wildlife Action Plan¹ identifies many shrubland and young forest species among the listed “Species of Greatest Conservation Need” (SGCN), which are species that are experiencing some level of population decline in New York, have identified threats that may put them in jeopardy, and need conservation actions to maintain stable population levels or sustain recovery. DEC’s 2019 Habitat Summary Report for New Paltz² identifies 13 SGCN species (birds and reptiles) associated with shrubland and young forest habitat in New Paltz, including American Woodcock, which we believe to have observed during the site visit. In addition to wildlife value, the rapid vegetation growth in young forests is associated with higher rates of Carbon sequestration per area relative to mature forests. We recommend conservation of the shrubland habitat to the greatest extent possible.

Near the middle of the shrubland we observed a small wetland with saturated soils, pockets of standing water, and wetland vegetation including sedges and beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*). In addition, a small drainage is present, possibly a remnant agricultural ditch. The drainage had some standing water but was not flowing at the time of the visit. We recommend that the Wetlands Inspector visit the site to determine whether these features fall under the jurisdiction of Chapter 139.

The Town Open Space Plan recommends the use of “conservation design” in new subdivisions in the Butternut/Canaan Foothills area. From a conservation standpoint, we recommend locating the proposed house in what is currently the pasture (perhaps near the pasture/shrubland edge) to minimize habitat loss and fragmentation. We believe this could be done while minimizing scenic impacts from the road as the property owner has artfully demonstrated with the primary residence. While this option might reduce or eliminate potential agricultural use of the pasture/field, there is no guarantee that future owners of the property will wish to continue any agricultural activity. An added benefit of a smaller disturbance footprint may be avoidance of the requirement for a SWPPP. Alternatively, locating the house closer to the pasture border within the shrubland might still permit some preservation of the shrubland.”

No further comments were submitted by the public nor was in anyone else in attendance to speak.

Application Review

1. Subdivision

PB21-40: 525 Albany Post Road

Applicant: Mark Albrecht

Zoning District: A-1.5

SBL: 86.3-1-6.200

7:08-7:41

Mr. Mark Albrecht and Mr. Robert James are in attendance to speak regarding this application.

Mr. Andy Willingham reviews the drafted EAF (Environmental Assessment Form) Part 2 with Board members. All questions have been marked, “No, or small impact may occur.” No Board members express any disagreement with Part 2 as drafted.

Attorney Golden advises members that they must now declare a Positive or Negative Declaration or postpone the Determination of Significance should the Board decide they need more information in order to decide.

Chair Ruger moves to determine PB21-40, 525 Albany Post Road, a Negative Declaration. Deputy Chair Nolan seconds.

Ms. Gotto expresses concern regarding items that were put forth by the EnCB regarding the habitat on site and existent wildlife.

Deputy Chair Nolan feels that given the Board's site visit and determination from the Wetlands Inspector, that members have all the information necessary to move forward with this application.

Attorney Golden speaks to the specifics of what the Planning Board is currently considering. When an applicant seeks Subdivision approval, they can also request approval from the Planning Board for location of a future home or structure on the newly created lot.

Mr. Albrecht speaks regarding his application. With respect to the suggestions provided by the EnCB, when his land was first subdivided almost 20 years ago, he was a proponent of limiting construction on the property. Mr. Albrecht and his wife participated in cultivating the open space, however it was known that they could build a house on that lot if they wished. Mr. Albrecht plans to disturb 2.5 acres on a 19-acre lot, which is a proportion that is extremely generous to the environment. The applicant confirms that he would like approval of the submitted Site Plan detailing the future location of the home.

Ms. Gotto asks if the applicant is intending to sell the new lot.

Mr. Albrecht explains that he does not know what will ultimately happen, but there is a farmer with a 5-year lease on some of the land.

Ms. Gotto asks if the applicant would own both houses.

Mr. Albrecht speaks to not knowing precisely what will happen but confirms that the property cannot be subdivided again after this.

5 ayes. Motion to make a Negative Declaration carries.

Attorney Golden explains that Department of Health approval is not needed before the subdivision approval. Things like that are typically conditioned in the Resolution. Mr. Willingham does not believe it's required due to lot size.

Mr. Nolan moves to set the Public Hearing for May 10, 2021 at 7 PM. Mr. DiDonna seconds. Ms. Gotto will be absent.

Attorney Golden notes that the plat requires all information required by the code. The Board will need to agree to waive all those aspects that are being requested at the next meeting.

5 ayes. Motion to set the Public Hearing carries.

Adjournment

Mr. Nolan moves to adjourn the April 26, 2021 meeting. Mr. DiDonna seconds. 5 ayes. The meeting adjourns at 7:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Alana Sawchuk
Planning and Zoning Secretary