

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

7:00 p.m., Thursday, January 9th 2025

In person, HSC Conference Room, Canton / on Zoom

I. Call to Order

- a. **Roll Call and Determination of a Quorum.** K. O’Neil called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. A roll call was held; a quorum was established.

	NAME	ABSENT	PRESENT		NAME	ABSENT	PRESENT
1.	Ken Bellor		X		Staff:		
2.	Kim Bisonette		X		Jason Pfothenauer		X
3.	Don Chambers		X		Preston Santimaw		X
4.	Priscilla Darling		X		Guests:		
5.	Daniel Fay		X		Bob Beckstead – NNY Newspapers		X (on zoom)
6.	Margaret Finen		X		John MacArthur – Mechanical engineer/project manager. Confluent		X (on zoom)
7.	Laura Foster	X			Brooks Washburn – PetaWatt Holdings representative		X
8.	Ed Fuhr	X					
9.	Andy Gilbert (Secretary)		X				
10.	Dan Huntley		X				
11.	Margaret Mauch		X				
12.	Robin McClellan		X				
13.	Kitty O’Neil (Chair)		X				
14.	Julia Rose (Vice-Chair)		X				
15.	Cherie Shatraw		X				
	Total		13/15				

- b. **Adoption of the Agenda.** O’Neil asked if there were changes to the agenda. Pfothenauer stated that staff wanted to add two full reviews. A Site Plan Review for a substation in the Town of Massena and a Special Use Permit for a wedding venue in the Town of Potsdam. Gilbert also stated he had a policy recommendation. The modified agenda was unanimously adopted.

- c. **Adoption of the December 12th Meeting Minutes.**

The minutes were unanimously adopted (Rose/Shatraw).

II. Public Forum

None.

III. Project Reviews

a. **Referrals Returned Pursuant to MOU.** Pfothenhauer highlighted details for projects listed in the MOU list. There were no questions.

b. **Full Reviews.**

Massena (T) – Site Plan Review for a greenhouse facility located on Dennison Road. Santimaw presented the full review. The applicant also spoke to new project developments. Board members, staff, and the applicants discussed:

- MacArthur: Summarizing the waste water management plan –
 - There will be solid and liquid waste generated from this facility;
 - The solid waste will not be as significant as the liquid waste;
 - There are currently no plans to wash the crops; equipment wash water will be produced as waste;
 - Liquid waste would be produced from cleaning hydroponic ponds.
- Bellow: Has this been reviewed by Arconic?
- MacArthur: This has been sent to them, but they have not responded.
- Bellow: Some at Arconic were not aware of this project, communication should improve between Arconic and the developers of this project.
- MacArthur: Arconic has undergone recent staff changes. Communication has suffered as a result. Would be happy to work with them.
- Bellow: The Massena Town Planning Board will meet January 16th. Will this be on the agenda?
- MacArthur: Yes, they will look at SEQR review.
- Bellow: The 4” water line was put in to handle Dennison Road customer’s water demands. Confluent needs to ensure that water taken from that line to the greenhouse does not affect those people.
- O’Neil: Confluent should submit a water use and waste management plan.
- MacArthur: That is in process, the facility will also have a domestic water tank that will act as a buffer from water drawn from the Town’s water supply. Also, the Massena Code Enforcement Officer said they would review this as an agricultural building, so it is not subject to the construction portion of the building code.
- Chambers: What are you going to do to address storm water drainage?
- MacArthur: Storm water will follow the existing drainage pattern.
- Chambers: The current drainage capacity may not be sufficient.
- MacArthur: In the process of developing a SWPPP.
- Chambers: That should be depicted on the site plan.
- O’Neil: Should that be added as a condition?
- Chambers: Yes.
- Bisonette: The main concern is that the drainage could damage the road.
- MacArthur: Two areas on the site plan will be included in the SWPPP. They have discussed storm water with Arconic.
- McClellan: Why can’t you use the storm water as process water?
- MacArthur: The proximity to other industrial uses could contaminate the water.
- McClellan: Yet you will use their process water?
- MacArthur: Their process water is of better quality.

- McClellan: If a customer requires crop washing, how much water does that use?
- MacArthur: That is not included in the estimates. Most likely 1,000 – 2,000 gallons/day.
- McClellan: Will you need a SPDES permit?
- MacArthur: This project will be operating under Arconic’s permit.
- McClellan: Why do you want an exemption from the building code?
- MacArthur: Greenhouses are a gray area in the building code. If this facility is subject to the building code, it may require redundant structures/requirements.
- Bisonette: Is this an agricultural use?
- Santimaw: The NYS definition does not include “place of employment where agricultural products are processed.”
- Finen: How many employees will be at this facility at any one time? Will parking be sufficient for that?
- MacArthur: 20-25 maximum. Parking will not be an issue. Also, this project has been through SEQR before, the Town is reevaluating to determine if the changes that were made since 2021 are significant enough to do another SEQR review.
- Rose: SEQR is still useful.

The Board voted unanimously to approve this project with the staff recommended and additional conditions and non-binding recommendations (Gilbert/Chambers).

Massena (T): Site Plan Review for a substation on County Route 42. Pfothenhauer presented the project review. Board members, staff, and the applicant discussed:

- McClellan: This project would most likely not meet use variance standards.
- O’Neil: Did the cryptocurrency law include crypto-mining as a permitted use in the industrial zone?
- Santimaw: Yes.
- Huntley: Does a substation fit into the definition of manufacturing?
- Pfothenhauer: That may be best to let the Town Zoning Board of Appeals decide.
- Bisonette: Utilities are separate from commercial uses.
- Washburn: The owner is acting as a developer in this case. They are offering a property that is already cleared to a potential data center business. Also, this will be a private substation with an agreement to sell power, it does not fit the definition of any permitted use because it has not been done before.
- Gilbert: Add a recommendation to permit electrical uses in the industrial zone.
- McClellan: The applicant could also do a planned industrial district as an alternative. Is there a timeframe on this project?
- Washburn: It is moving quickly.

The board unanimously voted to approve the project with the staff recommendations and the additional non-binding recommendation (McClellan/Huntley).

Potsdam (T): Special Use Permit for a wedding venue located at 6527 State Highway 56. Pfothenhauer presented the project review. Board members discussed:

- Gilbert: The applicant will need to clear the parking area and address its parking capacity.
- Huntley: The applicant should also address general safety and security features such as emergency exits, water and sewer capacity, and structural weight capacity.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the project with the staff recommendations and the additional non-binding recommendation (Gilbert/McClellan).

IV. Planning Board Training Session

The Board agreed to postpone the training session to the February meeting.

V. Reports

- a. **Executive Committee.** O’Neil reported that the executive committee did not meet and instead set the agenda over email due to the holidays.
- b. **Board of Legislators.** Fay reported:
 - The BOL elected a new chair and vice-chair;
 - The County is looking to address school attendance;
 - The BOL want to look to the Attorney General’s office to lower gas prices in the County.
- c. **Highway Department.** Chambers reported:
 - The Highway Department has been busy with snow and ice management;
 - They are planning projects for the upcoming construction year.
- d. **State of the County Roundtable.**
None.
- e. **Staff Report.** Pfothenhauer and Santimaw reported:
 - The Planning Office will be hiring a new Fiscal Officer
 - SLC Transit ridership reached a record high in 2024: 160,000 trips!
 - The Fair Housing Task Force is hosting a webinar on Tuesday, January 21st from noon – 1 pm that will focus on how to handle housing complaints. Anyone who is interested can email the planning office for the zoom link.

VI. Other Items

- a. **Correspondence.**
None.
- b. **Announcements.**

None.

c. **2025 Work Program**

- Pfothenhauer: The Environmental Management Council is interested in a joint meeting with the County Planning Board to discuss the new DEC freshwater wetland regulations. The meeting is planned for April.

The Board voted unanimously to adopt the 2025 Work Program (McClellan/Gilbert).

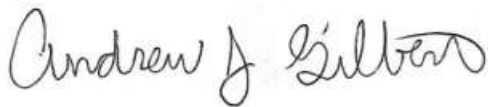
d. **Next meeting dates.**

- i. Executive Committee: Thursday, January 30th 2025 at 4:00 pm over zoom
- ii. Planning Board: Thursday, February 13th 2025 at 7:00 pm in the Second Floor Conference Room located in the HSC building, 80 State Highway 310, Canton NY.

VII. Adjourn

- a. The meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm (Fay/Bisonette).

Respectfully Submitted,



Andy Gilbert, Secretary

Minutes prepared by P. Santimaw