

**TOWN OF ULYSSES  
PLANNING BOARD  
MEEING MINUTES  
Tuesday, 3/01/2016  
7:00 p.m.**

*Approved: 4/5/16*

**Present:** Chairman David Blake; board members David Diaz, Rebecca Schneider, David Tyler, John Wertis, and board alternate Sara Worden. Environmental Planner Darby Kiley; and Town Board Liaison Richard Goldman.

**Public in Attendance:** Glen Chin, Noy Chansavath-Davis, Brian Davis, and Dr. Brice Smith.

**Call to Order:** 7:00 p.m.

**Agenda Review; Minutes Review (2/16/2016)**

Mr. Wertis MADE the MOTION to approve the February 16, 2016 meeting minutes, and Ms. Schneider SECONDED the MOTION. The motion was unanimously carried, 5-0.

**Privilege of the Floor:** No one from the public offered comment.

**Sketch Plan:** Consideration of Sketch Plan/Site Plan approval for the construction of a 1,600 +/- square foot single-family residence located at 1286 Taughannock Blvd, Tax Parcel Number 27.-4-5, CD-Conservation District within the Slope Overlay Area and Unique Natural Area. David and Mary Bruder, owners; Jason K Demarest, Architect/Agent.

Mr. Davis said he and Ms. Chansavath-Davis represent architect Jason Demarest. Mr. Davis said the property is located in the Conservation District and in a Unique Natural Area. The architecture firm is trying to follow the zoning guidelines as closely as they can but still take advantage of the uniqueness of the property. The property's previous owner had clear-cut it, removing a significant number of trees. The current owners now wish to use part of the clear-cut land as a pasture and fence it off, he said.

Mr. Blake asked about water runoff. Mr. Davis said the location of the constructed home is located in a small knoll toward the middle of the property. A little bit of drainage is located on the south side of the house, he said, and it is not very wet on the home's north side. A gravel drive is planned for the property, and though a septic system is planned, it has not been fully designed, he said. Asked by Mr. Tyler if they have been in contact with the County Health Department in regard to the septic system, Mr. Davis said no.

Ms. Schneider asked how many horses the applicants wished to house at their property, to which Mr. Davis said one or two. Ms. Schneider noted no buffer on the property's southern end and asked the architects if they could speak with the applicants about putting in a forested buffer. Mr.

Davis said yes. Ms. Schneider said returning part of the property back to forest would be of some relief to her.

Mr. Wertis said the property presents challenges in clearing it up. When the trees were hauled out – in November 2013, Ms. Kiley added – the brush was left in piles across the property. Machinery will likely be involved in clearing up the property, he said. Horses moving around on the steep slope will disturb the soil, he said.

Ms. Schneider said she had similar concerns, adding that horses on the steep slope add a whole other level of concern. The goal of the Conservation Zone and steep slope area was to keep it vegetated, she said. Does the Town have figures as to the percentage of property to be left in vegetation, or wider buffers in the steep slope area? she asked. Mr. Tyler asked if the owners planned to remove tree stumps from the property. In response, Mr. Davis said he did not think the applicants intended to remove the stumps since they do not want to disturb the property further.

Mr. Wertis noted a depression on the property that had water in it. When there are heavy rains, he said, there would be more water. A section of the property is eroded, he added.

Ms. Schneider said the creek on the property's north side would swell during extreme rainfalls, which are happening more frequently. The driveway is located near the creek and will eventually erode. The applicants may want to consider a wider setback from the stream, she said. Mr. Tyler said the lot is currently fairly stable because of the existing root structure from the felled trees. However, in 10 to 15 years, land stabilization would be a real concern as the root system dies. He asked how the Town would handle the project had the property not been clear-cut. Ms. Kiley said the applicants could have done the whole plan, but the Planning Board would have to give permission to remove trees for the house and the driveway. Zoning allows for building at the site, but the Planning Board would have discouraged taking down six acres of trees, she said.

Mr. Diaz suggested the Planning Board ask that there be additional planting made in the low slope. Maybe shrub material would be enough to uphold soil, he said. Ms. Schneider said the entire property has a 50-foot elevation change and shallow soil. On a wet day, with two horses, the property will be an ugly mud slope. It is not a good area for horses, she said. She suggested islands of tree vegetation scattered throughout the slope to help stabilize the land.

Asked about the project's timeline, Mr. Davis said they are hoping to get permitted to build by spring and begin during the summer and fall. Plans include a future barn – noted in the documents by Ms. Worden – which would require separate consideration from the Planning Board.

Mr. Wertis asked about electricity, pointing out the northbound electric line from the property toward Garrett Road. Mr. Davis explained there is a pole located on the neighbor's property to the north, and the applicants hope to link into that electric line. He confirmed additional trees would need to be removed to link into the northern electric line. The removal of additional trees would also need approval, Ms. Schneider said, adding that the zoning does not allow the removal of trees without Planning Board approval. Further, the location of the home requires clearing two

more patches of trees, and the electric line will require even more removal. Is the Planning Board giving up completely in preventing further clear-cutting on the property? she asked. This is the one chance the Board has in voicing concerns and making suggestions.

Mr. Wertis asked why not bring the electricity up the driveway. Mr. Davis said it was not a possibility; the applicants had initially wanted the home to be totally off the grid but had then spoken with the neighbor to run electric to the new home. If the neighbor does not grant permission, the only other option is to be off the grid and to install solar panels, Mr. Davis said. The house will be used year-round, he added. Mr. Wertis reiterated some of the Planning Board's questions concerning the property, including the septic tank, electric lines and use of the slope.

A conversation ensued about bringing in a specialist – a landscape architect, ag specialist, forester, or a representative of Tompkins County Soil and Water – to review the property. Mr. Wertis suggested reaching out to Soil and Water, which Ms. Schneider thought was a good idea.

Mr. Diaz said the driveway appears to be sited on the steepest area of the property and near a stream. Why was that site chosen? he asked. Mr. Davis said the existing drive leads to the start of the new, planned drive. Also, the more shallow part of the grade is right in the middle of the site, he said. Asked further about erosion from the creek, Mr. Davis said they plan to revegetate the area. In response, Mr. Diaz said the Planning Board needs some comprehensive planting plan to deal with the likely erosion in many spots on the property. The horses compound the erosion concerns, and the property would require substantial planting, he said. Terracing and cribbing were two other options suggested to improve the stability.

Mr. Davis said the architects have not spent a lot of time with the applicants, save for several meetings. Mr. Wertis suggested communicating the Planning Board's concerns to the applicants, who could then confer with experts on the matter of steep slope stability.

Mr. Wertis MADE the MOTION to open the sketch plan review, and Ms. Schneider SECONDED the MOTION. The motion was unanimously carried, 5-0.

The Planning Board proceeded with the sketch plan checklist, reaching a consensus to request more information on 6 d. regarding a stormwater management plan. Moving on to the site plan checklist, Planning Board members reached a consensus to request more information on items number 4, 5, and 6, regarding existing vegetation and proposed landscaping, existing and proposed overhead and underground utilities, and location and design of all water and sewage facilities, respectively.

Mr. Tyler said he would also like to know the flow of the on-site water well. He also advised the architects of the significant number of trees near Route 89. Over time, the applicants may lose their lake view as the trees continue to grow.

Ms. Kiley referenced Town Zoning law, which discourages the removal of trees to improve lake views. She also said the planned horses are intended as therapy animals for the applicant's daughter.

Mr. Davis said they would relay the Planning Board's concerns to the applicants. Both Mr. Davis and Ms. Chansavath-Davis left the meeting at 7:49 p.m.

**Sketch Plan:** Consideration of Sketch Plan/Site Plan approval for the construction of a 2,000 +/- square foot single-family residence and Bailiwick Lodge addition and bathroom installation at the Girl Scout camp property, located at 1419 Taughannock Blvd, Tax Parcel Number 18.-2-1, PR-Park/Recreation District. Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways, owner; Glen Chin, property director/agent.

Mr. Wertis MADE the MOTION to open the sketch plan, and Mr. Blake SECONDED the MOTION. The motion was unanimously carried, 5-0.

Mr. Chin, the property director for the Girl Scout camp, said the camp is seeking site plan approval for two components of Camp Comstock: a ranger home located in the middle of the property and an addition and bathroom build at the existing Bailiwick Lodge. The existing ranger home would be demolished and replaced, he said. The new ranger home – at 2,000 square feet – would be located about 50 feet off the right-of-way with Route 89, he said. Its location is important to the security of the property. Access to water is driving everything currently proposed, he said. Four wells were dug; two were successful. The modular home would host a site manager and family who would reside there year-round. A septic system has been designed and approved by the County Health Department, he said. As to the Bailiwick Lodge, an existing stone ice shed would be converted into a bathroom with two toilets and a sink. A new connecting structure would bridge the Lodge with the bathroom facilities.

Asked by Ms. Schneider how many girls would be sleeping there, Mr. Chin said the Lodge could sleep 16 girls upstairs. They would mostly spend weekends there. Any variance requirements? Ms. Schneider asked. In response, Ms. Kiley said the total land size is 67 acres, and the proposed builds would not come close to encroaching on setbacks; the land is not located in the Conservation Zone or in a Unique Natural Area, she added.

In response to a question from Mr. Tyler, Mr. Chin said the modular ranger home is currently being constructed off-site, with an expected completion date sometime in June or July. The ranger house is a log home with a metal roof and is being designed to blend into the property as much as possible. Asked about the projects' stormwater plan, Mr. Chin said, at the ranger home, the grading plan has swales designed around the home to divert water. The proposed grade shows a swale with a highpoint on the west side of the house, he said. On the subject of additional tree planting, Mr. Chin said it is important to not lose any trees on this project and to retain the wooded area as much as possible.

Conversation then turned to the septic system for the Bailiwick Lodge. Mr. Chin said the camp could probably house up to 130 children all summer long, when accounting for the camp's elevated cabins at the shore. Ms. Schneider asked if 16 children could be housed in the Bailiwick Lodge every night, to which Mr. Chan said yes but they will not. The Lodge is used more as a recreational building because it is further away from other facilities. The camp is remote, has views of the lake, and is used by membership for family weekends. The camp hopes to continue with family weekends without outdoor latrines being the only bathroom facilities. With the

updated lodge, the camp will be usable year-round. Ms. Schneider said she was interested in the area's steep slope and how the septic system would be integrated into the property. Sixteen children sleeping in the lodge every night raises concerns about the capacity of the septic system. Mr. Chin said the lodge would not be housing 16 children every evening; the lodge is not used that way during the summer. In the winter time, unless there is a week break, children only utilize the lodge on the weekends, he said.

Mr. Blake turned the Planning Board's attention to the site plan review checklist for both phases of the camp project. Ms. Schneider said she was confused by the application materials, which she felt put the Planning Board at a disadvantage.

Ms. Kiley said an ag data statement is not needed for this project. The Town received the application, fee, and a written description and scope of work. Topographical maps are missing; there are no Unique Natural Areas on the site or close streams located near the two proposed projects. No stormwater plan is needed.

Mr. Diaz said he expected to see a map of the entire camp site, which would have provided needed context. The smaller maps included within the documents do not provide that context. The Planning Board should always have that information, he said.

Board members reached a consensus that they needed more information on the planned septic system for the Bailiwick Lodge. Ms. Kiley said that while she understands Ms. Schneider's concerns about the septic design, the Planning Board does not have any say in the approval of that. Ms. Schneider said the Board does not have enough information on the septic system. If the septic is relocated on the property, where would it go? she asked. Mr. Chin restated that the ranger station's septic design has been approved by the County Health Department, but the Bailiwick Lodge septic has not been designed yet.

Mr. Diaz felt the Planning Board would be waiving part of the checklist – item 2 F, location and design of all water and sewer facilities, specifically – since it does not have information on the Bailiwick Lodge septic system. Ms. Kiley said the Planning Board needs information on landscaping and the Bailiwick septic. Mr. Chin asked if the Planning Board wants to see a map of grading for the whole 67 acres. Ms. Schneider requested a full topography map, with project sites A and B and any nearby streams highlighted. Additional information requested by the Board included placement of replanted trees and a County-Health approved design for the Bailiwick septic system.

Mr. Chin left the meeting at 8:44 p.m.

### **Discussion/recommendation to Town Board regarding solar regulations**

At this time, Dr. Brice Smith of SUNY Cortland presented to the Board possible future solar sites within the Town. Smith's presentation – "Town of Ulysses: Preliminary Assessment of Likely Near-term Solar Interconnection Limits" – based possible solar locations off of existing utility infrastructure and data from NYSEG and gave a general overview of the utility limitations that prevent large-scale solar development not only in the Town but statewide as well. Dr. Smith

said existing electric lines in Ulysses are amenable to smaller-sized systems. The Town is primarily powered by the Cayuga Medical Center Circuit 540, with much of the circuit's capacity already under development, he said. Using NYSEG data, Dr. Smith said the line currently has 2,931 kilowatts of production and is capable of holding 3,500 kilowatts. Right now, with current electric infrastructure, the Town of Ulysses could fit 4 or 5 more solar systems of similar size to the Sciencenter's recently approved project on Jacksonville and Agard roads. Upgrades to the electric system are not likely inside of 10 years, he said.

Dr. Smith's presentation concluded at 9:27 p.m.

### **Town Board Liaison Report**

Mr. Goldman said the Town Board is working through a proposal to change the highway superintendent and town clerk posts to appointed positions rather than elected. The Town will likely have a referendum on that soon, he said.

### **Agenda items for upcoming meeting**

Mr. Kiley said the Garrison-Crannell project has been resubmitted, and the plans have changed a bit. It will be on the agenda for the April 5 meeting. The project will need a 5-foot setback variance from the BZA, which will review the request at its March 16 meeting, she said.

Lastly, Mr. Wertis returned to the subject of the Bailiwick Lodge. He said he was unclear on whether it is within the Planning Board's purview to require the camp to replace trees. Ms. Kiley said it is not within the Board's purview, since the camp is within Park/Recreation District. However, the Planning Board could require plantings on the Bruder property as part of approval, she said.

Mr. Diaz MADE the MOTION to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Blake SECONDED the MOTION. The motion was unanimously carried, 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Louis A. DiPietro II on March 9, 2016.