

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

A hearing before the Village of Hudson Falls Planning Board was held on February 27, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Attendees: David Hutchinson, Chairman
Lynn Leland, Board Member
Diane Santa Croce, Board Member
Robyn Cronin, Board Member
Mark Schachner, Special Counsel

Absent: Deborah Breeyear, Board Member
Richard Wagner, Board Member
Joelle Timms, Board Member

Public Present: 10 members of public present

Chairman Hutchinson called the meeting to order at 6:13 pm.

The first item on the agenda is a site plan review application submitted by William Nikas on behalf of Griffin Hall LLC, 116 Oak Street, Hudson Falls, NY 12839 for proposed use of 119 Main Street, Hudson Falls, NY 12839 as a restaurant/deli/bar/event space.

William Nikas addressed the board and explained he is trying to save a historic building. The idea of a restaurant is general idea, he is not sure if it would be a deli but would have something to do with sourcing the food out of the agricultural businesses in Washington County and perhaps have some craft beer as well. Chairman Hutchinson mentioned that the building being part of a mixed-use zone is why this application is in front of the Planning Board. Mr. Nikas explained the building is currently vacant but was a furniture retail space and before that a carpet retail space. Chairman Hutchinson asked if it would be a change of use. Mr. Nikas stated, it has always fallen under a retail space. Special Counsel, Attorney Schachner stated the key is, is it an allowed and permitted use of the zone and his understanding is that it is. Code Enforcement officer Will Celeste stated it is an allowed use in that zone. Mr. Nikas went on to say the building is currently a shell and needs some structural work as it was built in the late 1800's.

A brief discussion ensued involving the integrity and history of the building.

Board Member Cronin asked if the adjoining parking lot belonged to that building. Mr. Nikas stated it is not a part of that building. However, parking in our code Section 215-45, for existing non-residential buildings, are exempt from off street parking requirements, most businesses in the village use main street for parking. The parking will factor into the decision of what type of restaurant to have there. A high occupancy or low occupancy one such as a deli.

Board Member Leland asked how long the process would take to re-do and open the new business. Mr. Nikas explained with the amount of work to be done and in today's market with the high costs of material and labor it would probably be next year before it was completed.

Upon motion made by Board Member Cronin, seconded by Board Member Leland and carried, the meeting was opened to public comment.

Joseph Schwenk of 110 Main Street addressed the board with a concern about parking. On his street this past year they put up signs for 15-minute parking, so how could people park there for a restaurant? He does not feel a restaurant is practical as we already have two restaurants near the old courthouse. Board Member Cronin asked if he ran a business out of 100 Main Street and Mr. Schwenk said it is just residential. A brief discussion ensued.

Pam Whiting of 6 Dixon Court, Queensbury NY, addressed the board and stated she owned the apartment building right next door to 119 Main Street. Her concern was also for parking as there are several uses listed on the application. They own an off-street parking lot to the right of the building and although they have 'No Parking' signs in their lot, they are taking people out of there all the time. There are twelve apartments in her building.

Matthew Nelson of 11 Mechanic Street told the board he feels the proposal seems a bit vague as an event center or space for weddings or reunions, so parking is his first issue. Mr. Nelson went on to say the property is

currently listed as other/storage, would this be re-classified as something else. Mr. Nikas's understanding is the assessor reclassified it as it's current use. A brief discussion ensued regarding assessment. Special Counsel, Attorney Schachner informed him these items discussed were a decision for the assessor, not the property owner nor the board. Mr. Nelson asked if there would be any grant funding coming from the immediate area or partnership from the Village? Mr. Nikas explained money has been applied for in a grant, ReStore NY. Mr. Nelson replied, a state grant. Mr. Nelson stated his main concern would be parking and asked if a tenant was interested in operating out of the building at this point in time. Mr. Nikas informed him he did not have interest this far out from completion. His intention is not to compete with other restaurants in the area but to market from local agricultural businesses in Washington County, so the goal is to look for something different.

Diane Yole of 53 Elm Street understands the parking concerns but given Mr. Nikas's history within the Village, everything he has done at 214 Main Street and everything he does for the village, he does things well and with good taste. She would love to see the building saved and feels Mr. Nikas's reputation proceeds him as far as what he will do to make the building nice.

Chairman Hutchinson stated they have heard a number of comments about parking, there has been public parking added up the road which has made things better but certainly there are parking issues in the village. He feels Mr. Nikas said the appropriate thing in that the use needs to lean towards what would be available for parking. Mr. Nikas stated parking has always been an issue in the village for every business. He recalls The Strand having three to four hundred people for an event before the parking was placed on Locust Street. If you want to go to an event within a city or village such as the Civic Center, you may have to walk a half a mile to it. His plan is to build the operation as to what the parking availability is.

Joanne Davidson of 22 Kelly Ave stated she has season tickets to the hockey games, there were five thousand people at the hockey game and there is no parking for the Civic Center. Parking is an issue in all small communities. Mullen's has no parking; they do not own the parking lot next to them and they do a fine business. It is customary to not have a parking lot in a village or small city, street parking is normal. It would be an unreal expectation to demand for parking.

Roger Whiting of 6 Dixon Court, Queensbury NY said he owns the property behind the buildings down to Depot Street and asked if anything had been looked in to for grants or something to clean that up. Mr. Nikas informed him that he bought the property behind Griffin Hall down to Depot Street and he does have intention to clean that up in the Spring and that they could possibly work together. A brief discussion ensued.

Matthew Nelson of 11 Mechanic Street asked if Mr. Nikas had asked the owner of the parking lot adjacent to 119 Main, if they would be interested in leasing it to him. Mr. Nikas has approached the owner of the adjacent parking lot and has a standing offer to purchase it. The current owner is not interested in doing so at this time.

There being no further comment from the public and on a motion made from Board Member Cronin, seconded by Board Member Santa Croce, and carried, the public hearing was closed.

There being no further questions from the board, Special Counsel, Attorney Schachner reviewed with the board the environmental assessment form and the parameters the board should be paying attention to while responding to the questions presented them. Mr. Schachner reviewed the use and meaning of the form.

Special Counsel, Attorney Schachner reviewed and read aloud the questions, and the Board answered each of them stating no or small impact.

Upon motion made by Board Member Santa Croce , seconded by Chairman Hutchinson and carried it is

RESOLVED, after reviewing a full form EAF, the board has determined that the action does not present any adverse environmental impacts. The Board further determined that, based upon the foregoing, a negative declaration be issued.

AYES : Chairman Hutchinson, Board Members Cronin, Leland, and Santa Croce, .
NOES : N/A
ABSENT: Board Members Breeyear, Timms and Wagner

Chairman Hutchinson asked for a motion to approve the site plan review application in accordance with the applicable Village of Hudson Falls site plan review criteria;

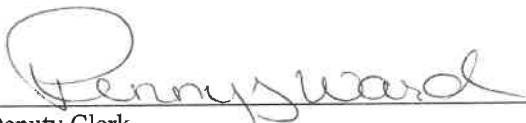
Upon motion made by Board Member Cronin, seconded by Board Member Santa Croce and carried,

AYES : Chairman Hutchinson, Board Members Cronin, Leland, and Santa Croce,
NOES : N/A
ABSENT: Board Members Breeyear, Timms and Wagner

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, to approve the Site Plan Review Application for 119 Main Street as submitted by William Nikas on behalf of Griffin Hall, LLC.

Upon motion by Board Member Santa Croce, seconded by Board Member Leland and carried the minutes of the February 6, 2023, Planning Board Meeting were approved as submitted.

There being no further business to come before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 6:43pm.


Deputy Clerk