

Village of Schuylerville**Planning Board
Minutes – Draft****April 16, 2007 – 6:30 p.m.**

Chairman Robert Foster called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Catherine Cicero called the roll: Chairman Robert Foster – present, Vice-Chair Jean Driscoll – present, Joan Alheim – present, Marshall Lee – present, Ronalee Myers – present, Alternate Nancy North – present, and Alternate John Allen – absent.

Approval of Minutes: Chairman Robert Foster said that the minutes of the February, March, and April 2 meetings would be approved at the May meeting.

Order of Business:

Chairman Foster reported that there were no agenda items scheduled for the meeting. He said that the Village Office has confirmed that a cell tower application has been picked up, which will probably be filed in time to begin review at the May 21st meeting.

Village Board Meeting:

Jean Driscoll said that she had attended the last Village Trustee meeting and reported to that Board. She said she hadn't realized that someone from the Planning Board was supposed to make a report each month.

Chairman Foster said that the Village Trustees meet the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. and asked for volunteers to rotate at each meeting.

Joan Alheim volunteered to go to the May 9th meeting.

Marshall Lee volunteered to go to the June meeting.

Ronalee Myers volunteered to go to the July 11th meeting.

The Board noted that the Village Trustees normally don't meet in August.

Chairman Foster volunteered to attend the September meeting.

Passage of Local Law:

Chairman Foster reported that Local Law #1 has gone through the approval process with the State and copies are now available in the Village Office for the Board members.

Door Keys:

Chairman Foster said that the Village is having difficulty adjusting the doors to the new swipe card system, but the hope is to have the system operable within the next several weeks.

Training:

No Board members, with the exception of Chairman Foster, were interested in going to the upcoming training in Syracuse. Several members inquired when the training at Hudson Valley in Troy would take place.

Presentation by Joe Finan:

Mr. Finan spoke at length about the National Park Service's concerns over telecommunication facility sitings within the view shed of many historically significant properties, such as the monument, the Battlefield, and the Schuyler House.

Mr. Finan related several discussions and correspondence he had had with Mayor Sherman regarding the possibility of siting a cell tower within the Village.

Mr. Finan said that the National Park Service is not against telecommunication technology, but is requesting a collaborative review process that will ensure integration of the technology without damage to the visual integrity of the historic value of the area. He explained the difference between collaborating with actual telecommunication carriers who are earnest about working within the community, versus speculators who are primarily interested in selling "vertical real estate" to several carriers and realizing the greatest profit margin.

Mr. Finan presented photos to the board that represented several ways carriers can disguise telecommunication antennae and related equipment. He also presented a "primer" of the way the review process should work.

Mr. Finan said that detailed studies should be presented on where coverage is needed and on the possibility of co-locating towers so they can relay signals or work together with shorter towers. He advised the Board to request propagation studies from any Applicant.

Mr. Finan said that he has spoken with Town of Saratoga Supervisor Tom Wood about working with the Towns of Stillwater, Saratoga, and possibly Easton to establish a regional plan for cell phone coverage. The areas to be covered could then be established, the high points could be determined, and the towers would be placed advantageously to serve the entire area. He believes that this approach will preserve the community character of the area.

He added that the Board should look at whether any proposed tower will be serving the area that it is sited in, or whether it is being situated to serve another area, such as Stillwater, for instance. He would like to see all the planning boards in the region get together to work with carriers to find the best site and fit for the communities being served...

In answer to a question from Chairman Foster, Mr. Finan explained that, in addition to a tower (which could be in the form of a silo, a church steeple, a water tower, a tall building, or other similar formation), the structure would require an equipment box in some sort of shelter, and a security fence. The tower would also need a power source and a fiber-optic line.

Mr. Finan advised the Board to take the review process slowly and thoroughly, and take a look at what review has already been done in the area; e.g., the Town of Saratoga.

Mr. Finan also suggested that the Village look at State-owned property, such as Lock 5, or municipal-owned property, that might accommodate a carrier. He emphasized that the Telecommunications Act does not refer to profits at all. Therefore, the Board should request that any proposals include alternatives even if they might be less profitable to the applicant.

In answer to a question from the Board, Mr. Finan explained that the Board cannot legally ask an applicant for studies outside the purview of the application. However, the Board can hire a consultant at the expense of the applicant to make recommendations. He noted that there are three levels of propagation studies within the Telecommunications Act and that the Board should ask for all three.

Finally, Mr. Finan advised that the Planning Board is in a unique position to have an opportunity to provide a model for other communities with historic significance. He said the Board should be very aware of the unique historic qualities of this area. He said that this is also an opportunity for the carriers to provide cell phone coverage without affecting the view shed and then marketing that success.

A discussion followed among the Board members who were concerned that the community has preconceived notions about a cell tower that hasn't been proposed to the Board as yet; no application is on file and the Board has not begun any review.

The Board members stated that their primary concern is with the preservation of the view shed surrounding many of the historically significant sites in the Village. Jean Driscoll read statements from the Village website which emphasized the Village's purpose to maintain the quality of such sites.

Mr. Finan related that Saratoga Town Supervisor Tom Wood has offered to write a letter to his colleagues in the Waterfront Revitalization Group regarding a regional approach to cell tower coverage. He noted that the next meeting for that group would be held on Tuesday, May 1st, at 7:30 at Burton Hall.

A discussion followed on the procedure to be used to bring in a consultant for the Planning Board to assist in the review process of the anticipated cell tower application.

A brief discussion followed on the establishment of a zoning board of appeals in the Village.

Chairman Foster concluded the meeting by saying that there is an opportunity for this Planning Board to play a thoughtful, responsible role in working with the Village to resolve a number of zoning issues. An example was made of abandoned property in the Village. Jim Miers commented from the audience that existing State property maintenance laws could be used to deal with those cases, but the Village Board of Trustees has chosen not to enforce them.

Old Business: None

Next Meeting: The next regular meeting will be held on May 21, 2007.

Joan Alheim made a motion, seconded by Jean Driscoll, to adjourn at 8:32 p.m.

Chairman Foster – aye, Jean Driscoll – aye, Joan Alheim – aye, Marshall Lee – aye, and
Ronalee Myers – aye. **Carried 5 – 0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cicero,
Secretary to the Planning Board