

MINUTES OF THE 445th MEETING
OTSEGO COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Meadows Office Building
Middlefield, NY

May 11, 2009
6:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order by R. Streek at 6:00 pm.
2. The following members were recorded as present: Ron Streek, Phil Durkin, Tom Clarke, Betty Ann Schwerd, Mark Babilonia, Dave Parker, and Flo Loomis. Jeff House and Scott Fickbohm were absent.
Also present were Terry Bliss and Psalm Wyckoff – staff.
Guests included: Jim Simpson, Butternuts and representatives of Verizon Wireless, Clifford Rohde, Attorney, and Tectonic Engineering.
3. Upon a motion by D. Parker, seconded by F. Loomis, and unanimously approved (7-0 vote), the minutes of the March 9, 2009 meeting were accepted as presented.
4. Report of Communications – D. Parker forwarded to the Planning Department a letter from the US Senate regarding energy, specifically waste to energy, which was signed by both New York State Senators. D. Parker is on the MOSA board and is active in promoting waste to energy solutions. Waste to energy facilities are evolving to low emissions. D. Parker believes that waste to energy with gasification to reduce ash waste is a better alternative to landfills. The GBB report was submitted to MOSA in March and includes some discussion of waste to energy. The report is available on www.mosainfo.org.
5. Report of Committees – J. House, Chair of the By-laws Committee reported to T. Bliss via telephone that he will have recommendations for the Board to consider in June. The recommendations will include some house keeping issues as well as reordering the agenda and providing for privilege of the floor.

The Chairman of the Board decided to move out of the order on the agenda to address items 8a. and 8b.

8.a. Planner Psalm Wyckoff presented referral #21-09-01 from the Town of Oneonta ZBA for an application by Verizon Wireless for a use variance to allow placement of a cell tower near Browne Street. The board reviewed the aerial photographs showing the property location, as well as simulation photographs of the most impacted visual receptors. The site plan was reviewed briefly (the site plan review application will be referred by the Planning Board in the future). Representatives of Verizon Wireless presented the viewshed map and the propagation map that shows the area of cellular coverage provided by the proposed tower. Discussion included the zoning district (industrial), coverage in the vicinity of the west end of Oneonta, and topographic challenges to cellular service. Upon a motion by T. Clark, seconded by B. Schwerd, and unanimously approved (7-0 vote), the board approved the application. Subsequent discussion included: the project had no county wide impact and the county residents and emergency services agencies will be better served. The Verizon Wireless representatives were asked: how good is Otsego County with regard to service. The representatives were not aware of any county-wide assessment. They pointed out that towers are expensive and colocation on existing towers is cost effective.

8.a. Planner Psalm Wyckoff presented referral #23-09-02 from the Otego Village Board for a proposal to amend the village zoning code. Discussion included the housekeeping aspect of many of the changes. The board inquired if the change in the definition of the “industrial zone” to “light industrial zone” was related to the change in the zoning of the old supermarket property that was referred earlier this year. In addition, discussion included the alternative method of notification for property owners adjacent to a proposed use variance or site plan approval. Upon a motion by F. Loomis, seconded by P. Durkin, and unanimously approved (7-0 vote), the board approved the application.

6.a The board discussed the concepts of energy authority, energy plans, and climate action plans. The board felt that the subject of an energy authority, brought to the board for consideration in November, is a concept included in

item 6.b. on the agenda. Upon a motion by D. Parker, seconded by M. Babilonia, and unanimously approved (7-0 vote), the board decided to strike 6.a. from the agenda as a recurring county planning board topic of discussion.

6.b. The resolutions proposed by M. Babilonia and D. Parker have been presented to the Solid Waste and Environmental Concerns Committee for consideration. It was not on the April agenda but will appear on the agenda for May 22nd. D. Parker and S. Fickbolm routinely attend the SWECC meetings. M. Babilonia will also attend. The board decided to table further discussion until after the SWECC reviews and provide comment on the two proposed resolutions.

6.c. The NYPA Meadows Energy Audit report has been received and will be presented to the Public Works committee on May 21st at 9:45 at the County Highway Department. Other topics of discussion will be potential funding sources, such as stimulus funds, and other innovative projects such as the digester at the Cooperstown Holstein farm. The energy efficiency measures recommended in the NYPA report have payback periods that are too long without some serious funding support.

Further discussion included the potential defeasement of MOSA debt. Discussion included alternative financial plans that have been presented to the MOSA board, reports by the media contain financial figures that are not “real”, practical problems with defeasement related to the reserve funds, and the failure of the consultant(s) to fully explore shipment by rail.

6.d There was no other old business brought by members

7.a. There was no new business brought by members.

9. T. Bliss, Planning Director, reported on the local government training sessions held in March and April. Approximately 50 people attended each session. He also reported on the various projects that the planning department is working on, including telecommunications, transportation, housing, and agricultural districts.

The terms of M. Babilonia, D. Parker and T. Clarke are up at the end of June. T. Bliss will offer names of individuals interested in appointment, including incumbents, to the County Board Chairman. T. Bliss asked each member to consider their interest in renewed terms and to contact him via phone or email.

10a. Upon a motion by P. Durkin, seconded by B. Schwerd, and unanimously approved (7-0 vote) the meeting was adjourned at 7:12 pm. The next meeting will be June 8th, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,
Psalm Wyckoff, Planner