

**Economic Development, Historic Preservation
& Environmental Conservation Committee**

MINUTES
November 4, 2022
8:30 am

Members Present:

- Jaime Puccioni, Supervisor
- Laura Robertson, Town Planner
- Clark Henry, Assistant Planner
- Alaina Finan, Town Attorney
- Matthew Yetto, Superintendent, Water, Sewer & Engineering (Virtual)
- Dart Strayer, Chairman of the Conservation Advisory Council
- Kevin Walsh, Chairman of Planning Board
- Denis Brennan, Town Historian
- Susan Polsinelli, Confidential Assistant to the Supervisor

a. Presentation: David Hogenkamp

Mr. Hogenkamp gave the Board a presentation on Schenectady Landbank’s goals and tools for addressing vacant homes in Schenectady County and proposed a partnership with the Town of Niskayuna to help address vacant & zombie homes within Town limits. This partnership would be under a memorandum of understanding and assist the Town and Building Department to turn vacant properties over more rapidly in neighborhoods so there was less blight.

b. Public Concerns

There were no public concerns today.

c. Minutes

- **October 7, 2022**

Mr. Walsh made a motion to approve the minutes and it was seconded by Chairman Della Ratta. The minutes were approved unanimously.

d. Resolutions / Finance Committee

1. A Resolution appointing an intern to the Planning and Building Departments (Jack Connelly)

Ms. Robertson noted she was very excited to have a masters student in Planning as an intern and said this was within her budget.

2. A Resolution entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with Schenectady County for the purposes of collaboration to address vacant and abandoned properties within the Town of Niskayuna

47 Ms. Robertson stated this was discussed by Mr. Hogenkamp and she recommended moving forward
 48 with the memorandum – it was something the Supervisors office, the legal department and the
 49 Planning/Building Department had all been working on.
 50

51 3. An Introduction of Local Law “X” amending Chapter 139 Article III Vacant Building
 52 Registration and a call for a public hearing on the amendments
 53

54 Ms. Robertson stated this attached local law was a draft of what was needed to bring the recently
 55 adopted vacant building registration code into compliance with NYS and the Landbank process for
 56 moving forward with foreclosure on vacant buildings. She recommended moving forward with the
 57 changes.
 58

59 **4. Planning Board**

60 Mr. Walsh gave updates on Planning Board projects. He highlighted the renovations for Stewarts which
 61 will be going to the ZBA for approval, the Empire Drive Subdivision drainage plan, the Raizada Mart
 62 addition, and Broken Inn outdoor seating going to public hearing. He discussed the Van Antwerp Rd
 63 Subdivision site plan changes that Momentive that will be going to ZBA for façade sign approval and
 64 the Trinity Baptist Church are returning for discussion. Mr. Walsh noted that there will be 2 new
 65 discussions. 1748 Union St has proposed a mixed use building on the site and 3413 State Street is
 66 requesting a tenant change for a new smoke shop.
 67

68 5. **Zoning Board** – There are 2 cases for ZBA in November.
 69

70 **6. Grants Update**

71 Ms. Robertson stated she was able to purchase the LED lights with the \$5,000 grant from NYSERDA.
 72 She updated the committee on the plans for the construction for the crosswalks at St. Joseph’s and Union
 73 Streets. Ms. Robertson included the notification signs that will be posted to notify Town residents that
 74 the parking lot will no longer exist on crosswalk are installed. She noted it will direct residents to go to
 75 the Zenner parking lot to park and connect to the bike path there.
 76

77 **7. Complete Streets**

78 Ms. Robertson discussed with the Committee that the CSC will be reviewing the Niskayuna Central
 79 School District upgrades and advocating for more accessible and safe routes for walkability and biking.
 80

81 **8. Tree Council**

82 Ms. Robertson stated the Tree Council finished the first draft of the Street Tree Mater Plan and is ready
 83 to have it reviewed by their consultant. The Big Tree Hunt was successful with 10+ entries and the
 84 results will be posted on the website and certificates given to the winners for each category.
 85

86 **9. Conservation Advisory Council**

87
 88 Ms. Robertson stated the CAC is reviewing projects for the Planning Board. Ms. Robertson noted that
 89 the council needs members but she has 2 potential candidates.
 90

91 **10. Climate Smart Community Task Force**

92 Ms. Robertson stated that the task force continues to work hard. She noted that on November 9 there
93 will be an alternative fuel vehicle expo. It will highlight other alternatives to electricity and gas for
94 freight vehicles. She noted she would be attending and invited water and sewer and highways.
95

96 **11. Architectural Review Board**

97 Mr. Henry noted that the ARB continues to review projects. They are reviewing the Raizada Mart on
98 Union Street presently.
99

100 **12. Comprehensive Plan Committee**

101 Mr. Strayer stated that the committee is continuing to meet and are working on creating a survey to
102 gather information from residents on what they feel is most important about the Town. This includes
103 the strengths, weaknesses and what makes each neighborhoods work.
104

105 **13. Building Department / Enforcement**

106 Mr. Henry stated that the Building Department continues to be very busy but permits have started to
107 level out compared to the numbers of 2021, but storm water and neighbor complaints continue to be
108 high.
109

110 **14. Planning**

111 Ms. Robertson stated she requested a quote for the Consaul Street sidewalk. Her hope is to tie its
112 construction into another project. She stated that there is opportunity for some online training as well as
113 in person trainings coming up for the Board members. She added that she included the draft 2023
114 meeting calendar for review.
115

116 **15. Legal**

117
118 Ms. Finan stated that a Town building/zoning compliance case that was in the court for years was finally
119 resolved. She has not heard back yet on the Article 78s pending with the Town.
120

121 **16. Historical**

122 Mr. Brennan stated the Preservation Committee met for the first time. Ms. Robertson discussed with
123 him the process of sending him permits for demolitions of buildings that are older than 50 years old.
124

125 **17. Adjournment**

126 Chairman Della Ratta made a motion to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Mr. Walsh. The
127 meeting was adjourned at 9:34 am.