

Official Minutes
City of Niagara Falls Planning Board
02-23-22

A regular meeting of the City of Niagara Falls Planning Board was held on Wednesday, February 23rd at 6:00PM in Council Chambers, City Hall, 745 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY.

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tony Palmer
Joseph Giaquinto
Charles MacDougall
Timothy Polka
Joyce Williams
Ken Nossavage

STAFF PRESENT:

Eric Cooper, Director of Planning
Josh Greene, Environmental Planner
Sarina Deacon, Planning Clerk

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Joseph Sarkees
Schurron Cowart

ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Melanie Dorn
Michael Carson
Marvin Wilmoth
Paul Lang

At 6:00PM, MR. COOPER called the meeting to order.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – FOR THIS MEETING

MR. COOPER requested that the Board reorganization be moved up in front of the Public Participation section of the agenda.

A motion to make the requested change was made by MR. GIAQUINTO and seconded by MR. POLKA

With no further discussion, a vote was called and approved unanimously.

A motion to approve the agenda as revised was made by MR. GIAQUINTO and seconded by MR. POLKA.

MOTION: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

BOARD REORGANIZATION

MR. COOPER asked the Planning Board to nominate a Chairperson. MR. MACDOUGALL nominated MR. PALMER. MR. POLKA seconded the nomination. With no further nominations or discussions, a vote was called.

MOTION: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Tony Palmer was elected as Chairperson of the Planning Board.

Official Minutes
City of Niagara Falls Planning Board
02-23-22

MR. COOPER asked the Planning Board to nominate a Vice Chairperson. MR. POLKA nominated MR. MACDOUGALL. MR. GIAQUINTO seconded the nomination. With no further nominations or discussions, a vote was called.

MOTION: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Charles MacDougall was elected as Vice Chairperson of the Planning Board.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 2021-12-29

A motion to approve the minutes was made by MR. GIAQUINTO and seconded by MR. DALLAVIA.

MOTION: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

ACTION ITEMS

1. Level Two Site Plan Review: Generation Development Group LLC for Metropolis Properties Management LLC, owner of property 515 6th Street (159.30-1-1), is seeking approval for proposed reuse and renovation of the St. Mary's Hospital and the development of accessory parking lots.

Marvin Wilmoth, the managing principal of Generation Development Group, spoke. MR. WILMOTH stated that Generation Development Group focuses on the redevelopment of communities designed to improve the quality of life for the residents that they serve and the surrounding communities. MR. WILMOTH introduced Paul Lang, the project lead architect for the company.

MR. WILMOTH explained they were proposing the adaptive reuse of the Mount St. Mary's Hospital at 515 6th Street. MR. WILMOTH stated that there were four separate parcels.

MR. WILMOTH stated the project would bring about \$40 million in economic development to the South End of Niagara Falls. MR. WILMOTH stated the company's plan was to submit for building permits before summer 2022.

Paul Lang explained that the property was a former nursing home, hospital and a sanitarium in the past. MR. LANG stated the building was a historic property. MR. LANG stated the company would like to restore the property to how it used to look. MR. LANG stated the building would be mostly residential, with space available to rent. MR. LANG spoke on the parking situation. He explained there was an existing parking lot to the west of the site. MR. LANG explained that there were perks to having the property be a historic one that would help utilize for more additional parking. MR. LANG explained the company was within the parameters of New York State.

MR. LANG stated they need one variance for one side lot in order to make one double side lane drive. MR. LANG stated they could not achieve the 10 foot buffer due to only having 7 feet.

Official Minutes
City of Niagara Falls Planning Board
02-23-22

MR. COOPER spoke to clarify that it was not a variance that the company needed. MR. COOPER explained the Planning Board was being asked to waive the buffer and it was stated in the conditions.

MR. LANG asked if the Planning Board had any questions and that he would be happy to address them.

MR. WILMOTH added that there would be energy efficient lighting and energy efficient appliances. MR. WILMOTH stated they had been conversations with the school board and nearby hospital about the need for housing for hospital employees, teachers and frontline workers. MR. WILMOTH emphasized that the company was trying to provide housing for Niagara Falls residents.

MR. MACDOUGALL asked what the construction timeline was. MR. WILMOTH stated the goal to submit for permits was in the summer of 2022 with construction starting in the 4th Quarter of 2022.

MR. DALLAVIA asked if the company was responsible for the work done at Silo City in Buffalo. MR. WILMOTH confirmed that they worked at Silo City. MR. WILMOTH explained that Silo City was a collection of Buffalo's grain silos that had been turned into a co-working space and artist enclave with an amount of \$65 million dollars of economic development.

MR. DALLAVIA applauded the work that the company had done at Silo City and stated that the Mount St. Mary's project would be good for the City of Niagara Falls.

MR. COOPER stated that New York State ESD provided a grant for the previous development and hopefully they would be willing to extend that to the Mount St. Mary's project so the city could make investments in the surrounding community between 5th and 8th streets.

CHAIRPERSON PALMER asked if the conditions had been provided and if they had been looked over. MR. WILMOTH stated they had been and the company was amenable with the conditions.

MR. COOPER stated he wanted to change two points in the conditions. MR. COOPER wanted to remove Condition Five since they were no comments from the Niagara Falls Water Board. Regarding Condition 2 Site Plan, MR. COOPER wanted to add and revise some of the dates.

CHAIRPERSON PALMER asked why there weren't any Bonds in the conditions. MR. COOPER answered that it was in Condition Eleven and then stated in was Condition Twelve because of a change in the numbering. CHAIRPERSON PALMER stated that it said "*no certificate of occupancy shall be issued*". MR. COOPER responded that phrase was taken directly from the Zoning Ordinance.

A motion to recommend approval with 13 conditions, was made by MR. GIAQUINTO and seconded by MR. DALLAVIA.

POLLED VOTE:

CHAIRPERSON PALMER:	Yes
MR. GIAQUINTO:	Yes
MR. MACDOUGALL:	Yes
MR. POLKA:	Yes
MS. WILLIAMS:	Yes

Official Minutes
City of Niagara Falls Planning Board
02-23-22

MR. DALLAVIA: Yes
MR. NOSSAVAGE: Yes

MOTION: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

2. Level Two Site Plan Review: Tilson Technology Management Inc. and Dish Wireless LLC for T-Mobile, owner of property at 621 10th Street (159.06-1-1.1/CT1), is seeking approval for proposed addition of telecommunication equipment to existing telecommunication facility.

Melanie Dorn, an associate at Tilson and a representative for Dish Wireless, spoke. MS. DORN explained that Dish was a new wireless carrier. MS. DORN explained that the project would bring Dish Wireless to the City of Niagara Falls. MS. DORN stated the company was applying for a Level Two Site Plan Review at 621 10th Street at Memorial Hospital. MS. DORN stated it was exempt from a Special Use permit.

MS. DORN explained that the project would contain nine panel antennas with three different sectors. Three different sector would receive an antenna and ancillary equipment so the antennas could operate. MS. DORN stated she had looked over the conditions and was satisfied with them. MS. DORN said she would be happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON PALMER asked if there were any questions.

A motion to recommend approval, with 5 conditions, was made by MR. GIAQUINTO and seconded by MR. MACDOUGALL.

POLLED VOTE:

CHAIRPERSON PALMER: Yes
MR. GIAQUINTO: Yes
MR. MACDOUGALL: Yes
MR. POLKA: Yes
MS. WILLIAMS: Yes
MR. DALLAVIA: Yes
MR. NOSSAVAGE: Yes

MOTION: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

3. Set Public Hearing Date: Arlene Jackson, owner of property at 1707 Virginia Avenue (SBL: 144.25-1-2), requests the abandonment of 72 ft. of the City owned Right-of-Way (Alley) that separates 1707 Virginia Avenue from 1716 Tennessee Avenue.

MR. COOPER asked if both Action Item Three and four could be handled together.

Action Item Four stated *“Set Public Hearing Date: Arlene Jackson, owner of property at 1707 Virginia Avenue (SBL: 144.25-1-2), requests the abandonment of 1,851 sq. ft. of the City owned Right-of-Way situated between 1707 Virginia Avenue and the street line.”*

Official Minutes
City of Niagara Falls Planning Board
02-23-22

CHAIRPERSON PALMER stated yes.

CHAIRPERSON PALMER stated the Planning Board was going to combine Action Items Three and four together as far as the public hearing went.

MR. COOPER suggested Wednesday, March 23rd given the other agenda items for the date versus holding a meeting for just the public hearing and would give the Planning Department adequate time to notice the public hearing.

CHAIRPERSON PALMER asked if anyone disagreed with Wednesday, March 23rd. Nobody had any objections.

A motion was made to approve the public hearing date was made by MISS. WILLIAMS and seconded by MR. POLKA.

POLLED VOTE:

CHAIRPERSON PALMER:	Yes
MR. GIAQUINTO:	Yes
MR. MACDOUGALL:	Yes
MR. POLKA:	Yes
MS. WILLIAMS:	Yes
MR. DALLAVIA:	Yes
MR. NOSSAVAGE:	Yes

MOTION: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

OLD BUSINESS:

MR. COOPER stated the Planning Board needed to choose a date for the first Planning Board meeting of April. MR. COOPER stated the Planning Board had decided to leave the date as TBD because of a conflict on April 6th as of December 2021. MR.COOPER stated he wanted to have a date picked and set. MR.COOPER suggested Tuesday, April 5th. There were no objections to the date.

A motion was made to set a Planning Board meeting for April 5th by MR. POLKA and seconded by MR. DALLAVIA.

MOTION: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

NEW BUSINESS:

PLANNING REPORT / COMMUNICATIONS:

MR. COOPER provided a written Planning Report for the board....

2/23/2022

Official Minutes
City of Niagara Falls Planning Board
02-23-22

Grace Celik is unfortunately no longer with us as she was offered her dream job. We appreciate all her hard work, and we will miss her.

My wife is pregnant and due in the next few weeks. At that point I will be out of the office for two weeks and then returning on a limited schedule.

Upcoming Projects:

Welch Avenue – National Grid Substation demolition and replacement. Expected on 3/23

9400 Niagara Falls Blvd – New ~90 Room Hotel. Expected on 3/23

7029 Niagara Falls Blvd – New car wash. Expected on 3/23. Variances and Niagara County Planning Board review is needed.

Planning Projects:

Harriet Tubman Statue – Working on a contract with the artist. Hopeful to have that approved by City Council ASAP.

Hyde Park Shoreline Improvements – BN Waterkeeper has applied for a grant to do stormwater improvements along a few locations at Hyde Park Lake. Hopeful that the grant will be successful.

Old Stone Chimney – Project will now cost more than initially expected and approved for design. Extra financing needs approval of City Council.

Greenway Connecting Trails Project – You may be aware the DOT held a public hearing for this project that would connect the off road multi-use trail at the I-190 to Buffalo/Cayuga Ave in LaSalle. DOT is moving forward and hopes to begin shortly. CNF needs to agree to maintenance.

DRI Projects – We've received contract docs back from NYS DOS for two projects which need review/approval. Finishing up work plan for the Small Project Grant Fund. No news on Blue Cardinal. Working with NFNHA on the environmental review for the mural projects.

LaSalle Business District Streetscape – Finalizing Bid Documents and budget for the improvements. Hope to have bid out this year.

LWRP – Will be establishing the WAC and releasing the RFP shortly.

Niagara County Brownfield Assessment – Niagara County received an EPA grant to assess the contamination status of various municipally owned properties throughout the County. We've identified some priority sites and are working with the county to begin the assessment process. Hopefully after the project is completed these sites may be more marketable due to incentives or they will be certified as clean for redevelopment.

USACE Gill Creek Flood Study – The Army Corp of Engineers is working on a review of the Gill Creek Floodplain. They believe there is the opportunity to remove some of these properties from the floodplain.

Official Minutes
City of Niagara Falls Planning Board
02-23-22

They hope to have the study done by the years end and we could then submit to FEMA for revised flood maps.

Bloomberg Ashpalt Art Grant – The chosen intersection is at the “Y”. They are working on a design and action plan for the community engagement. End of February they hope to have design and scope of the project.

Bird Scooters – BIRD scooters is hoping to enter into an agreement with the City to introduce electric scooters. The details of the agreement are still being worked out. Obviously there is concern about speed, time of use, location, parking, etc.

GObike – Working on improving the intersection of Lewiston Rd and Monteaagle/Chasm. They are working on public engagement right now. We are waiting on the results of their engagement.

Comprehensive Plan Update – It’s been 13 years since the comp plan was updated. It is past due for a review. We are working on finding funding to assist with this large project. The PB will be largely involved as this project moves forward.

MR. MACDOUGALL asked if there were any upcoming trainings. MR. COOPER said he would look into it.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made my MR. POLKA and seconded by MR. MACDOUGALL

The meeting adjourned at 6:36pm.