

MEETING MINUTES

JEFFERSON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

**Jefferson County Office Building, 175 Arsenal St.
2nd Floor Conference Room**

September 30, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lisa L'Huillier, Vice-Chair, Neil Katzman, John Stano, Jean Waterbury, Richad Nuijens, John Stinson, Randy Lake.

STAFF PRESENT: Hartley Bonisteel-Schweitzer- Director of Planning
Andy Nevin, Senior Planner
Sam Wilson, Community Development Coordinator
Emerald Macilvennie, Typist

PUBLIC PRESENT: Dave Lamora- Dodge Bay Art Works, LLC

CALL TO ORDER AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM: Lisa L'Huillier opened the meeting at 4:02 p.m. and stated that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE August 26, 2025 MEETING MINUTES: The motion was made by Neil Katzman, seconded by Jean Waterbury, and carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS: Lisa L'Huillier asked if there were any communications. There were none.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (OTHER THAN AGENDA ITEMS): Lisa L'Huillier asked if there were any public comments (other than on agenda items). There were none.

NEW BUSINESS: Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer introduced herself to the Board members as the New Director of Jefferson County Planning. Andy Nevin reports that there is no other new business to share.

A. General Municipal Law, Section 239m Referrals:

1. Cape Vincent (T) Dodge Bay Art Works LLC, Site Plan Review, T CV 1 – 25

Sam presented this project to the Board, displaying the locator map, aerial photos, site photos, and site plan. He explained that this project is being reviewed due to its proximity to New York State Route 12E. The applicant is proposing an art gallery in an existing building.

He discussed County/State related matters:

A Jefferson County Building Permit will be needed.

A New York State Department of Transportation Highway Work Permit will be required for the proposed driveway connection to New York Route 12E

The project is within 500 feet of a New York State Certified Agricultural District; therefore, an Agricultural Data Statement is required.

Locally related issues discussed:

The site plan should show the location of the private septic system.

2. Cape Vincent (T) Dodge Bay Art Works LLC, Area Variance, T CV 1a – 25

Sam presented this project to the Board, displaying the locator map, aerial photos, site photos, and site plan. He explained that this project is being reviewed due to its proximity to New York State Route 12E. The applicant is proposing an art gallery in an existing building that does not meet the front yard setback.

There were no County/State related matters.

Locally related issues discussed:

The local board should consider and weigh the New York State Town Law five tests when deciding on an area variance request.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of local concern only with comments stated above for projects 1 & 2, was made by Neil Katzman, seconded by John Stano, and carried unanimously.

3. Black River (V) Village Zoning Law Amendment, V BR 1 - 25

Sam presented this project to the Board. He shared the locator map, aerial photos, site photos, and the site plan. The Village is proposing to adopt a Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Law.

He discussed County/State related matters:

New York State Law requires all zoning amendments to be consistent with a Comprehensive Plan. According to our records, the Village's most recent plan is the Community Visioning and Strategic Development Plan from 2008. The local board should ensure this amendment aligns with that plan and reflects the Village's long-term vision regarding locations of battery energy storage systems.

There were no locally related issues discussed.

Jean Waterbury asked if this was going to be a stand-alone law or if it would be adopted into the zoning law. Sam answered that this will be adopted into the zoning law.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of approval based upon the positive impacts that Battery Energy Storage regulations would have on the health, safety, and welfare of the Village residents and neighboring communities, was made by Neil Katzman, seconded by Richard Nuijens. Randy Lake recused himself from voting on this project, all others were in favor.

4. LeRay (T), Charge Smart EV, Site Plan Review T Le 4 – 25

Andy presented this project to the Board, displaying the locator map, aerial photos, site photos, and site plan. He explained that this project is being reviewed due to its proximity to US Route 11. The applicant is proposing to install 6 EV charging stations at the existing Candlewood Suites Hotel.

There were no County/State related matters identified.

There were no locally related issues discussed.

Andy noted that the Jefferson County Planning Department is in process of adding projects of this nature to an exemption list as they do not raise specific County/State/ or Local concerns.

5. Lyme (T) Jason Corbin, Special Use Permit, T Ly 3 – 25

Sam presented this project to the Board, displaying the locator map, aerial photos, site photos, and site plan. He explained that this project is being reviewed due to its proximity to County Route 8 and New York State Route 12E. The applicant is proposing to construct a 1,680 square foot building for the operation of a sign company.

He discussed County/State related matters:

A Jefferson County Building Permit will be required.

A Jefferson County Highway Permit will be required for proposed driveway connection to County Route 8.

As the project is within 500 feet of the Village of Chaumont, the Village must be notified of the public hearing as required by state law.

Locally related issues discussed:

The local board should ensure that there are an adequate number of parking spaces for the use.

The local board should coordinate with the applicant regarding the SEQR review process.

The local board should request that the private septic system be shown on the site plan.

Neil Katzman asked if the inactive existing well had the proper procedures performed according to DEC regulations for closure. Staff realized what looked like a well-head on the google street view image was not indeed a well location on-site as the area has municipal water.

6. Orleans (T) Northern Tier Contracting Inc, Site Plan Review T Or 4 – 25

Andy presented this project to the Board, displaying the locator map, aerial photos, site photos, and site plan. He explained that this project is being reviewed due to its proximity to New York State Route 411. The applicant is proposing a 600-square-foot office addition for HP Hood, LLC.

He discussed County/State related matters:

A Jefferson County Building Permit will be required.

Locally related issues discussed:

The property is currently split zoned, with the front portion designated as Residential and the rear portion as Industrial. The local board may wish to consider rezoning the Residential frontage to Industrial, to have the entire site within one zoning district.

Richard Nuijens asked if this is in the Water and Sewer District. Andy stated that it is in the Water District but they have a lagoon to the rear to treat onsite waste products.

7. Pamela (T) Karen Dodge, Area Variance, T Pa 5 - 25

Andy presented this project to the Board, displaying the locator map, aerial photos, site photos, and site plan. He explained that this project is being reviewed due to its proximity to New York State Route 342 and Interstate 81. The applicant is proposing to construct a 100 foot tall ground sign on the I-81 Corridor.

He discussed County/State related matters:

In reviewing the area variance request, the local board should consider and weigh the five tests for an area variance.

Due to proximity to the Wheeler Sack Army Airfield, and the Watertown International Airport, an FAA Form 7460-1 should be filed. Timing and use of the crane should also be documented during this process.

Locally related issues discussed:

The proposed 512 square-foot sign is much larger than the allowed 100 square foot maximum allowed for freestanding signs under the Town Zoning Law. The sign area should be reduced to meet the code. If it is not, an area variance will be required.

The Town Zoning Law states that “all signs shall be limited in wording and graphics to the name of the establishment and its principal service or purpose”. The proposed sign displays unleaded and diesel fuel prices; the Town should determine if this portion of the sign also requires use variance.

Randy Lake asked if the “collapse zone” had been taken into consideration with this site and surrounding parcels. Andy said he would check on this but based on the height and location it would not fall onto Interstate-81 or any nearby public roadways.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of local concern only with comments stated above, for projects 4-7, was made by Neil Katzman, seconded by Jean Waterbury, and carried unanimously.

8. Watertown (T) Davidson Ford, Site Plan Review, T Wa 7 - 25

Sam presented this project to the Board, displaying the locator map, aerial photos, site photos, and site plan. The project is being reviewed due to proximity to US Route 11. The applicant is proposing to construct an addition to an existing building.

He discussed County/State related matters:

A Jefferson County Building Permit will be required.

Since the total disturbance is equal to or greater than one acre, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will need to be completed and submitted to the Town engineer consistent with MS4 requirements.

Locally related issues discussed:

The applicant should be encouraged to complete a lot line adjustment so that all planned improvements are contained on the same parcel.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of local concern only with comments stated above, was made by Richard Nuijens, seconded by John Stano, and carried unanimously. Jean Waterbury recused herself from voting on this project, all other members were in favor.

B. Intergovernmental Reviews:

2025 – 4 The City of Watertown is applying for \$1,000,000 in funding through the Environmental Protection Agency Community Grant Program for the City of Watertown Water Treatment Improvements. Andy presented this to the board highlighting the goals for the future of water improvements for the City. Overall, this grant will aid in reducing costs long term, improving filtration, and introducing less chemicals into the City water supply. Vice Chair Lisa L'Huillier recommended sending a letter of support for this Intergovernmental Review.

Motion: A motion was made by Neil Katzman, and seconded by Richard Nuijens, in agreement with sending a letter of support from the County Planning Board for this project.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Andy Nevin mentioned the Annual Land Use Training that will be held on October 8th 2025 at JCC and encouraged the members to attend the course for 2 credit hours out of their annual required four hours of training. He also reminded the members that the October Planning Board meeting will be held at the Watertown International Airport and that a tour would be offered at 3:00. He made mention of the need to fill vacant positions on the board, for members whose terms are up and do not wish to be reappointed to the board. Two new members for the upcoming year will be Mitch Robinson and Joe McLaughlin. There is one more vacancy to fill.

Adjournment:

Richard Nuijens made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:40 pm, seconded by Neil Katzman.