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MEETING MINUTES

JEFFERSON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

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

September 29, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lisa Ruggiero, Chairperson, Neil Katzman, John Stano, Jean Waterbury, Richard Nuijens, Randy Lake, Mitch Robinson, Joe McLaughlin.

STAFF PRESENT: Alicia Dewey, Deputy Director
Andy Nevin, Senior Planner
Emerald Macilvennie, Secretary

PUBLIC PRESENT: Christina Schauss- Adams Liberty Solar

CALL TO ORDER AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM: Lisa Ruggiero opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m. and stated that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE August 25, 2026 MEETING MINUTES: The motion was made by Neil Katzman, seconded by John Stano, and carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS: Lisa Ruggiero asked if there were any communications. There were none.

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

NEW BUSINESS: Andy Nevin reports that there is no other new business to share.

A. General Municipal Law, Section 239m Referrals:

1. Watertown (T) - Drop Zone Storage, site plan review T Wa 8 - 26

Alicia presented this project to the Board, displaying the locator map, aerial photos, site photos, and site plan. She explained that this project is being reviewed due to its proximity to County Route 202. The applicant is proposing to construct two 30 x 180 foot self-storage buildings to add to the existing three on the parcel. This parcel is within the Neighborhood Commercial District.

She discussed County/State related matters:

A Jefferson County Building Permit will be required for the proposed additional storage buildings.

The local board should confirm that the existing access onto County Route 202 can accommodate the expansion.

Locally related issues discussed:

The local board should ensure that appropriate landscaping and screening are provided for the expanded development in accordance with §107-49 of the Town's zoning ordinance, including landscape buffers previously recommended by the County along CR 202 and the front and side yard boundaries. Landscaping should be designed to avoid interference with the existing NEXAMP easement.

The local board should require the applicant to demonstrate that stormwater runoff from the additional buildings and paved circulation areas will be adequately managed on-site and will not adversely affect adjacent properties or County drainage facilities along County Route 202.

If additional lighting is proposed, the local board should ensure that it is dark-sky compliant and appropriately directed and shielded to minimize impacts on adjacent properties and the County highway.

The local board should confirm that the expanded development does not interfere with the existing NEXAMP access easement.

The previous site plan indicated the required pedestrian walkway along CR 202. The local board should ensure the applicant provides previously approved walkway as required by § 107-50.

Lastly, the local board should ensure the site plan indicates all outdoor storage areas so that appropriate screening can be implemented.

Joe McLaughlin asked what happens with the landscaping that was a comment when this project was first submitted, that has not been addressed yet. Andy Nevin said that is a site plan enforcement issue and it is up to the Town to enforce requirements that were part of an approved site plan or review.

2. <u>Watertown (T) - Nick Morgia Site Plan Review for self storage, T Wa 9 - 26</u>

Alicia presented this project to the Board, displaying the locator map, aerial photos, site photos, and site plan. She explained that this project is being reviewed due to its proximity to County Route 60. The applicant is proposing to construct four 30 x 200 foot self-storage buildings. This parcel is within the Neighborhood Commercial District.

She discussed County/State related matters:

A Jefferson County Building Permit will be required for the proposed storage buildings.

Due to the proximity of the Watertown International Airport, an FAA Form 7460 should be filed, including or noting any potential crane use during construction.

Locally related issues discussed:

The local board should request a more detailed site plan, indicating the complete access drive and extent of the gravel vehicular areas to be shown on the site plan providing loading access to all the proposed storage buildings. The site plan should also include measurements between buildings, to ensure that adequate loading space, internal circulation and emergency vehicle access to all four storage buildings will be provided.

The local board should request the type and location of lighting fixtures be shown on the site plan. This will help identify if they will be dark-sky compliant and appropriately directed and shielded to minimize light spill onto adjacent properties, particularly neighboring residential properties and public roadways.

The local board should ensure that appropriate landscaping and screening are provided for the expanded development in accordance with §107-49 of the Town's zoning ordinance, including the applicable front and side yard buffer requirements. Particular consideration should be given to screening the proposed storage buildings from CR 60 and adjacent residential properties. Landscaping near the driveway should not obstruct sight distance.

The local board should require the applicant to demonstrate that stormwater runoff from the proposed buildings and associated driveway and circulation areas is adequately managed and does not adversely affect adjacent properties or stormwater along County Route 60 and NYS Route 12F.

The local board should ensure that the proposed freestanding sign complies with the Town's Sign Control Law, including applicable dimensional and setback requirements, and that its location does not obstruct sight distance at the driveway entrance.

Randy Lake asked if there is a standard for the Town to have a specific distance between storage buildings. Andy said not that we are aware of in the Town of Watertown's law.

3. Watertown (T) - Grindstone Group Site Plan Review for self storage, T Wa 10 - 26

Alicia presented this project to the Board, displaying the locator map, aerial photos, site photos, and site plan. She explained that this project is being reviewed due to its proximity to New York State Route 12F. The applicant is proposing to construct two additional self-storage buildings to an existing project that has been approved but not yet constructed. This parcel is within the Neighborhood Commercial District.

She discussed County/State related matters:

A Jefferson County Building Permit will be required for the proposed additional storage buildings.

Due to the proximity of the Watertown International Airport, an FAA Form 7460 should be filed, including or noting any potential crane use during construction.

The local board should confirm that the previously required NYS DOT Highway Work Permit has been obtained for the proposed access on NYS Route 12F and determine whether the expanded development requires any additional review or authorization from NYS DOT.

Locally related issues discussed:

The local board should ensure that the expanded development provides adequate internal circulation and emergency vehicle access to all four storage buildings, including sufficient maneuvering space around the proposed office.

The local board should request a plan showing parking for the proposed office building.

The local board should ensure that appropriate landscaping and screening are provided for the expanded development in accordance with §107-49 of the Town's zoning ordinance, including landscape buffers previously recommended by the County along 12F and the southwestern property boundary.

The local board should require the applicant to demonstrate that stormwater runoff from the additional buildings and paved circulation areas will be adequately managed on site and will not adversely affect adjacent properties of NYS Route 12F.

The current site plan depicts the previously proposed sign near the NYS Route 12F entrance but does not identify its setback from the property line. The local board should confirm that the sign complies with the Town's Sign Control Law, including the required 15-foot setback from all property lines.

The proposed pedestrian walkway should include lighting as required with low or mushroom type fixtures.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of local concern only with comments stated above for projects 1, 2, and 3, was made by Richard Nuijens, seconded by John Stano, and carried unanimously with the exception of Jean Waterbury who recused herself from voting on these projects.

4. Adams (T) - TotalEnergies Distributed Generation USA, Site Plan Review for solar energy facility T Ad 1 - 26

Andy presented this project to the Board. He shared the locator map, aerial photos, site photos, and the site plan. This project is being reviewed due to its proximity to County Road 84 and being within a NYS Certified Agricultural District. The applicant is proposing to construct a 1.95 MW solar facility within the Agricultural Residential zoning district.

He discussed County/State related matters:

A Jefferson County Building Permit is required for commercial solar panels.

The Town's zoning law requires a glare hazard analysis, in order to identify any potential glare impacts on any Fort Drum flights\training routes as well as any neighboring homes or public roads.

A small portion of the access road and stormwater management features (0.1 acres) appear

to coincide with mapped wetlands. If they impact jurisdictional wetlands, then appropriate NYS DEC mitigation measures should be utilized.

An Agricultural Data statement should be completed due to the property being within a NYS Certified Ag District.

A Jefferson County Highway Permit is required for the proposed access drive onto CR 84.

Locally related issues discussed:

The Town Solar Law requires existing agricultural activities and uses to be mapped as part of the application, as well as the prime ag soils, soils of statewide importance and prime ag soils if drained. The local board should request this information.

The local board should ensure the project will meet the Town Solar Law regulations to submit a vegetation management plan including native perennial vegetation and foraging habitat beneficial to game birds, songbirds and pollinators. The local board should request this information.

The local board should also request verification to ensure the project construction will meet the Town Solar Law requirement to follow NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets construction guidelines for solar projects on agricultural lands.

The local board should ensure the decommissioning requirements are met including the ability of the Town to remove the project components and restore the site in the future if required. Lastly, the Town should request an emergency management plan, including fire safety, and training for local fire departments on an annual basis.

Randy Lake asked if the project will be fenced in and how wildlife will be affected and if a study has been conducted. The project representative Christine Schauss stated that yes 21 of the 96 acres will be fenced and that National Heritage & Habitats study and Wetland delineation studies have been completed.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of local concern only with comments stated above, was made by Neil Katzman, seconded by Richard Nuijens, and carried unanimously.

5. Pamelia (T) - OYA Lane Road, LLC (Dispatch Energy), Site Plan Review for a solar energy facility T Pa 3 - 26

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 12. The applicant is proposing the construction of a 3.1 Megawatt solar energy facility in the Agricultural & Rural Residential Zoning District.

He stated the project access drive will be from NYS Route 12.

He discussed County/State related matters:

A Jefferson County Building Permit is required for commercial solar panels.

A NYS DOT Highway Work Permit is required for the proposed access onto NYS Route 12.

The local board should request a glare hazard analysis to be submitted to ensure area flights, training routes, maneuvers as well as nearby homes and public roadways won't be impacted by glare.

Locally related issues discussed:

The local law requires existing trees to be retained and the provision of screening along residential property lines.

The local board should request the proposed landscaping to be extended to the south further to provide an adequate screen for the existing homes along Lane Road as well as the homes on either side of Forest Drive.

The local board should ensure the Town Solar Law requirements are met regarding an emergency management plan to include fire safety and local training on an annual basis.

The local board should ensure the decommissioning requirements are met including the ability of the Town to remove the project components and restore the site in the future if required.

Randy Lake asked about the decommissioning plans for the solar project and noted that they do not always address what is left in the ground, only above. This could pose problems ten to twenty years down the road that should be considered.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of local concern only with comments stated above, was made by Neil Katzman, seconded by Richard Nuijens, and carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Andy noted that we completed our Fall training courses and they are available on our website to anyone that was unable to join but wishes to complete them. It was also noted that our October CPB meeting will not be held at the County Office Building but will be at held the Watertown Airport.

Adjournment:

John Stano made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:11 pm, seconded by Richard Nuijens.