

**MEETING MINUTES**

**JEFFERSON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**

**Jefferson County Office Building, 175 Arsenal St.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room**

**November 25, 2025**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** David Prosser, Chairman, Lisa Ruggiero, Vice-Chair, Neil Katzman, John Stano, Jean Waterbury, Richad Nuijens, John Storms, Randy Lake, Donna Dutton.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer, Director  
Andy Nevin, Senior Planner  
Sam Wilson, Community Development Coordinator  
Aileen Anderson, Community Development Coordinator  
Emerald Macilvennie, Typist

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Craig Fox, Watertown Daily Times  
Tyler Clemons, Atlantic Testing Laboratories

**CALL TO ORDER AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:** Chairman David Prosser opened the meeting at 3:59 p.m. and stated that a quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF THE OCTOER 28, 2025 MEETING MINUTES:** The motion was made by Neil Katzman, seconded by Richard Nuijens, and carried unanimously.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Chairman David Prosser asked if there were any communications. There were none.

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

**NEW BUSINESS:** Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer introduced Aileen Anderson, a newly welcomed member to the Jefferson County Planning Department, in the role of Community Development Coordinator.

A. **General Municipal Law, Section 239m Referrals:**

**1. Deferiet (V) Village Zoning Law and Map Amendment, V Def 2 - 25**

Sam presented this project to the Board. The Village is proposing zoning law and zoning map amendments. Sam shared pictures of the current zoning map alongside the newly proposed zoning map to highlight and compare the changes.

He discussed County/State related matters:

Land use compatibility for Fort Drum and its Wheeler Sack Army Airfield operations, and for nearby training range activities, as described in the Fort Drum Joint Land Use Study (JLUS),

must be incorporated. In particular, compatibility within the Village includes proximity to air safety zones as they relate to Wheeler Sack Army Airfield, limitations on tall structures such as telecommunication and other towers as they relate to takeoff and approach surfaces (Federal Aviation Administration Department of Defense Part 77 Imaginary Surfaces) for the Airfield, as well as minimizing glare as it relates to outdoor lighting, and noise compatibility should be incorporated.

The local board should also consider expanding the glare paragraph in Article X, Section 190-41, Paragraph 2, to include that a glare hazard analysis report shall be completed to gauge potential impacts on aircraft pilots (where airplane flyovers, approaches, and takeoffs occur) and for nearby drivers along public roads. The code should also require applicants to notify Fort Drum's Plans, Analysis, and Integration Office upon submission and to provide a response letter from the Airport Manager.

NYS Village Law requires zoning amendments to be made in accordance with a Comprehensive Plan.

Locally related issues discussed:

The amendment adds several new administrative review processes that may be disproportionately burdensome for a Village of fewer than 300 residents. The local board should consider whether this level of review is appropriate given the scale of typical development activity and whether streamlined alternatives could achieve the same goals with less administrative complexity.

The local board should determine whether increasing the minimum side yard setback to 40 feet in the Residential 1 Zoning District is appropriate, considering that the minimum lot area is decreasing from 20,000 to 15,000 square feet.

The Village would benefit from clearer definitions and a more modern regulatory structure for renewable energy and emerging technologies. Defining Small and Large Solar Energy Systems by nameplate capacity, in addition to surface area and intended energy use, would align the code with industry standards. Large systems may be defined as 1 MW AC or greater, with small systems under 1 MW AC and producing no more than 110 percent of historic on-site consumption.

The proposed amendments establish extensive regulations for Large Solar Energy Systems while limiting the use to a very small industrial district that may not realistically accommodate such development. The local board should evaluate whether this regulatory approach is meaningful or whether the district's constraints render the use effectively infeasible.

The local board should consider adding requirements for Large Solar Energy Systems that address emergency response, public safety, and infrastructure impacts. Including an Emergency Operations Plan, a Fire Safety Compliance Plan, and a Road Maintenance Agreement would help ensure that first responders are prepared, that fire and electrical risks are properly managed, and that local roads are protected from construction-related wear. These additions would provide clearer expectations for applicants and stronger safeguards for the community.

The local board should add the use of Small and Large Battery Energy Systems to Section 190-8: Schedule 1 Land Use Controls table. It appears that Small and Large Battery Energy

Storage Systems are not restricted to any single zoning district.

Because Article X regulates both Solar Energy Systems and Battery Energy Storage Systems, renaming the Article would improve clarity. The Village should also define the New York State Unified Solar Permit and add a definition for EV charging stations, treating EV charging as an accessory use permitted with a zoning permit.

Andy Nevin stressed the importance of including Fort Drum Compatibility Land Use issues in the amendment, as outlined in the Fort Drum Joint Land Use Study (JLUS). Randy Lake and Neil Katzman both agreed that this is beneficial.

**Motion: The Board passed a motion of approval with the condition that Fort Drum land-use compatibility be incorporated into the zoning amendments, made by David Prosser, seconded by Neil Katzman, and carried unanimously. This motion is based on the importance of maintaining Fort Drum's compatibility within the region in support of its mission to train, rapidly deploy, and sustain ready forces for national security requirements, primarily centered around the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division.**

## **2. Watertown (T) Mico Development LLC Site Plan Review for a shopping center, T Wa 9 – 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 municipal boundaries and NYS Route 3 (Arsenal Street). The applicant is proposing to construct a 12,000 square foot retail plaza that was reviewed previously by the Board in 2022.

He discussed County/State related matters:

The applicant should coordinate with NYS DOT, which has requested that the June 2019 traffic study be updated to reflect the proposed 12,000-square-foot shopping plaza and other new uses in the application. Updating the traffic study will help determine whether improvements are needed at the Arsenal Street and Alexander Drive intersection and identify appropriate timing to ensure continued safety and adequate levels of service.

With the total soil disturbance of 2.5 acres, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) should be completed and submitted to the Town engineer, consistent with MS4 requirements. A Jefferson County Building Permit is required.

Locally related issues discussed:

The local board should require an updated traffic study for the Thousand Island Ag Park, as the overall site plan proposes several additional uses along Alexander Drive. A revised analysis would identify the point at which the cumulative leasable space, number of businesses, or trip generation may affect intersection levels of service and trigger the need for roadway improvements.

The board should also consider aligning future access drives along Alexander Drive to maintain safe and predictable traffic movements. The Town Engineer should review whether Alexander Drive meets Town road construction standards, including drainage infrastructure, to ensure long-term stability and adequate runoff management.

Pedestrian walkways should be required along Alexander Drive, as outlined in the Neighborhood Commercial District, to preserve safe and accessible pedestrian connections among future uses. Finally, the applicant should provide the total lot coverage to confirm compliance with the Town's fifty-percent maximum.

Lisa Ruggiero asked if the applicant is obtaining a sewer permit. Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer stated that it is a known issue and that at present there is no septic proposed on site plans.

Randy Lake asked if there were sidewalks on the site plan and if that would be required. Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer confirmed that sidewalks are required in the district.

Neil Katzman asked about street lighting regulations. Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer noted that there would only be street lighting regulations if the Town of Watertown Zoning or Subdivision Law required them. Andy displayed the site photos taken during the site visit that showed existing street lights on Alexander Drive.

**Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of approval, with a condition that the traffic study be updated to include both the new use formally proposed as well as any additional anticipated uses, with comments as stated above, was made by David Prosser, seconded by Donna Dutton, and carried unanimously, with the exception of Jean Waterbury who recused herself from voting on this matter.**

### **3. Pamela (T) Jefferson County SPCA Site Plan Review to add dog kennels, T Pa 7 – 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 3 and municipal boundaries. The applicant is proposing an addition to increase its dog kennel capacity.

He discussed County/State related matters:

A Jefferson County building permit is required.

The local board shall notify the City of Watertown of the public hearing as required by General Municipal Law Section 239nn.

Locally related issues discussed:

The local board should consider updating the Town's zoning law to reduce or remove the minimum 1,500-foot setback from any residential structure for animal care facilities.

According to the Town of Pamela's Zoning Law, the local board should ensure that all animal waste shall be disposed of in an environmentally safe manner that does not pollute the air, land, and water pursuant to Section 760, Paragraph C. There is no indication of how animal waste will be handled for the proposed 70 dog kennels.

**Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of local concern only with comments stated above, was made by David Prosser, seconded by Lisa Ruggiero, and carried unanimously, with the exception of Richard Nuijens, who recused himself from voting on this matter.**

#### **4. Watertown (T) Mico Development LLC Site Plan Review for a warehouse, T Wa 10 – 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 Road 200. The applicant is proposing to construct a 19,520 square foot warehouse.

He discussed County/State related matters:  
A Jefferson County building permit is required.

A Jefferson County Highway Permit is required to expand the use of the shared access onto County Route 200. In addition, a permit is required for any utility work within the road right-of-way, and no open cuts are allowed across the road.

Federal wetlands have been identified on the proposed site. The applicant should complete a Joint Application Form with the NYSDEC and contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to ensure that all applicable requirements are met. The USACE issued a preliminary jurisdictional determination in 2012 for the wetlands located on lots 10 & 11. Since federal laws have changed, the USACE would review the site conditions as a new application.

Since the total disturbance is three acres, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will need to be completed and submitted to the Town engineer, consistent with MS4 requirements.

The local board shall notify the Village of Glen Park of the public hearing as required by General Municipal Law Section 239nn.

Locally related issues discussed:

The local board should require the applicant to submit a photometric plan to ensure that the appropriate intensities in foot-candles are met for the parking lot and at the property lines.

The local board should confirm that there are enough parking spaces for the proposed use and consider updating the Town's zoning code to reduce the minimum parking requirements for warehouses as appropriate.

**Motion: To accept staff recommendations to pass a motion of local concern only with comments stated above, was made by David Prosser, seconded by Neil Katzman, and carried unanimously, with the exception of Jean Waterbury, who recused herself from voting on this matter.**

#### **5. Brownville (V) Village Zoning Law Amendment, V Br 1 – 25**

Aileen presented this project to the Board, displaying the Village locator map. She explained that this project is being reviewed due to its proximity to the Village boundaries. The Village is proposing to update their Code, including some zoning amendments related to the timing of reviews to be made consistent with NYS enabling legislation.

There were no County/State related matters identified.

Locally related issues discussed:

The proposal does not raise significant county-wide or intercommunity concerns and is therefore mainly a local matter.

David Prosser asked if the Planning Department helped the Village with the amendment. The Town received assistance from the General Code publishing staff.

**6. Dexter (V) Sean Deptula Special Use Permit for residential solar panels, V Dex 2 – 25**

Aileen 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 municipal boundaries and County Road 53. The applicant is proposing to install a residential, roof mounted solar system.

She discussed County/State related matters:

The local board should notify the Town of Brownville of the public hearing as required by General Municipal Law Section 239nn.

Locally related issues discussed:

The local board should consider updating the Village Zoning law to allow residential solar projects as permitted accessory uses as opposed to the special use permit process.

**7. Leray (T) Evergreen Family Ltd Partnership Site Plan Review for EV charging stations, T Le 5 - 25**

Aileen 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 US Route 11. The applicant is proposing two EV charging stations.

There were no County/State related matters identified.

Locally related issues discussed:

The local board should consider requiring the charging spaces to be painted and marked as EV parking only. Each parking space orientation should be placed to maintain adequate vehicular circulation when exiting the car wash lanes.

**8. Philadelphia (T) Town of Philadelphia Site Plan Review for Town park and trail improvements, T Ph 2 - 25**

Andy presented this project to the Board, displaying the locator map, aerial photos, site photos, and site plan. The project is being reviewed due to its proximity to County Route 29. The Town is proposing several improvements to the existing Town Recreation Park.

He discussed County/State related matters:

The applicant has initiated the Corps of Engineers pre-application process and will need to finalize the nationwide permit upon project completion.

There were no locally related issues discussed.

## **9. Watertown (C) Dreambridge LLC Special Use Permit, C 14 – 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 3. The applicant is proposing to operate a licensed cannabis dispensary.

There were no County/State related matters.

Locally related issues discussed:

The local board should require the applicant to submit their hours of operation to ensure compliance with Section 310-75, Paragraph B: Hours of Operation.

The local board should ensure that any proposed signage meets the City of Watertown's Zoning Ordinance.

## **10. Watertown (C) Chessworth Farms Special Use Permit, C 15 – 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 3. The applicant is proposing to operate a licensed cannabis dispensary.

There were no County/State related matters identified.

Locally related issues discussed:

The local board should ensure that any proposed signage meets the City of Watertown's Zoning Ordinance.

Randy Lake asked if the nature of projects such as this are somehow nullifying a Federal Law. Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer stated that the review of Jefferson County Planning Board projects are obligated to follow State Law (enabling legislation).

**Motion: To accept staff recommendations to pass a motion of local concern only with comments stated above for projects 5 through 10, was made by David Prosser, seconded by Richard Nuijens, and carried unanimously.**

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Andy asked the board members to collaborate for volunteers to form a committee to elect a Chair and Vice Chair for a 2-year term beginning in January 2026. Volunteers for this committee are Lisa Ruggiero, John Stano, and Jean Waterbury.

### **Adjournment:**

Neil Katzman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:21 pm, seconded by Lisa Ruggiero.