

Department of Planning and Community Development

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MEETING MINUTES

JEFFERSON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

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

March 31, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lisa Ruggiero, Neil Katzman, John Stano, Jean Waterbury, Richard Nuijens, Jon Storms, Mitch Robinson, Karen Freeman, Joe McLaughlin.

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

PUBLIC PRESENT: Cyril Cullen, Jeff Herpel (Cape Vincent Planning Board Chair), Sarah Dayton, Mary Jordan- All present for the Village of Cape Vincent marina project.

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 February 24, 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. Sam shared with the Board that there were two letters and supplemental information received from Sarah Dayton concerning # V CV1 - 26.

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. Cape Vincent (V) Seaway Marine Group LLC Site Plan Review, V CV 1– 26

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 NYS Route 12E. The applicant is proposing to construct a marina office, bathrooms, add storage

containers and fuel tanks and replace siding as needed on two marina structures.

He discussed County/State related matters:

A Jefferson County building permit is required.

A NYS DEC Protection of Waters Permit is required for the installation of floating docks.

The local board should ensure that setbacks are met for the proposed above-ground storage of petroleum, as specified in the NYS Fire Code.

The local board should ensure that the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation is consulted for any permits related to petroleum bulk storage.

Due to the close proximity to the St. Lawrence River and the proposed petroleum storage exceeding 1,320 gallons, a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) plan is required.

Locally related issues discussed:

As the project is located within the Waterfront Overlay District, the local board is encouraged to ensure the redevelopment is reviewed for compatibility with the policies and purposes of the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP). The LWRP emphasizes the revitalization and reuse of existing waterfront sites that improve the function, appearance, and efficiency of current development.

The local board should ensure that the proposed dock slips, wave attenuator, and pump out station are clearly shown on the site plan to confirm that safe boat circulation will continue. In addition, the contractor storage areas and equipment docking locations should be identified.

The local board should ensure that there is adequate parking for the designated use in the Commercial District.

The local board is encouraged to consider amending the zoning law to provide more precise definitions for "marinas" and "light industrial operations" and to establish corresponding use-specific standards for each within the commercial and industrial zoning districts.

The County Planning Board recognizes that concerns were raised regarding potential nuisance impacts associated with marina and industrial-related activities, including noise and visual impacts from barge traffic and associated operations. The Board notes that the Village's current zoning framework may not fully address these impacts, particularly for more intensive or industrial uses within marina facilities. The local board may wish to consider whether additional performance standards or design requirements could be established to better mitigate potential nuisance conditions and ensure compatibility with surrounding uses.

Cape Vincent residents that were present at the meeting noted that they were supportive of the marina, but their concerns lie with the lack of documentation in the planning process, and whether or not current Zoning Laws were being followed appropriately. They stressed the importance for the community to have the opportunity to weigh in on these types of projects and development, and felt it was a step that had been overlooked.

Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer added that the Board can only review what we are provided from the municipality, and that the Board can only work within its parameters, which would be reviewing what is currently in the Village Zoning Law.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of local concern only with comments stated above, was made by Richard Nuijens, seconded by Neil Katzman. John Stano did not vote in favor of this project. The remaining members of the Board were in favor.

2. Alexandria (T) Stewarts Shops Corp. Site Plan Review, T AI 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 proximity to NYS Route 12. The applicant is proposing to construct a new 4,500 square foot Stewarts convenience store in the parking lot of the existing plaza.

He discussed County/State related matters:

The applicant should contact NYS Dept. of Transportation for the proposed project.

A Jefferson County Building Permit will be required for the new building and canopy.

Locally related issues discussed:

The proposed layout, which positions the convenience store closer to the highway and gas pumps/canopy to the side, represents a thoughtful design approach that improves on-site circulation and minimizes potential conflicts associated with fueling traffic.

The lighting fixtures are proposed under the gas canopy and soffit on the building. The local board should ensure lighting is downward-directed and shielded to prevent glare onto adjacent parcels and the public highway, consistent with the Town Zoning Law, Article VIII, Section 3. Paragraph D.

The site plan should identify snow storage areas.

Richard Nuijens asked where the new tanks will be, and if the old ones will be removed. Andy answered that the new tanks will be underground and that the old tanks, which are also underground, will be removed.

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

3. Henderson (T) Henderson Town Board Comprehensive Plan T He 1 – 26

Andy presented this project to the Board. The Henderson Town Board is proposing a full update and rewriting of its Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning and Community Development Department worked with the Town Plan Committee to develop a Comprehensive Plan update from June 2024 to early 2026. The Committee used a community survey, SWOT issues session, and public meetings to gather

input. Land use, transportation, community facilities, housing and natural resources goals and strategies were identified. Agricultural, renewable energy and sustainability, airport and Fort Drum compatibility were also prioritized.

Next steps for the Town include applying for a NYS DOS Smart Growth grant to fund a process for the zoning amendments, and a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) process was approved for funding, which will address waterfront needs and priorities to include waterfront consistency zoning amendments. Additional grant requests to implement the Plan recommendations and potential Town improvements identified during the process will also be pursued.

The Plan includes demographic, housing and economic trends, transportation, community facilities, natural resources, agriculture, renewable energy and land use chapters. It also includes a Town Vision statement and a series of short term, medium and long term actions for the Town to consider.

Specific zoning amendments identified in the Plan are being pursued by the Town Board for the initial implementation steps that will ensure consistency with Zoning Law. The LWRP will focus on waterfront needs and zoning amendments.

Positive community impacts will occur by guiding and enhancing future development through the implementation of the vision, goals, and strategies, pursuing needed public facility projects, and developing appropriate zoning tools to foster compatible growth in key areas and preservation in other areas.

Mitch Robinson commended Planning Staff for their excellent work on this Comprehensive Plan.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of approval based upon the positive impacts that sound planning practices will have on the development of the Town and adjacent communities, was made by Neil Katzman, seconded by Jon Storms, and carried unanimously.

4. Lyme (T) Town of Lyme Zoning Law Amendment, T Ly 1 – 26

Sam presented this project to the Board, the Town is proposing to update its Zoning Law pertaining to quarry operations.

He discussed County/State related matters:

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

Locally related issues discussed:

To prevent regulatory conflict between quarries and heavy industrial projects, the local board should ensure clear and consistent distinctions between these categories, including their respective definitions, uses, and standards as outlined below:

The local board should confirm that the footnote added after the use table for (2) includes the standards outlined in Section 725, Paragraph A through E. The current draft incorrectly cites "Paragraph A through D."

The definition of "heavy industrial" contains standards in the second sentence that should be applicable to their own dedicated section. The local board should either consider expanding Section 725 to include heavy industrial uses or establish a new section specifically for these standards. This change would require an additional footnote in the use schedule for heavy industrial.

As outlined in Section 725, Paragraph D, the no excavation of materials within 20 feet of the side lot line does not comply with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation requirements for excavation. NYS DEC regulations require a minimum 25-foot setback from property lines for quarry excavation. Furthermore, increased setbacks may be necessary depending on slope stability and mining depth to ensure the protection of adjacent properties.

The board should consider implementing buffering and setbacks from adjacent municipalities to limit intermunicipal impacts on the Village of Chaumont and the Towns of Cape Vincent, Clayton, and Brownville.

The local board is encouraged to define the term environmentally sensitive areas.

Richard Nuijens did ask for clarification on what an "environmentally sensitive" area is. Andy Nevin stated the Ashland Flats, Chaumont Barrens, and the Point Peninsula Wildlife Management Area would all be considered examples within the Town.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of approval based upon the positive impacts that sound planning practices will have on the development of the Town and adjacent communities, was made by Richard Nuijens, seconded by John Stano, and carried unanimously.

5. Watertown (C) Puccia Olive Oil Company LLC Area Variance, C 3 – 26

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 NYS Route 3 (Arsenal Street). The applicant is proposing to expand an existing parking lot that will require relief from landscaping requirements in the front and side yards.

He discussed County/State related matters:

The local board should consider the benefit to the applicant as weighed against the detriment to the health, safety, and welfare of the community, using the five factors for an area variance as stated in NYS General City Law.

The local board should ensure that the NYS Department of Transportation is consulted if there is any proposed work in the right of way.

Locally related issues discussed:

The local board should ensure there is a shared access agreement to use the existing driveway

on NYS Route 3.

The local board should require the site plan to depict the location of the dumpster.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of local concern only with comments stated above, was made by John Stano, seconded by Jean Waterbury, and carried unanimously.

6. Watertown (T) Northern Credit Union Site Plan Review, T Wa 4 – 26

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 NYS Route 3. The applicant is proposing to construct and operate a six-lane drive-up ATM service in a neighborhood commercial district.

She discussed County/State related matters:

A Jefferson County building permit is required.

Locally related issues discussed:

The site plans indicate the plans for the southern portion of the parcel, including modifications to the existing vacant building (former Red Lobster restaurant), will be reviewed at a future date.

The local board should ensure the proposed lighting of the entrance intersection (western side of parcel) is sufficient to meet the Town zoning requirements on lighting (107-20.2).

The local board should ensure the proposed internal traffic circulation pattern does not create unsafe/opposing traffic flow(s) into the drive-thru lanes.

Motion: To accept staff recommendation to pass a motion of local concern only with comments stated above, was made by John Stano, seconded by Neil Katzman, and carried unanimously with the exception of Jean Waterbury who abstained from voting.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Andy Nevin said that Planning Staff is trying to work with New York State DOS to host a Site Plan Review training in May 2026. Further information to follow.

Adjournment:

Richard Nuijens made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:39 pm, seconded by Neil Katzman.