

Village of Cayuga Heights Planning Board  
Meeting #55  
Monday, August 24, 2015  
Fire Hall – 7:00 pm  
Draft Minutes

Present: Planning Board Members Chair F. Cowett, G. Gillespie, D. Hay, and R. Segelken  
Code Enforcement Officer B. Cross, Deputy Clerk A. Podufalski  
Phi Mu Executive Director-Darlene Reyes, Phi Mu Financial and Accounting Services  
Comptroller-Tim O'Rourke, Buyer's Agent-Claudia Lagalla, Chapter Consultant-Kate Jahries,  
Seller's Agent-Susan Lustick

Item 1 – Meeting called to order

- Chair F. Cowett opened the meeting at 7:02 pm.

Item 2- April 27, 2015 Minutes

**Motion:** G. Gillespie

**Second:** D. Hay

**RESOLUTION No. 156**  
**APPROVING MINUTES OF APRIL 27, 2015**

**RESOLVE**, that the written, reviewed and revised minutes of the April 27, 2015 meeting are hereby approved.

**Aye votes** – Chair F. Cowett, G. Gillespie, D. Hay, and R. Segelken  
**Opposed**- None

Item 3- Public Comment

- No members of the public wished to comment.

Item 4- Preliminary Site Plan Review- 520 Wyckoff Road

- Code Enforcement Officer B. Cross explained to the Board why a site plan review is necessary even though new construction is not anticipated. The property is located in the Multiple Housing zoning district. It is currently a single family residence, but will be occupied as a multiple residence. In order for the applicant to occupy the property as a multiple residence, a building permit to change occupancy from a single family property to an R2 occupancy is required and a new certificate of occupancy will need

to be issued to reflect the change in the character of the building's physical use. Additionally, property classification would be changed from a single family dwelling to a fraternity/sorority which is considered a change in use. Because Planning Board regulations in the Village's Zoning Law state that a change of occupancy or change of use of any property within the Multiple Housing or Commercial zoning districts is a condition for Planning Board site plan review, and both conditions are applicable here, site plan review by the Planning Board is necessary.

- Phi Mu Executive Director, Darlene Reyes, gave a presentation about the sorority and the property it intends to purchase. Founded in 1852, Phi Mu is the second oldest sorority in the United States and currently has 126 chapters. It has previously not had a chapter at Cornell and has contracted to purchase the house at 520 Wyckoff Road, built in 1923, in order to establish one. The purchase contract is contingent on site plan approval. The house has six bedrooms. There are no plans to expand the structure. The plan is to house approximately 12 to 14 students as well as a House Director who is a single person living onsite fulltime in a managerial capacity.
- Some Phi Mu chapters are located in residential areas and Phi Mu executives are aware that chapters located in residential areas pose certain challenges including noise and parking. Regarding noise, a Phi Mu sorority is not a party house. Prospective house rules, provided to the Planning Board, stipulate quiet hours between 10:00 pm and 10:00 am. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed. Regarding parking, the house has three parking spaces and a nearby apartment complex has 5-10 spaces available for rent.
- Code Enforcement Officer B. Cross asked the applicant about trash removal and whether there would be a dumpster. After discussion, D. Reyes stated there will not be a dumpster.
- The Board asked about additional lighting. D. Reyes stated that need for additional lighting will depend on how dark the property is at night, but that any additional lighting would not be security lighting.
- The Board asked about meals and whether there would be a commercial kitchen with a noisy ventilation system. D. Reyes stated that chapter residents will be responsible for their own meals and could be on Cornell meal plans, and that there will be no commercial kitchen on the premises.
- Code Enforcement Officer B. Cross informed the applicant that any noise or activity related complaints will be handled by the Village's police department as they are not regulated by zoning. D. Reyes stated her belief that these will not be issues thanks to the House Director residing full time onsite.
- The Board asked whether the chapter will be ready for the 2016 rush. D. Reyes stated she did not know, but that it would be doubtful.
- The Board asked whether there will be Cornell Phi Mu sisters who do not reside at the chapter and whether Phi Mu sisters not at Cornell are likely to visit and/or attend chapter functions. D. Reyes replied affirmatively to both questions.

- Code Enforcement Officer B. Cross informed the applicant that, because property boundaries are within 500 feet of another municipal boundary, in this case the City of Ithaca, he must contact the Tompkins County Planning Department for their opinion about the proposed changes to the residence. He will also inform all surrounding property owners.
- Chair F. Cowett informed the Planning Board that prior to this meeting Attorney R. Marcus had advised with respect to the SEQR review portion of site plan review that this project would likely not be classified as either a SEQR Type I (significant) action or a SEQR Type II (exempt) action, but would instead likely be classified as an unlisted action. The Planning Board discussed the project's probable environmental impact and determined its SEQR action classification.

**Motion:** D. Hay

**Second:** G. Gillespie

**RESOLUTION No. 157**

**TO ACCEPT PROJECT AT 520 WYCKOFF RD AS AN UNLISTED SEQR ACTION**

**RESOLVE**, that the project proposal at 520 Wyckoff Rd. is categorized as an Unlisted SEQR action and the property owner is to complete Part 1 of the Short Environmental Assessment Form.

**Aye votes** – Chair F. Cowett, G. Gillespie, D. Hay, and R. Segelken

**Opposed**- None

**Motion:** R. Segelken

**Second:** D. Hay

**RESOLUTION No. 158**

**TO HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROJECT AT 520 WYCKOFF RD**

**RESOLVE**, that a public hearing will be held on September 28, 2015 at 7:10 p.m. regarding the site plan review for the proposed project at 520 Wyckoff Rd.

**Aye votes** – Chair F. Cowett, G. Gillespie, D. Hay, and R. Segelken

**Opposed**- None

- The Board required the applicant to provide additional information about parking at the September 28th meeting, including a sketch of parking places at the house, the precise location of the nearby apartment complex with 5-10 parking spaces available

for rent, and written confirmation of the willingness of the apartment complex to rent those parking places to Phi Mu sorority sisters as needed.

- Code Enforcement Officer B. Cross stated that he will inspect the building's bedroom dimensions to determine occupancy potential.
- Chair F. Cowett provided the applicant with Part 1 of the SEQR Short Environmental Assessment Form for completion prior to the next meeting.
- Seller's Agent Susan Lustick informed the Board with regard to Short Form question 20, remediation for hazardous waste, that asbestos removal was previously performed inside the house.

#### Item 5-Other Business

- Chair F. Cowett updated the Board on the progress of the Zoning Task Force.
- Code Enforcement Officer B. Cross asked the Board for feedback on adding language to the site plan review code regarding instances where there is a change in occupancy, but not a change in use, such as might occur in the Commercial zoning district, and whether he should be allowed to exercise his judgement instead of presenting such cases to the Planning Board. Chair F. Cowett stated that the Zoning Task Force was not inclined to burden the Planning Board with this additional responsibility.

#### Item 6- Adjourn

Chair F. Cowett adjourned the meeting at 8:11 pm.