

Village of Schoharie Planning Board

Mar. 12, 2026

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Board members: Tom Hitter, Steve Babbitt, Dave Knoop, Mike Ullman

Board Consultants: Dave Brennan, Mike Harrington

Applicants: Mainbridge Commons team: Teresa Bakner, Brian Messana

Public: Jason Ballard

Zoning Board of Appeals: Jessica Kirby, Amy Foland, Melissa Cooper, Samantha Ballard

This was a joint meeting with the Zoning Board of Appeals focused on the variance requests for the Mainbridge Commons development. Further progress by the Planning Board awaits the variance rulings of the Zoning Board. Jessica Kirby, chairperson of the Zoning Board, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

(Below is a brief summary, but refer to the separate meeting minutes document of the Zoning Board for more details.)

Old business: Mainbridge Commons

Teresa presented the variance requests:

1. An area variance for dwelling unit density
2. Area variances for size of signage (2 signs along Main St frontage) and encroachment into front and side yard setback buffers

Depending on whether the basis for the computation is the combined Mainbridge Commons parcel acreage (commercial and residential = 5.43 acres) or solely the residential parcel's (2.4 acres), the dwelling unit densities for the 44 dwelling units compute to $44/5.83 = 8.1$ units/acre or $44/2.4 = 18.3$ units/acre. The Land Use Law design standard in Table 2-7.1 for residential use = 1 dwelling unit/10,000 sq. ft. x (43,560 sq. ft/acre) = 4.36 units/acre.

The size of the 2 Schoharie Dental street frontage signs has not changed and is slightly oversized per the LUL design standards in section 3-1.2H and Table 3-1.2, and the locations of the signs intrude into the yard setback buffers by 3 - 8 ft.

The Zoning Board members sought to understand the design changes that had occurred since their last meeting, mainly the Jan. 28 site plan design changes (resulting from the elimination of the underground parking garage). Details that they focused on were:

- the impact to parking resulting from the reduction in total parking spaces.
- The need for bollards or a gate with a lock at the property boundary to exclude motor vehicles from blocking or parking on the new crossover emergency fire access road leading from the Mainbridge Commons driveway and crossing the Ballard driveway Right-of-Way on The Birches property to access the rear of the apartment complex, and also new fire access road signage on The Birches property. It has been common practice for residents or visitors to park at the location where the new access road will be placed.
- Whether screening is planned for the southeastern corner of the Mainbridge parcel to compensate for the removal of the large willow trees, to shield the Ballard residence on the hillside above from the increased intrusion of light and noise.
- How to impose contingency conditions if the phased construction does not proceed as planned and delays or even abandonment of subsequent phases occurs. We should require ground cover seeding of the Phase 2 & 3 surfaces, which are to be graded and graveled during Phase 1, if the planned phased construction does not occur within a certain period of time after the previous phase has been completed.

Public Hearing scheduled: A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday April 7 at 6:00 p.m.

This ended the Zoning Board portion of the meeting, and it was the Planning Board's turn.

SB 03/25/2026

Old business: CSD Housing Depot Lane development

Chairperson Tom inquired if we could attend a meeting on Tuesday March 17, which happens to be St. Patrick's Day. None of the members had plans to celebrate with the Hibernians, so Tom set the next meeting for Tuesday March 17 at 7:00 p.m. He will invite and confirm that the CSD Housing team can attend, because the main purpose of the meeting will be to begin review of their site plan and special use permit application. They had met with us in a preliminary meeting on Jan. 22, had submitted the application package in mid-February, and had requested a meeting, but we had delayed scheduling it in order to first hear the comments presented at the March 5 public forum.

Several speakers at the forum had missed the late January public presentation at the high school because they had never seen a public notification and felt it had not been well publicized. Jessica recommended that the village government needed to establish a social media presence, which is where many folks now get their news information, and that the village web site and notices in the local newspapers were no longer sufficient. The text messaging service offered by the village should be better promoted and could be used to also broadcast meeting notifications to subscribers. She felt the social media site could be configured to not allow commenting, just present vetted news and information, and its content could mirror what was posted on the village website.

Most villagers who spoke at the public forum were opposed to the development proposal.

Ref: https://www.nyvtmedia.com/sections/cobleskill-times-journal/articles/the-times-journal-march-12-2026?wallit_nosession=1

We discussed how to proceed with the development review, if it appeared that a denial could occur. How and when should we present this to the applicant? If a denial is issued, a strong possibility is for them to sue with an Article 78 lawsuit, so then it becomes a battle of lawyers (but time elapses). The basis of the reasoning for arguments for and against should be the vision for the future and guidelines for changes presented in the Comprehensive Plan.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Future meetings: Tues. March 17 7:00 p.m. Begin review of CSD Housing Depot Lane Development

Tues. Apr 07 6:00p.m. Public Hearing Mainbridge Commons variance requests

Respectfully,

Steve Babbitt

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