

Village of Schoharie Planning Board

Mar. 17, 2026

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

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

Board Consultants: None

Applicants: CSD Housing team: Mike Newman, David Warren, Jason Dell, Laura Koss, Christine Nealon, Corey Auerbach

Public: Elizabeth Vedder, Larry Caza, Colleen Henry, Samantha Ballard

Tom H, chairperson of the Planning Board, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

We reviewed the draft meeting minutes from the March 12 meeting. Tom requested that more information be included describing the discussion about methods for blocking public motor vehicle access to the crossover fire access road leading from Mainbridge Commons to the rear of The Birches, such as bollards or gate with a lock. Dave made a motion to approve the revised minutes, seconded by Mike, and the vote was 4-0 in favor.

Old business: CSD Housing Depot Lane development

The main purpose of the meeting was 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.

Mike Newman introduced the members of the design team, then the presentations began.

Land Use for Affordable Housing Aligns with Comprehensive Plan: Corey Auerbach, an attorney whose law practice focuses on land use rules & regulations, asserted that land use for affordable housing is a goal often cited in the 2025 Comp Plan, and that redevelopment for apartment housing from institutional housing is no change from the present land use of the jail.

They desire that the site plan review process be collaborative and not antagonistic and understand that requests for design modifications or conditions may arise pertaining to community character.

Design changes since the January presentation: Jason Dell described the site plan changes:

- The parking lot had been relocated from fronting on Depot Lane to behind the building, facing towards Terrace Mtn;
- One wing of the building 'L' now fronts along Depot Lane, with 2 driveways from Depot Lane leading around the building to the parking lot; the complex is positioned to create a large green space on the eastern side of parcel between the building and the back yards of the Main St parcels;
- The driveways provide a fire access road for access to the rear of the building that will be identified with signage;
- The landscape screen to shield the back yards of the adjoining residential and commercial parcels along Main St was moved to the berm of the relocated eastern driveway, which is at a higher elevation up on the fill pad of the building, rather than down at the present grade level.
- The landscape screening plants will be a mix of evergreen and deciduous shrubs/trees.

The site plan review package is nearly complete and he would like the review to proceed and have the SEQR process begin without delay.

Less Impact to Emergency Medical Services and Public Safety than Initial Estimates: Christine Nealon from RSS contended that the impacts to the volunteer fire and ambulance squads (and village law enforcement staff) would be less than the initial estimates because there will be 6 – 8 RSS support staffers on site, with coverage spread across the week, who would intercept and address many of the emerging medical issues of the supported housing residents, preventing the symptoms from worsening to the stage of calling for EMS.

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Village Concerns and Perspective:

Board members and some public attendees expressed their concerns:

- The village needs affordable housing, but desires a mixture of housing types that balances low-density homes with the higher-density rental apartment complexes. The addition of two rental complexes in quick succession will shift the balance more toward rentals, because the population basis is so small-- there are only about 200 single-family homes and 1,000 people (*need the housing demographics data*). This will be the fourth apartment complex.
- Limited expansion opportunities: there is little undeveloped land in the village that is free from constraints that add significant cost: presence in a flood plain or agricultural district, a gravel quarry located within village limits, large tracts of agricultural land. New development will mainly have to be redevelopment (demolition of existing structures).
- Increasing the proportion of taxable land relative to nontaxable is desired: The high proportion of tax-exempt parcels (nearly 50%) places a larger-than-average property tax burden on the taxable ones. There is little sales tax revenue, so most of the village revenue comes from property tax.
- The need is for new development to expand the tax base and be taxable, not tax-exempt, but there is a real possibility that this development will resort to a pilot, although it has not yet done so.
- Compatibility with historic district and nearby building (the Creamery) on historic register.

The existing site plan review process is not ideal for addressing some of these factors, but they can best be classified as impacts to community or neighborhood character, which are considered as a type of environmental impact in the state's SEQR process and need to be assessed in Questions 17 & 18 in the Full EAF Part 2 form, 'Consistency with Community Plans' and 'Consistency with Community Character'.

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The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Future meetings: To Be Determined

Tues. Apr 07 6:00p.m. Public Hearing Mainbridge Commons variance requests Zoning Board of Appeals

Respectfully,

Steve Babbitt

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