

Village of Schoharie Planning Board

May 27, 2025

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

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

Board Consultants: Dave Brennan, Mike Harrington

Applicants: Mainbridge Commons team: Dr. Hazeem Elbially, Teresa Bakner, Chris Knox, Brian Messana

Public: Logan Finning (law student interning with Dave B), Patsy Nicosia (Times Journal)

Tom called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The meeting minutes from the previous May 13 meeting were reviewed, with no corrections or changes suggested. Dave made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Tom, and the motion was approved 4-0 in favor.

Old Business: Mainbridge Commons

Teresa had requested this meeting as a workshop to present recent design changes and responses to letters, to reveal recent land purchases, and present a video simulation showing the project in drive-by 3-D perspective.

Brian M, the architect, explained that one of the design objectives was to create a feeling of being in a park. He also spoke about the team members collaborating well together and making design adjustments to address concerns, particularly parking capacity.

Teresa and Dr. Elbially presented the land acquisition news:

Dr. Elbially is finalizing the purchase of 2 adjacent lots, primarily to provide additional parking capacity:

1. The rear portions of the Relyea parcels north of Furman Dr (226 and 228 Main St), to be subdivided from those 2 parcels and then merged as a single parcel.
2. The 35' wide strip running across the southern boundary of the Mainbridge Commons parcel from Main St to the brook. Originally this was associated with The Birches but was lost in tax foreclosure sale.

The splitting of the Relyea parcels will require a subdivision application. These parcels are zoned Residential, not Commercial, but parking would be allowed by the Land Use Law as an accessory use on an adjoining parcel to a commercial parcel. The space will provide an additional 28 9' X 20' parking spaces, intended for employees, not customers.

The 35' strip has a gated gravel driveway leading to the rear of The Birches. Mike H. mentioned that the gravel driveway may have been intended to be emergency fire access when The Birches complex first opened, but he did not know its present status. But the legal recording of this as a right of way had never occurred; Teresa had found no Right-of-Way easement or any other encumbrance in the deed. There is also a driveway to the Ballard property that is closer than typical to the apartment building, and the turn radius to swing around to the back of the complex would be tight for a fire truck. The Fire Dept. needs to be consulted, and the present status of the driveway needs to be determined. Also, the strip is within the PDA zone, not in the Commercial zone. The Mainbridge team intends to submit a Re-zone request to the Village Board to convert it to Commercial.

Chris Knox gave an update on the status of the design process, letters from regulatory agencies and utilities, and responses to concerns raised in previous comment letters:

- The addition of the two land purchases has increased the area of the lot from 4.43 to 5.75 acres.
- The increased lot size enabled the number of surface parking spaces to increase from 207 8' X 18' spaces to 204 + 28 = 232 9' X 20' spaces. In addition, the underground parking garage capacity was increased from 35 to 65 8' X 18' spaces.
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- The addition of the 35' strip to the southern boundary allowed the location of the structures to be shifted very slightly southward. This enabled the entrance to the underground parking beneath the office building to be flipped from the north side (Furman Dr) to the south side (driveway that exits onto Main St).
- Soil testing had revealed that the deep loamy soil did not permeate as well as hoped, so using porous asphalt paving has been ruled out (it was considered because infiltration would reduce storm water run-off. The soil boring and infiltration testing is done. The stormwater design is still under development.
- DOT has approved the PERM 33-COM Stage 1 Permit application and does not require a traffic analysis study currently.
- National Grid is processing the UCD (Underground Commercial Distribution) and Chris awaits a response letter from them.
- Mike H. raised questions pertaining to extending water mains or sewer lines on Furman Dr, whether there were two separate water line systems (domestic use and fire sprinklers), and whether the fire hydrants would be village-owned or privately owned.
- They have decided to proceed with raising the entire lot with fill to the base flood elevation of 610.5 ft so that it will no longer fall within the special flood hazard area. Alton Knapp, their flood plain consultant, is preparing a LOM-R (Letter Of Map Revision) application for submittal to FEMA. The lowest level of occupied building space will be BFE + 2 = 612.5 ft.

Brian Messana presented the new 3D perspective video simulation and answered questions about the architectural features:

The external emergency stairs (siloes) will contain rectangular switchback segments, not spiral. The row house unit facades have an alternating 12 – 18" stagger. The south-facing sides of the gable roofs will have solar panels, and the north-facing sides will have skylights. The external air conditioning machinery for the commercial structure will be on an elevated platform between the 2 buildings. The siding on the commercial building will be 2 shades of red brick, alternating from unit to unit across the 11-unit façade. The siding on the residential buildings will be gray metal cladding.

Next, we discussed and developed an action plan that coordinates 3 separate village gov't boards:

The Planning Board:

- Begin processing the EAF Part2 document by answering as many of the 18 tests as possible, where near certainty about the answer already exists. To be left unanswered would be the tests for the stormwater, landscaping, and lighting impacts or any others that might be targeted during the public hearing to come.
- Update the Zoning Board on our SEQR status and attend their meeting for the Mainbridge Commons presentation.

Mainbridge Commons:

- develop stormwater, lighting, and landscaping designs.
- Submit a variance application and schedule a meeting with the Zoning Board. Provide them with 3-D perspective renderings or the video drive-by simulation.
- Submit a subdivision application to the Planning Board for the split-off Relyea parcels.
- Request a zoning change for the 35' strip from the Village Board.

Zoning Board of Appeals: receive the SEQR update from the Planning Board, meet with Mainbridge Commons for a presentation and begin assessing the variance request.

The Village Board: receive, schedule, and assess the Zoning Map Change Request.

Tom made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:42, seconded by Mike, and we voted unanimously to approve.

Future Meetings: To Be Scheduled (perhaps 2nd week of June?)

Complete as much as possible of EAF Part 2

Respectfully,

Steve Babbitt

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