

Village of Schoharie Planning Board

June 17, 2025

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Board members: Tom Hitter, Steve Babbitt, Tim Repicky, Mike Ullman
Board Consultants: Dave Brennan, Mike Harrington
Applicants: Mainbridge Commons team: Dr. Hazeem Elbially, Rob Stout, Chris Knox
Public: None

Tom called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting minutes from the previous May 13 meeting were reviewed, with corrections for the description of the strip of land being added to the southern boundary of Mainbridge Commons. The tract is tax parcel 72.17-5-1 and is 75' wide. This had been confused with the 35' Right-Of-Way that runs along the boundary on The Birches property. The gated gravel driveway is on the 72.17-5-1 tract, while the paved driveway leading to the Ballard property is within the Right-Of-Way on The Birches property. Tim made a motion to approve the corrected minutes, seconded by Mike, and the motion was approved 4-0 in favor.

Old Business: Mainbridge Commons

New plan for Reconfiguring the Mainbridge Commons Parcels:

Rob Stout and Dr. Elbially presented a plan for reconfiguring two of the parcels to separate the residential structures from the commercial ones. Dr. Elbially stated this is necessary to qualify for a grant he is seeking. (No change to the Commercial Zoning for the housing lot.)

1. Subdivide the Mainbridge 2 parcel 72.17-5-2 into 2 lots with a dividing line running roughly parallel to Main St, the lot adjacent to Main St containing the commercial office structure, and the rear lot containing just residential apartment structures.
2. Subdivide the newly acquired 75' strip 72.17-5-1 by extending the -2 dividing line across -1 to its southwestern boundary.
3. Merge the two western (fronting on Main St) -1 and -2 parcels into one
4. Merge the two eastern (rear) -1 and -2 parcels into one.
5. Establish an easement in the deeds to allow shared use of the parking spaces across the 2 lots.

These changes would require subdivision applications, with the requisite survey and revised deeds.

Board Concern Pertaining To Accessory Use of Adjoining Residential Zone Lot Without A Primary Structure For A Parking Lot:

The Mainbridge site plan creates a parking lot with 28 spaces on the north side of Furman Drive, carved from the rear portions of the 2 Relyea parcels at 226 & 228 Main St. and merged into a single parcel. The Planning Board concern is that the new residential zone parcel contains no primary residential structure, but will be used for parking as an accessory use to the commercial healthcare facility across Furman Dr. Would this set a dangerous precedent? Several years ago, a previous Planning Board had approved the demolition of the Shroh residence on an adjoining lot to become a parking lot for the present dental facility at 229 Main St. Those lots were residential zoning with mixed use overlay. Would re-zoning the lot to Commercial make any difference? Merging the parcels together? Tim contended that the parking lot is not needed, that the 297 parking spaces far exceed the need and the loss of the 28 still would be sufficient, but others favor maximizing the parking. Further discussion is needed.

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SEQR Process: Preliminary Assessment of EAF Part 2

The Board began work on the Full EAF Part 2 form, answering as many of the 18 tests as possible.

| Question | Topic | Board Assessment of Severity of Impact |
|----------|--|---|
| 1 | Impact on Land | Yes. Small or No impacts, but the action may involve construction that continues for > 1 year or in multiple phases |
| 2 | Impact on Geological Features | No. |
| 3 | Impacts on Surface Water | Yes. Required practices for erosion control and stormwater discharge during construction (SWPPP) will be followed. We anticipate small or no impacts, but await the stormwater facility design details. |
| 4 | Impact on Ground Water | No. Permeable asphalt pavement will not be used. |
| 5 | Impact on Flooding | Yes. The site will be raised on fill to be above the FEMA AE flood risk zone. Based on the HEC-RAS study for The Birches, increased risk to downstream properties will be negligible or very slight. A LOMR is in process for FEMA flood map. The applicant is considering ordering a new HEC-RAS study, but awaits guidance from the floodplain consultant. The Board sentiment is that the impact will be small. |
| 6 | Impacts on Air | No. |
| 7 | Impacts on Plants & Animals | Yes. The EAF Mapper identifies the Northern long-eared bat as an endangered species in our region, but the site is developed with disturbed ground and little suitable bat habitat. The Board sentiment is small or no impact. |
| 8 | Impact on Agricultural Resources | No. |
| 9 | Impact on Aesthetic Resources | No. |
| 10 | Impact on Historic and Archeological Resources | Yes. The site is adjacent or nearby to districts or sites listed on State or National Historical Registers. We anticipate a small impact, but await news of how an upcoming meeting between the Mainbridge design team and SHPO resolves some size and appearance concerns. |
| 11 | Impact on Open Space and Recreation | No. |
| 12 | Impact on Critical Environmental Areas | No. |
| 13 | Impact on Transportation | Yes. Awaiting further details. DOT has approved the Stage 1 PERM33-COM application without requiring a traffic analysis. Stage 1 is concept phase. The Stage 2 application will examine the detailed design, and we await DOT's assessment. |
| 14 | Impact on Energy | Yes. We anticipate small impact. |
| 15 | Impact on Noise, Odor, and Light | Yes. Awaiting detail design of lighting system, which will adhere to village standards. We anticipate a small impact. |
| 16 | Impact on Human Health | No. |
| 17 | Consistency with Community Plans | Yes. The addition of approximately 50 more residents in the village would increase the population by about 5 %. There will be an increased demand for fire, EMS, law enforcement, school, and recreation, and increased traffic, but we anticipate the increases to be small. Perhaps it would spure some development nearby? Mainbridge has submitted an area variance application to the Zoning Board to increase density; the density will be consistent with that at The Birches complex. |
| 18 | Inconsistency with Community Character | No. While the commercial structure is large and the architectural style differs , the sentiment of the Board is that the location on a designated commercial zone on Main St near downtown grants some flexibility in the choices of size and architectural style, and that the design is suitable. |

The Board cannot complete the SEQR process and issue a decision until the Zoning Board of Appeals rules on the density (area) variance application. And we still await the lighting, landscaping, and stormwater design details. But unless a major unanticipated complication emerges, the Board sentiment leans toward issuing a negative declaration.

Memo for Village Board and Zoning Board:

Tom passed around copies of a draft memo, to be sent to the Village Board and the Zoning Board, expressing our expectation for a negative declaration. After editing, Tim made a motion to send the memo to the respective boards. Mike seconded the motion, and we voted 4 – 0 for approval:

As of June 17, 2025, although the Planning Board has not yet rendered a final declaration regarding SEQR on the May 23, 2025 Mainbridge Commons Project Applications because some further information and confirmations which the applicant has promised remain to be provided and a density variance decision from the ZBA as well as a zoning change from the village Board of Trustees are required, the Board has, nevertheless, discussed every question on Part 2 of the EAF and foresees no major SEQR obstacle. The Planning Board, therefore, finds a negative declaration probable if the aforementioned conditions are met and recommends that the Zoning Board of Appeals and Board of Trustees take this currently favorable disposition by the Planning Board on this matter into their considerations.

Lingering questions: Interpretations Requested From Code Enforcement Officer and Legal and Engineering Counselors

1. If 2 parcels are separated by a road, are they considered to be 'adjoining' for the purpose of providing an accessory use on an adjoining parcel to a commercial-use parcel?
2. Are there any standards in the Fire Code pertaining to providing an access road for fire EMS vehicles to the rear of a building? Or maximum distances for fire hoses to reach the rear walls of a building? Or distances from a hydrant?

Meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Future Meetings: To Be Scheduled (an updated drawing package is expected in early July)

Respectfully,

Steve Babbitt

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