

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COHOES PLANNING BOARD HELD VIRTUALLY
FEBRUARY 14, 2021 at 6:30PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Mr. Mark DeFruscio, Chairperson**
 Mr. Jack Carroll, Vice Chair
 Mr. Joe Nadeau
 Ms. Stephanie Couture

ABSENT: **Ms. Kizzy Williams**

ALSO PRESENT: **Joseph Seman-Graves, City Planner**
 Sharon Butler, Administrative Assistant

Chairperson DeFruscio called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and asked for roll call.
Roll Call; Member Bucher and Alternate Member Williams were absent

Chairperson DeFruscio; first important issue is to let everyone know, if you're here for 98 Niver Street, that issue has been removed from the calendar for this month. It's been withdrawn by the applicant so we won't be addressing anything for 98 Niver Street. If you had other things you wanted to do, go ahead.

Sue Commarada; Thank you Mark

Chairperson DeFruscio; I just don't want you waiting for it, because it's not coming.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 10, 2022 MEETING

Chairperson DeFruscio; first item on the agenda is consideration of the January 10, 2022 meeting minutes, are there any changes, additions, modifications that anybody has to submit after reviewing? I see none, so then I'm looking for a motion to accept the minutes as submitted.

Member Couture; I'll make a motion to approve 2nd by Member Nadeau

Motion carried.

	YES	NO
Bob Bucher	ABSENT	
Joseph Nadeau	X	
Mark DeFruscio	X	
Jack Carroll	ABSTAIN	
Stephanie Couture	X	
Kizzy Williams	ABSTAIN	

CONSIDERATION OF A CHANGE OF USE/NEW TENANT APPLICATION FOR 195R SARATOGA STREET

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok, next item on the agenda is consideration of a new tenant application for 195R Saratoga Street. The applicant had been with us last month but didn't have all the information provided. They have since provided the information, they're essentially going to put in a 3 unit apartment building. Is the applicant here?

John Convertino; yes I'm here.

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok do you wish to just review what you're doing?

Mr. Convertino; say that again.

Chairperson DeFruscio; would you like to present to the planning board the plan.....

Mr. Convertino; ok, so the plan is basically, it's already a 3 unit there, 3 floors, there's already an addition on it, which is going to be torn down and rebuilt properly with proper footings and what not underneath it. Once I actually close on this, I'll be buying a little parcel off of Dustin from SCI, which will help a little bit more with how I have the land laid out. I'm waiting on that.

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok does any of the board member have any questions, comments? I know Jack you weren't with us the last time so do you have any questions or comments?

Vice Chair Carroll; no I don't.

Chairperson DeFruscio; alright I guess I'd like to open it up to the public, is there anyone from the public that has any comments, ideas, considerations regarding this property? It's really just straight forward redoing an existing property, cleaning it up, taking down a section that's not that stable, and improving the property. I haven't seen anybody from the public wanting to make any comments, so I'll close the public comment period. So, I'm looking for a motion to accept the final plan or decline the final plan for this property at 195R Saratoga Street.

Member Nadeau; I make a motion to approve. Vice Chair Carroll; I'll 2nd motion carried

	YES	NO
Bob Bucher	ABSENT	
Joseph Nadeau	X	
Mark DeFruscio	X	
Jack Carroll	X	
Stephanie Couture	X	
Kizzy Williams	ABSENT	

Chairperson DeFruscio; I don't know if you saw Sharon that Kizzy has joined us.

Sharon; no I didn't see that.

Chairperson DeFruscio; Kizzy you're with us right?

Joe Seman-Graves; I don't see Kizzy.

Member Nadeau; I see William's iPad.

Sharon; is that her?

Chairperson DeFruscio; I'm not getting a response.

CONSIDERATION OF A FLOOR PLAN REVIEW FOR 171 REMSEN STREET

Chairperson DeFruscio; alright, next item on the agenda is consideration of a floor plane review for 171 Remsen Street. The applicant is proposing three residential apartments on the upper second floor of 171 Remsen Street. The first floor will not be altered, the second floor will be fitted with two apartments and the third floor with one apartment. Is the applicant with us?

Daniel Oh; yes, I'm here.

Chairperson DeFruscio; do you want to give us anything that is different than what I had mentioned?

Mr. Oh; nothing, nothing different than what you mentioned.

Chairperson DeFruscio; so this essentially is Smith's restaurant right?

Mr. Oh; correct.

Chairperson DeFruscio; you're going to keep the restaurant as it is, and you're going to change the second floor into two apartment versus one apartment and keep one apartment on the third floor.

Mr. Oh; yes that's all correct.

Chairperson DeFruscio; any members have any questions?

Vice Chair Carroll; it's pretty straight forward as long as they keep the restaurant on the first floor.

Mr. Oh; we have no intention of changing that, we're still on the hunt for an operator.

Chairperson DeFruscio; if the board members don't have any questions or comments then I'd like to open it up to the public for comments.

Joe Johnson; I just have one question on the project. I see the floor plan and they're talking about dividing, is this building going to be sprinkled on the second and third floors?

Mr. Oh; there are two means of egress on the second floor, so it is not going to be sprinkled.

Mr. Johnson; I missed that, ok thank you.

Vice Chair Carroll; sprinkled?

Sharon; with a sprinkler system in case there's a fire.

Vice Chair Carroll; ok, I thought it was some other term.

Chairperson DeFruscio; any other questions or comments? I see none, so what we're looking for here is an exemption for parking, seeing as there are public lots in close proximity of the property that one directly next to it and one across the street. So I'm going to close the public comments at this point in time and I'm looking for a motion to accept and approve the applicant with a parking exemption for the upper two floors or denying that.

Member Couture; I make a motion to accept. Vice Chair Carroll; 2nd motion carried.

	YES	NO
Bob Bucher	ABSENT	
Joseph Nadeau	X	
Mark DeFruscio	X	
Jack Carroll	X	
Stephanie Couture	X	
Kizzy Williams	ABSENT	

Chairperson DeFruscio; Dan thank you, I think we're all set here and we look forward to the modification of the space and hope you find in short term an operator for the restaurant.

Mr. Oh; thank you very much I appreciate it.

CONSIDERATION OF A CHANGE OF USE/NEW TENANT APPLICATION FOR 146 REMSEN STREET

Chairperson DeFruscio; next item on the agenda is the change of use new tenant application for 146 Remsen Street. The applicant is looking to open a new business called The Brazilian Mini Mart. They provided us with hours of operation, they don't seem to be out of whack with the downtown. Is the applicant with us?

Sara Goncalves; yes I'm here.

Chairperson DeFruscio; would you like to give us an overview of your plan, what you're planning on doing with the apartments upstairs?

Ms. Goncalves; I have nothing to do with the apartments upstairs, the owners has already rented them out. I'm just renting the bottom floor.

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok

Ms. Goncalves; we plan to just be a deli mini mart which will sell Brazilian products, cut meats, deli meats and cheese, such as in the pictures I provided.

Chairperson DeFruscio; yes I see that.

Joe Seman-Graves; just so the board knows, this is a different Brazilian Market, same location.

Chairperson DeFruscio; we've approved somebody else there before.

Ms. Goncalves; yes apparently from what I'm told, it was within the last year.

Member Nadeau; there will not be eat-in services on the premises, everything is to go?

Ms. Goncalves; no, everything is to go.

Chairperson DeFruscio; no public rest room or anything?

Ms. Goncalves; only if there's an emergency honestly. There's one there, but we're not going to make it permanent public.

Vice Chair Carroll; what about delivery, merchandise delivery is that going to be on Remsen?

Ms. Goncalves; we would have a small truck come and drop off probably once every 2 weeks or once a month. If there's a problem with them delivering at the place on Remsen, we can have them deliver at the apartment we are currently living at, just like park the truck there and bring the stuff over to the store.

Chairperson DeFruscio; is there a rear entrance that they could come through or no?

Ms. Goncalves; I didn't see one at all.

Chairperson DeFruscio; I don't think there is one there. Any other questions or comments?

Member Nadeau; assuming this is approved, when do you expect to be in operation?

Ms. Goncalves; I'm, we're kind of redoing the ceiling right now because of the previous people that put it in. So we are hoping to be able to open by the 5th of next month.

Member Nadeau; thank you

Ms. Goncalves; on top of I believe its Ed, I can't remember his last name...

Member Nadeau; you have an Ed Francesconi listed here, is that who you're trying to refer to?

Ms. Goncalves; yes, he's working on the bathroom and piping upstairs.

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok so do members have any other additional questions? If not I'd like to open it up for public comments at this point in time. Is there anybody in the public that has any comments, questions or things they want to say? Alright, I don't see any public comments, so I'm going to close the public comment period at this point in time. So I'm looking for a motion to either approve or deny the application of opening a new business at 146 Remsen Street. Member Nadeau; I make a motion to approve. Vice Chair Carroll; I'll 2nd motion carried.

	YES	NO
Bob Bucher	ABSENT	
Joseph Nadeau	X	
Mark DeFruscio	X	
Jack Carroll	X	
Stephanie Couture	X	
Kizzy Williams	ABSENT	

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok you're all set and we wish you luck and look forward to seeing you open next month sometime.

Ms. Goncalves; thank you so much

CONSIDERATION OF A CHANGE OF USE/NEW TENANT APPLICATION FOR 239 REMSEN STREET

Chairperson DeFruscio; next item on the agenda is consideration of a change of use new tenant application for 239 Remsen Street. Is the applicant with us?

Don Russell; yes.

Chairperson DeFruscio; do you want to explain to us what you're proposing here?

Mr. Russell; sure, so this is the former Miron Flooring next to Spindles Wine Bar on Remsen Street. We purchased the building spring time last year. The building is about 7,000 square feet, just shy of 7,000 square feet. So we're proposing to put five apartments into it. Five-one bedroom apartments targeting single individuals and then the former show room space we're looking to put a gourmet market in. Comparable to Cardona's up in Latham. But we'll be featuring fresh produce, there will be a meat counter, we're going to offer delivery service to downtown residents, such as the seniors to make things a little more convenient for them.

Chairperson DeFruscio; do any of the members have questions or comments?

Member Nadeau; I do. The entrance to the building, the main entrance on Remsen Street, will that main entrance be exposed to the stairway as well as the deli?

Mr. Russell; so the main entrance on the front of the building will go, that will be access for two apartments upstairs. When you walk in, there's a vestibule, so you walk in and there will be a door to the market and then there will be a door that goes up to the stairwell to the two apartments on the second floor. And then for three of the apartments, they will have their own private entrance from the alley and there will also be an entrance to the market for deliveries. All deliveries for the market will be in the back, they'll have a direct access door right into the market storage area.

Member Nadeau; and you're comfortable with that main entrance being kind of shared with the tenants and the business operation?

Mr. Russell; yes, one of the tenants that will be in that front space is my business partner. And then we already have tenants lined up for four of the five apartments. So yea, I'm not concerned about that because everything will be secure, each access will be secured by a lock. The tenants will have a key to their door to get up to their place, there will be a keyed entrance to the market, and it'll be a shared vestibule.

Member Nadeau; ok.

Chairperson DeFruscio; so there's a note on your application about the last three apartments they have kitchens below the ground level that we have not received plans for yet.

Mr. Russell; it's actually not below ground level, it's at ground level. It's just how the property slopes. The kitchens are at street level in the back alley.

Joe Seman-Graves; Mark if you see, I updated it on the email, the square footage in here was not representative of the unit plus the kitchen for these two here (on screen) so we added those and it was sent in the email that I sent out all the updated

information. But you can see obviously the residential units are not 300 square feet, they just lack the kitchen square footage.

Chairperson DeFruscio; and parking, everything for the apartments, is there off street parking or is there.....

Mr. Russell; so behind Spindles there's 2 available off street parking spaces and then we have spoken with Rizzo's Florist and the tenants will be able to use their parking spaces overnight when Rizzo's is not there. For the front two spaces, we're within the allotted distance to a public parking space so we are looking for a waiver, but we are within the allotted distance to public parking on Remsen Street.

Chairperson DeFruscio; and each of the three apartments in the back there, those are two story apartments?

Mr. Russell; yup, they're up and down style.

Chairperson DeFruscio; anybody else have questions?

Member Couture; yes, I just have a couple of questions. Is there going to be any eat-in opportunities here or is everything going to be take out?

Mr. Russell; we are looking at being able to put a couple of two top tables that people can come in at lunch time for example and grab a salad or something like that. They'll be able to have a place to sit in the front and then obviously in the nice weather be able to put those tables outside on the sidewalk along the front. But it would be for two or four people tops. And that will obviously be dependent upon placement of shelving and all that kind of stuff. We don't want it to be crammed in, we want people to enjoy their shopping experience there. But it would be our hope to at least be able to give somebody a spot if they do come in at lunch time, because as we all know there's hardly any place to eat lunch in downtown Cohoes anymore.

Member Couture; so a rest room would be available to anyone?

Mr. Russell; yes, the rest room that is on the blueprint in the back would, people will have access to that.

Member Couture; ok and you did note the hours are 7AM to 8PM daily, are you looking at seven days a week?

Mr. Russell; six days a week. Monday's we would be closed.

Member Couture; and it looks like the City engineer had several questions, did we get resolution to all of those?

Mr. Russell; yes, code enforcement already walked the project this past week.

Member Couture; and that cleared all of the city engineer's concerns?

Mr. Russell; yup.

Member Couture; ok, thank you.

Chairperson DeFruscio; from your perspective Joe, everything is kosher here?

Joe Seman-Graves; yea and I think any of the minor things that still need to be touched up by the architect were not items that were going to change the layouts of these units.

Member Nadeau; any of those items will be picked up during the occupancy permit inspection right?

Joe Seman-Graves; absolutely yes.

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok if no other members have any questions, I'd like to open this up for public comment. Is there anybody from the public that has any questions, comments or things they want to share? I know when I looked at the building and saw that it was only two stories, I was thinking where were you going to put five apartments. But with the L shaped building in the back which you can't really see from the front...

Mr. Russell; yeah, and it goes literally right back to the alley, its super deep.

Member Nadeau; my recollection in the past when it was a business there, there were parking issues back there. I would appreciate keeping some kind of control of that.

Mr. Russell; I agree and I live next door, I live above Spindles so I'm aware of what you're saying. There's a neighbor that lives in the alley and they have a tendency to park back there and I've already talked to him and said this is going to be somebody's home that you're not going to be able to park there much longer. They are aware of that.

Member Nadeau; ok, thank you.

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok so if there's no public comments, I'd would like to close the public comment period. Now we're looking for a motion to approve or deny a change of use new tenant application for 239 Remsen Street as well as give them relief from the parking requirements as well. Is there anything else Joe that we need to add to that?

Joe Seman-Graves; I think, you know it's zoned correctly for commercial, that makes the use, the biggest concern downtown is always density as well as parking. He's provided some off street parking and it is within 430 feet of a lot instead of the 500 foot requirement, so it's really up to the board to approve this density.

Chairperson DeFruscio; so does anybody have a motion to approve or deny.

Vice Chair Carroll; so moved to approve Member Couture; I'll 2nd motion passed.

	YES	NO
Bob Bucher	ABSENT	
Joseph Nadeau	X	
Mark DeFruscio	X	
Jack Carroll	X	
Stephanie Couture	X	
Kizzy Williams	ABSENT	

Chairperson DeFruscio; we look forward to the new market and the wares that you are going to offer there as well as some new people to provide business for the downtown.

Mr. Russell; thank you, I appreciate it greatly and hopefully we'll see you at the grant opening.

CONSIDERATION OF A SITE PLAN REVIEW FOR 426 COLUMBIA STREET

Chairperson DeFruscio; the next item on the agenda is consideration of a special use review for 426 Columbia Street. It's the addition of a 34x36 constructed garage. Is somebody on the call that is representing that?

Sean Rivage; yes.

Chairperson DeFruscio; Sean you want to give us what is done there?

Mr. Rivage; (inaudible) I just need space from him to park, store some trucks, equipment and stuff like that for my business. So this, I've been going back and forth unclear of what the description of a permanent versus non-permanent structure is. This is a pre-fab structure that gets built in a day, it's just sitting on an Alaskan slab and basically I did go for a permit for this, it was advised to go for a permit if I was putting it on a foundation. It wasn't required, I shouldn't say it wasn't required, but it was just advised by my construction company that did it. I have plans in the future if I move out of this space, the building gets deconstructed in basically a day and moved with a low boy trailer. It is all bolted together, the steel structure frame and basically the use is for storing some equipment and smaller items like hand mowers, pressure washers. I had an issue this past year with some things being stolen from the lot over the course of the weekend nights, people driving in are taking smaller things like that so that was the purpose for it. Like I said obviously the building is already constructed, so I'm just going through the motions of just trying to make everything right with the city. I do have plans of, if I can acquire this property I'm interested in, in Colonie, 10 acres, I'm looking at moving to within two years, and this building would be deconstructed and moved. Like I said it's an Alaskan slab there and that can easily be removed.

Vice Chair Carroll; an Alaskan slab?

Mr. Rivage; yea, it's a 5 inch Alaskan slab which means it's just a formed poured concrete. I was originally going to install it on an asphalt base, it's just a little rougher.

Vice Chair Carroll; ok

Mr. Rivage; it's easier to move things around obviously when you have concrete, but there's no frost walls or anything like that, it's just a 5 inch Alaskan slab. If I need to remove it, it's just saw cut in places lifted out, it's sitting on an existing crusher run lot, so it's just all number 2 crushed stone. There was nothing there previously.

Chairperson DeFruscio; so this essentially is something that is already done and you're looking for us to provide approval for it at this point in time.

Mr. Rivage; basically what happened is I went through the process of trying to obtain a permit for this, the construction company from North Carolina, they were all set to construct the building, I believe it was December 20th, I'm not, I'm pretty sure it was December 20th, so I believe it was a couple of days before, I got a letter saying that it was denied because it was non-conforming. I have \$30,000 invested in the building and it's non-refundable, so that's why the building went up. So here I am just trying to figure out what needs to be done for approval or denial.

Member Nadeau; some of my concerns have to do with the general appearance as the gateway to the city. It's not so much the structure that was built without a permit, but it's the stock piles of materials, just the overall appearance of that lot is not conducive as the gateway to the city. That would be more of my concern and had this gone through the proper channels, I would have stated that concern prior to the erection of it. I'm not sure what can be done about that, I guess I'd be looking for help from you as to what can be done to make it more presentable.

Mr. Rivage; right, so your concern is just like materials and stuff just being left out in the wide open or what comes to your first impression?

Member Nadeau; just generally going by there and this has been before you were there even, the general appearance of what takes place on that lot as a gateway to the city, it's disappointing.

Mr. Rivage; yea, I mean as far as what I have there, I can't speak for what it was previously, the state it was in previously, but for what I've done there, I feel that I have at least cleaned up the appearance as far as garbage, trash, stuff that's been abandoned and left there. At least what's in the lot now, the property has is all just trucks and this and that, but I do get what you're saying.

Chairperson DeFruscio; are there still trailers, travel trailer and things in there?

Mr. Rivage; I believe there's one or two out in front.

Chairperson DeFruscio; and are they yours Sean or are they.....

Mr. Rivage; no, I'm not quite sure who's they are, I just lease the outside space. I don't have anything to do with the garage or stuff that's parked in front of the building. But I just lease the outdoor space on the side and the rear of the building.

Vice Chair Carroll; if I can add to this. I've been by there a few times, actually that building blocks off a lot of the less than scenic materials there.

Chairperson DeFruscio; the new building you're talking about?

Vice Chair Carroll; yeah, I mean you've got to place some things way behind the building and at least it's out of sight. And you've been there how long now Sean, 10 years?

Mr. Rivage; it's been 5 years. Yeah, we've grown a lot and Paul Marra the landlord, he's helped me out greatly, to help me build and I mean we do have another hub up in Saratoga Springs, it's kind of similar to this. We're just trying to balance between 2 spaces and that's where I'm going through the motion of trying to lease to build this property over in Colonie to get it zoned industrial and to kind of put us out at the next level. But yeah, we provide services in construction, install for many, many people around the state.

Joe Seman-Graves; I just want to add, we're not just focusing on the garage itself, while that is Mr. Rivage's concern here, it is a site plan approval for the entire site. If there's anything else on the site that needs to be brought into this conversation, I wouldn't say withhold from it.

Member Nadeau; I guess, I don't know if I'm the only one with concerns, but the fuel tank area factor, I'm not sure how this transpired into a business years ago without being presented to the planning department. I don't think that's Sean's problem, he just did what he could and by all means Sean I'm not looking to, I commend you for operating a successful business. Again, my concern is the gateway to the city and what that lot has materialized into, it's just not conducive to the neighborhood. As you know the zoning has changed up there, it's A-1 residential and to see this particular parcel going in this direction, just again Sean it's not anything against you, you run a great business, but if there was something that could be done to change the appearance. Again if you had come prior, for prior approval that building would have been up further and your pallets of block and material would be behind it so it would be totally concealed. There's been a problem with parking over the years, it's been construction staging again, this is before you, and I thought maybe this is a chance to clean up the whole parcel.

Mr. Rivage; there was another thought for the remaining time that I'm there, is to establish a temporary fence, not out on Columbia Street but set back into the property with a privacy barrier to that, was another idea. I did get some prices and stuff but I haven't pursued any kind of approval or anything like that yet.

Member Nadeau; actually that would go a long way. Again my concern is we're setting a president if and when you ever decided to relocate from that property, what I don't want to do here is set a president for another construction company or something else to move into this because we're allowing it to enlarge.

Mr. Rivage; correct and I totally get what you're saying and I'm right in your shoes about the appearance. I never expected to grow to this size and this is half of my equipment, half of it is out on jobs throughout the year. Construction equipment and all that stuff that's never even here. Like I said, I never expected to get to this point and now it's me trying to keep going in this next direction of getting adequate space and zoned correctly too.

Member Nadeau; again it's generally neat, everything stock piled, everything is neat and orderly, but it's still....

Mr. Rivage; it's right as you come into the city.

Member Nadeau; yes.

Chairperson DeFruscio; Mr. Marra do you have any comments?

Paul Marra; no, I mean that property, you know as you said it has blossomed. Any future use of that property I'm sure will have to be approved by you guys.

Member Nadeau; that's nice Paul, but it hasn't been approved up until now. But at this stage dealing with what's there now, Sean alluded to possibly a privacy, some kind of fencing even if it was along the face of the existing building that would shield his stock piles and maybe put a better face on the property. Again, I can't insist that you do that.

Mr. Rivage; it will keep people from driving in and out to you know. I guess while I'm in the meeting here, I don't know as far as putting a say like an 8 foot chain link fence up with privacy barrier, I don't know what the approvals or what kind of permits to obtain for something like that.

Joe Seman-Graves; it would be similar to what you're going through right now. So if you did want to put a fence up and the board is requesting that, I'd say just get on the phone with me and we'll get another site plan together showing where it's going to go, show the design of the fence, then we'll propose it to the board next meeting.

Mr. Rivage; alright.

Member Nadeau; Sean, again I wouldn't be looking for a total barrier, just something to improve the site line somewhat, to maybe put a shadow on your construction, of your block and your pallets, that type of material. Sean, we wouldn't want to hinder you coming in and out of there.

Mr. Rivage; it's so open that's the problem. If there was more green space, if I had the ability to plant trees around, but the problem is there is so much frontage along Columbia Street so it makes it harder to do that and being that I can't put some more trees and stuff along Monroe Street, but I can only come out so far without blocking any kind of site for pedestrians pulling out. So I'll give it some thought.

Chairperson DeFruscio; how did you come up with the location of the building Sean versus more towards the front or more towards the back?

Mr. Rivage; well there's an existing concrete pad, they must have used for, it used to be an old bus garage and there was, it was used as, part of that floor in that garage, they used part of that existing concrete that was there from, they used to do, I guess you would go down in between these concrete sections, change oil on the trucks and stuff. We used a portion of that and it was just how we would normally use the lots driving in and out or parking stuff that was the least traffic area. So if we, and I didn't want to come up towards the road closer obviously to be an eye sore or at least try to match the siding with the roof that's on the existing building and the location of that obviously helped block some of the stuff in the back too, so that was kind of...and also we ran some temporary power to the building for some lights that was inspected, electrical inspection. Obviously if I put it on a different location on the property, it's difficult to do any of that.

Mr. Marra; and if I could say, probably before Sean was even born that was used for tractor trailers to pull in and out of there to get the oil changed and the service done. There was a pit alongside that building and what we did was kind of butt up to that concrete slab.

Chairperson DeFruscio; thank you for that clarification. Do any of the members have any additional questions? I guess I'd like to open this up to comments from the public. If there's anybody in the public that has any comments at this point in time.

Joe Johnson; yea, I'd like to talk on this on behalf of Sean. Sean and I grew up together a long time ago in Glen Meadows. We started a business, he's grown this thing into something that I think is great. He's always been in Cohoes, his parents are still here, and he's been here a long time. I know I ended up having to leave the city because I outgrew the city, so I know what he's going through. I think his trucks look good up there. I think they're clean, they're professionally lettered. I think if he's not here you might get more storage of vehicles. I know there's a lot of that going on in the city. I think Sean does a nice job. I think this garage actually helped, correct me if I'm wrong, but there were conex boxes there that were temporary structures. I believe he removed those and I think this is something that can be taken down as quickly as it was put up and moved, so I think this, I know you guys have issues with the site. I've been in Cohoes my whole life I know it's been an ongoing eyesore, but this young kid works hard and grew his business into something. He came right out of Cohoes and I think the city should support him and I hope that he does stay here.

Member Nadeau; let me be a little more clear. I don't have a problem with his equipment, I agree he keeps an orderly site, there's no question about it, he does a great business. It's the stockpile of materials that just grabs the eye, if there is something that can be done with that, I'm supportive.

Mr. Johnson; yea, I mean, I guess I know there was some concerns about the vehicles and stuff in the front that doesn't seem that it pertains to him. That's out of his wheel house, I know his trucks and I literally call Sean when I need a lawn mower because I know he keeps his equipment top notch and he's a great guy. I think his trucks and appearance of everything lettered all the same, if it's not him being there and he leaves then are you going to be stuck with more campers and RV's? I understand what he's going through because I ended up, I live in Cohoes and I outgrew the city and it's tough to find any areas in the city to rent your business of this nature. I think that is a great location for him,

unfortunately its' the gateway to the city and I would just hate to see him be pushed out of the city we grew up in. We stated, him and I used to be partners back in Glen Meadows, we used to push lawn mowers around. That's kind of going back in history but Sean.....

Member Nadeau; and I agree with that, we don't want to see him leave the city either.

Chairperson DeFruscio; no we're not trying to push Sean out, we really hope for the success of his business where it is. The issue we have at this point in time is because of the building we're obligated to do a site plan review and that includes the entire site not just Sean's building. So that's why you're seeing the additional comments about the RV's being store out front and things like that. We understand that it's not his responsibility, it is the responsibility of the owner. We're trying to mitigate some kind of solution to improve the view of that site at this point, that's all we're doing. We don't want to impact Sean's business.

Mr. Marra; back to the RV's, both of those RV's are friends of mine, they have no place to keep them where they live. I've allowed them to keep them there, I've never heard anything about them before. There are 2 RV's.

Chairperson DeFruscio; I need to ask.....

Mr. Rivage; I can try to eradicate a plan and be creative, think of some ideas that could provide some additional screening coming down Columbia Street with direction.

Member Nadeau; that would be appreciated Sean.

Chairperson DeFruscio; I do need to ask if there are any more public comments or I can close the public comment period.

Mr. Johnson; I appreciate you guy's time. Sean good luck I hope everything works out for you.

Mr. Rivage; thank you.

Vice Chair Carroll; I have a concern about Sean moving, I mean they're going to put Stewarts out of business in the morning. It's like Sherman's army moving in there in the morning.

Chairperson DeFruscio; so I guess we made it clear that we would appreciate any suggestions or considerations that you and Mr. Marra can discuss to try and improve the view of that building and that property because it is the gateway to the city. We did a lot of soul searching when we allowed the Stewarts and the carwash to be put where it is, when that project came about and worked with them a lot to make sure it was an improvement for the community and that's what we're looking at here.

Mr. Rivage; let me come up with some ideas, fencing, trees anything of that nature over the next two weeks and then I can come back and make a presentation. I do have, I did receive a few quotes here and there over the last few months of some different things but let me go back to the drawing board and talk to Mr. Marra about it and we'll go from there.

Chairperson DeFruscio; so we have 2 options, we can do an approval for the site plan for the building and constructed garage that's already there at this point in time with some reference to submission of future plans for some other fencing or shrubbery or out and out approve or deny the building construction. Is there anything else Joe that we need to include?

Joe Seman-Graves; you can also just table the matter until next month, until there's some updated plans.

Member Nadeau; updated plans to include.....

Chairperson DeFruscio; Sean when to give Sean an opportunity, a month to see if he can come up with something additional for our consideration and then we can approve them both at the same time.

Mr. Rivage; do you have a meeting every 30 days is that was it is?

Vice Chair Carroll; yes 2nd Monday of the month. Is what we're asking Sean to do is it a little beyond the scope of what he asking us to do? He's asking us to do an approval for the building.

Chairperson DeFruscio; no that's not what it is. It's an approval of the site plan.

Vice Chair Carroll; ok.

Chairperson DeFruscio; and it includes the entire site so we're not out of our realm. It doesn't affect you Sean in any way, shape or form, because if we table it until next month, because we're not asking him to take the building down or change anything at this point in time, we're just asking you for a little more consideration and see what you come up with.

Mr. Rivage; that's no problem at all.

Chairperson DeFruscio; I guess I'm looking for a motion to table this item until next meeting.

Member Nadeau; I make that motion Vice Chair Carroll 2nd motion carried to TABLE this agenda item.

Chairperson DeFruscio; and Sean I just want you to understand, we don't want to lose your business in Cohoes, we think you're a great asset and we wish success for you and we appreciate you taking the opportunity just to see what else you can come up with between now and next month.

Mr. Rivage; absolutely.

Member Nadeau; I would like to thank Sean and Paul also for any consideration they can do to the general improvement to the site.

Mr. Rivage; any kind of improvement to the general appearance will be a plus. I will give you my word, I'll work on it and go from there.

CONSIDERATION OF A CHANGE OF USE/NEW TENANT APPLICATION FOR 288 SARATOGA STREET

Chairperson DeFruscio; next item on the agenda is consideration of a change of use new tenant application for 288 Saratoga Street. Is the applicant with us?

Joe Johnson; yes I'm here.

Chairperson DeFruscio; you're seeking to rehab an existing three unit apartment building and change it to a six unit apartment building at 288 Saratoga Street, is that correct?

Mr. Johnson; yes that is correct. So I purchased the building probably about 3 months ago, maybe 4 months ago now. I did go through the application process to get the three units back to the way it was, to rebuild the structure. The building was on fire probably years ago now. When I sat there and I looked at the building, the foot print was about 15-1700 square feet, they are existing 4 bedroom apartments in each apartment and I just kind of looked and said this really isn't the road I would want to put my kids on and I've done a lot of construction, I own several buildings in Cohoes, once again I'm a Cohoesier, I grew up in Cohoes. And so some of the other projects I've done, I've converted to smaller units and I've had great success as far as bringing young professional individual people into the area and limiting the amount of kids. I just think the street is way too busy to potentially put 12 kids coming in and out of the house.

Chairperson DeFruscio; so you're increasing the number of apartments thinking that you're going to decrease the number of kids versus adults because of the footprint of the apartments?

Mr. Johnson; that's correct. So what we would do is take the building and we split it up so it would be a 1 bedroom and a den in the front and then the rear would be a 2 bedroom and the building will get completed resided. We have a sprinkler system installed. I actually bought another burned out building in Cohoes, so we have several projects going on in the city, but like I said this here I just kind of looked at the footprint, it's really a big building, not to, I don't know you've got to cross the street to get to the parking lots. I visited there one time with my wife and kids and it was like good luck. It was like trying to play frogger to get across Saratoga Street.

Chairperson DeFruscio; you've got to understand that we think that parking is an issue there because some of that lot is owned by the city, some of it is owned by the IDA and private owners for parts of it.

Mr. Johnson; so I kind of looked at the map of that and I know there are 2 lots owned by the IDA, one is directly across the street, the other one is on the other side of the garage. There is a private owner that owns that 4 car garage and a little piece next to it. I've been through some of these meetings before, we actually have several tenants that in the other buildings and other projects that they use public transportation, they have other means. There are people that sometimes don't even have cars, there's UBER available, there's so much available now. I've lived in the city of Cohoes, I understand the parking issue, I've been to Saratoga Street, and I've been to the house, when I was a kid actually. I mean we seem to find parking when we're there, as far as the trucks go there were some trailers being stored in that lot, they've since been gone. I haven't really had an issue as far as trying to find a parking space over there. I think at a minimum each floor, even if I left it at 3 units, could be a potential 2 cars, that's 6 cars, so that's, I mean I don't know how many more cars that would actually generate if you really thought everybody was actually driving I guess.

Chairperson DeFruscio; Joe the issue, Joe Johnson, the issue we're trying to deal with there, it's not an approved city parking lot, so I can't give you a waiver for parking. And the city's requirements is 1 parking space per unit for a multi-family residential dwelling.

Mr. Johnson; well yea, I guess then I would ask the city where would the residents park if they live on Saratoga Street? I mean I understand what you're saying, it's a sticky situation, and it's always been when it comes to that Saratoga Street corridor. Obviously there is no on street parking for anybody that potentially lives there. It's always been this kind of weird situation that they use that lot that's across the road. I mean I'm, I guess I'm not asking, I don't know that I'm approaching the board for a parking variance or just a change of use on the existing building to change the units. I'm not really sure maybe Joe can help me out with that.

Joe Seman-Graves; it's a little of both. If you change the use and increase the density that also comes with the parking. So there both inter related to a degree.

Mr. Johnson; yeah I just, I mean I don't know the parking situation, I understand the parking situation, I just don't have an answer for that because there never was parking on Saratoga Street and obviously this lot that is stuck with the IDA has kind of been used by the residents over the years. So I don't know, it's kind of a sticky situation, I understand what you're saying. If the IDA develops that land, then I don't know what the plan would be, where these other people are going to park their cars, the people that live there I guess is what I'm saying.

Chairperson DeFruscio; and there's no capacity for a driveway or anything where this house is?

Mr. Johnson; unfortunately no. I mean there is a small front yard, like the resident next to me, he had made himself a little driveway, but I think it will hold maybe 1 car and then I know he has problems backing out of there because it's literally, basically you can get one small SUV in there and it just clears the sidewalk. So unfortunately we don't have that option. The guy who does have all the parking also has the garage but we don't have that option there either unfortunately.

Member Nadeau; is there rear access to that property?

Mr. Johnson; yea, there's not, the train tracks, we butt up to the train track, the building on each side are within 3 to 5 feet from each other.

Joe Seman-Graves; I would also add that the chances of any of these lots being developed is slim to none given their sizes. The depth is not there for, whether it's a single family house now or commercial. So I don't see these being developed and Mark to your point they are not official parking lots, but I just want to take that off the table that they would be developed in the future by the IDA, so I don't believe that is the intent.

Chairperson DeFruscio; I agree with you, we need to do something from the perspective, we don't even know who's plowing the lots out when it snows. We know it's not the IDA.

Mr. Johnson; I believe the city, I was talking to neighbors who've been there a long time and the city actually paved that lot at one time and they also plow the lot up to the telephone pole, so the city actually maintains that lot. To Joe's point, I don't think, if it was ever to be developed it would have to be something where they approach 787 with store fronts and turn it into a boulevard or something of that nature. I mean you would have an absolute disaster down there as far as parking on Saratoga Street goes. It's one of those unspoken things, it's been this way for so long with the city going way back.

Chairperson DeFruscio; anybody else have questions or comments?

Member Couture; my only thought was that, I know we have to take the parking into consideration, because it's a change of use, but it is an existing building, it's not new construction. So he's not increasing the density by changing it to a proposed 6 unit. So in my opinion it's, people have parked there before, they figure it out, it's not ideal, I definitely agree with that, but it's not something that he's causing new issues.

Chairperson DeFruscio; I don't disagree with you Steph, I'm just trying to come up with a plan that we can all live with, if we knew that it was an approved public parking lot, that the city maintained which I don't know that we have those facts at this point in time and if we were approving 3 parking spots it would be much easier than, because he wants to go to 6 units which I understand the logic and everything and I don't disagree with it, you're probably likely to get somebody in there that doesn't drive, but what it does from our perspective is, there's 6 parking spots that we have to somehow say that we're going to justify approving this because there's public parking within 500 feet.

Joe Seman-Graves; now there's also the ability to reduce the amount by adding things like a bike rack, should the board want to go that route. So you can knock off 1 or 2 spots by putting other infrastructure in. I would also add that I'd be happy to work on this from the city and IDA's point of view to try to get these lots together, because really from this whole stretch from Vital Signs down to the other house on Saratoga right there (on screen) there's only 3 lots that are not owned by either the city or IDA and 2 of them are DOT. So I think there's opportunity to combine these and make something of it, but the challenge is, if you go and make it an official lot now and you put it in a memo and you paved it, what we own currently you'll probably reduce the amount of spaces because you'll have to stripe it officially and if you're not doing the whole thing at once, you're going to kind of segment it and I can see there being less parking by doing that. I'd hesitate to say make it an official lot now in its current condition. If that make sense to the board.

Mr. Johnson; I think that's why when the city came through and paved it, that why they didn't stripe it, they didn't really want to make it an official lot, but I do know what you're saying, there are several lots over there that are in that gray area, that have just been used by the residents of Saratoga Street. I just don't know, if that property was ever to be developed where anybody would go.

Member Couture; I think this is an opportunity to start a conversation. So Joe from the city anything you can do to maybe combine those and I don't know if DOT could ever be approached to see if those pieces that they have can be sold either

to property owners or the city, anything like that. And then Joe Johnson, would you be open to a bike rack or some type of other infrastructure to kind of reduce the need for all 6 units to have parking?

Mr. Johnson; yes, I mean certainly. We've done that in the past with other planning boards. We've had to install a bike rack at another project that we did, we had no problem with that. We did it through a vendor and we were also questioned one time whether it was on a bus route, which obviously Saratoga Street is heavily traveled and I think there is a bus location down on the corner there where price chopper, right around Main Street area, so we're in the proximity of public transportation for sure. And we have no problem putting in bike racks and things of that nature to accommodate alternative means of transportation.

Joe Seman-Graves; we did have comments sent in if you would like me to read those now.

Chairperson DeFruscio; please.

Joe Seman-Graves; and I did try to explain to the individuals who commented, the confusion, before I read these, with density. The current capacity as I said with the current 3 unit layout would be 18 people and with the 6 units it will still be 18 people. So it's not necessarily adding individuals in the household but just the increased parking requirement by the planning board and I also tried to explain that just because there's a 4 bedroom that does not necessarily mean that there's a family that's going to be living there. It could potentially be roommates that each have their own car. (on screen) this is a photo taken of the lot on 1/27/22 at 7AM. The comments were read; Casi Hasslinger of 290 Saratoga Street, Charlise Ackles of Saratoga Street, and Dan Quinn of Saratoga Street.

Chairperson DeFruscio; is there anybody that has any additional public comments, I'll open it up for public comments at this point in time. Don't see anyone. One of the comments read as something we should ask you about Joe, as far as trash is concerned. What are you going to do if it's a 6 unit building, does that change if the city picks up the trash or...

Mr. Johnson; I know that, I think that after 3 units maybe, I know at some point we can still have city pickup. I believe there is an additional fee and different cans, they're blue I believe. I don't really know what the rules are that that but ultimately like Joe had said, we're not generating more people, we're just ultimately breaking the building up and this comes down to the planning code, which is making us look towards making more parking which may or may not necessarily be a function just to get to this point. We could just rent it to 4 college kids and they could all bring a car so it really comes down to not adding more people per say. It's just were stuck in this planning situation with the parking. To get to the point with the DSS and low income housing, I know there's a lot of people who run around and say those things, you know we can't control who we rent too obviously but we do tend to lean towards younger professionals, people of that nature. So we had great success, I have about 50 units rented right now and this is one of the projects I have going in Cohoes currently. I don't think we're adding more people, we're ultimately looking at maybe adding 1 or 2 more cars per say than what we're currently going to bring if that's what the planning code says, that may or may not happen so it's all kind of a speculation depending on whoever decides to rent the units.

Chairperson DeFruscio; I know I'm just torn at this point in time. I agree with everybody that people will find the parking one way or another. It could create issues there but if it was just 3 units, then we would essentially from a code perspective, we would only be dealing with 3 parking spaces. When we go to 6 units the code says we have to deal with 6 parking spaces, off street parking spaces for this project and I don't know how we can get around that at this point in time. I know that you're considering a bike rack or something in order to offset 1 or 2 of those parking spots.

Mr. Johnson; yea, that's correct we will install alternative means. If it's a bike rack that helps with the parking situation, like I said we're kind of speculating, we don't know, like Joe was saying we could have 4 roommates and there could be 4 cars. I mean the building has a permit right now to build it back to 3 units and leave it the way it is, but like I said I just looked at adding no more density, essentially eliminating the city maybe having an accident with a kid or eliminating some burden to the school district and that's where I came up with the idea to make this into smaller apartments and then create something where young professionals and people like that would have a convenient spot to travel to and from work, wherever that work may be.

Joe Seman-Graves; and the code does specifically say the planning board at its sole discretion may require less off street parking if warranted based on information presented. "In any case where less off street parking is required, the planning board reserves the right to require to set aside the additional open space efficient to accommodate the amount of off street parking which would ordinarily be required, if they choose so." So there's a couple of things the board can look at here, I mean right now I would say that you would assume 3 spaces would be permitted regardless since it's continuing the use of a 3 family, so we're really looking at the additional 3 and if there's any reason then that the board would waive 1 or more by adding additional infrastructure or the information that Mr. Johnson provided is sufficient, that can be taken into

account. So you do have some options with that without necessarily addressing the parking and if it's legally considered public parking or not.

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok, so then I'm looking either for a motion to approve or deny the change to a 6 unit apartment, we can have a caveat that the developer will consider additional infrastructure to be presented at the next meeting for us to reduce the parking draw. Does anybody want to make a motion of any sort?

Member Couture; so when you say that he has to present at the next meeting, are we looking to possibly approve as is with that caveat and he just has to let us know what he's going to be installing?

Vice Chair Carroll; or are we tabling it? Are we tabling it?

Chairperson DeFruscio; I wasn't going there, but that's an option.

Mr. Johnson; I would just ask for the boards consideration at least to give me their approval based on I'll install the secondary means of transportation. I'm just really looking to get working on the building, there are some exterior alterations that need to be done. I'm really looking to side this thing and get moving. This is the difference between adding a sprinkler system or not, so there's just so many things that go into this. If I table for another 30 days, I just prolong the construction and I know the neighbors are really tired of looking at the eyesore. So I guess I'm going to do what I say I'm going to do, but I understand you guys have an obligation to review everything and look and make sure it's on my plan or site plan. It'll 100% be on there, between Joe and I or you guys, I can put the bike rack in there.

Chairperson DeFruscio; I was leaving it open ended so that between now and then if you and Joe came up with another option in addition to the bike rack, we can mention specifically the bike rack, and to investigate other options as well. I mean the public transportation part of it, we understand that is a bus line. I believe there's a bus stop at Spring Street and there's one at New Bedford.

Mr. Johnson; I believe that is correct.

Member Couture; I'll make a motion to move forward with the approval based on the caveat that you had mentioned Mark and based on the fact that it is already a 3 unit, minus the 2 that could potentially be alleviated because of the bike rack. So we're only looking at the addition of one potential space that we need to hopefully figure something out with and have Joe work with the City to see what can be done as far as maybe acquiring all those lots and kind of stringing them together.

Member Nadeau; I'll 2nd Stephanie's motion. Motion carried

	YES	NO
Bob Bucher	ABSENT	
Joseph Nadeau	X	
Mark DeFruscio	X	
Jack Carroll	X	
Stephanie Couture	X	
Kizzy Williams	ABSENT	

Chairperson DeFruscio; Mr. Johnson thank you for working through this with us, we understand that you're looking to develop the property and we appreciate that but we also understand that residents around you feel that the addition of more families is going to impact their parking at that, in that area. But it is true that the building was used or occupied at one point in time, there were parking spots for the people that lived there, we just need to work out the details so it works with the new city code.

Mr. Johnson; I understand that and I appreciate you guys working with me and it feels good to be back in Cohoes and doing things for some of these building that I've been trying to save my whole life. I look forward to doing more projects here in the city and I appreciate all you guys help and helping me here as well.

Chairperson DeFruscio; thank you and good luck. By now you're all tired of looking at me so it's 7:54 and I'm looking for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chair Carroll; so moved Member Couture; I'll 2nd motion carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:54PM