

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COHOES PLANNING BOARD HELD VIRTUALLY ON
May 10, 2021 at 6:30PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Mr. Mark DeFruscio, Chairperson**
 Mr. Joseph Nadeau
 Ms. Stephanie Couture
 Ms. Kizzy Williams

ABSENT: **Mr. Jack Carroll, Vice Chair**
 Mr. Bob Bucher

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

Chairperson DeFruscio called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.
Roll Call; there were 2 members absent; Mr. Robert Bucher and Vice Chair Carroll

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 12, 2021 MEETING

Chairperson DeFruscio; the first item on the agenda is the consideration of the April 12, 2021 meeting minutes. They were quite lengthy. Does anybody have any comments, updates, changes that they'd like to submit, if not I'm looking for a motion to accept the meeting minutes as submitted.

Member Couture; I'll make that motion

Member Nadeau; 2nd

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

CONSIDERATION OF A CHANGE OF USE/NEW TENANT APPLICATION FOR A PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL UNIT AT 34 CONGRESS STREET

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok we we've accepted the meeting minutes from April 12th.

Joe Seman-Graves; Mark do you want to go to, I'm sorry, my apologies, we're going to skip to the 5th item really quickly we have someone who is at work.

Chairperson DeFruscio; I didn't see him on here.

Joe Seman-Graves; he is

Chairperson DeFruscio; is he on? Ok. So the next item on the agenda is consideration of a change of use.....

Female voice in background; I believe Tommy is on here can he speak?

CONSIDERATION OF A CHANGE OF USE FOR 205 COLUMBIA STREET

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok hang on. It's a change of use application for 205 Columbia Street and the application is for Tommy Durrant seeking to remove a fence that separates 205 from 201, install a trailer to distribute or disperse ice cream from adjoining Signal 30. Tommy do you want to give us an overview, tell us what your plan is?

Mr. Durrant; I'm going to put a, hold on a minute I need to fix this (echoing in background). So I'm going to put a trailer right where that fence is right there (picture on screen) and I'm going to put all my ice cream equipment over there and

have the ice cream workers over there distributing the ice cream rather than inside of the kitchen, freeing up some more space for the guys that are cooking and everything like that. So we'll try to get as close to the house as I possibly could but, so it doesn't take away the patio space and the seating but it's gonna be probably a 12 or 16 foot trailer 6 ½ feet wide and I'm going to put a fence right where the grass is right there (on screen) to kind of like block it in a little bit so it doesn't really look like just a trailer sitting there, kind of wrap it right around and make it look pretty.

Chairperson DeFruscio; Tommy we definitely would want the fence even with the end of the house so it looks like a yard, a fence for a yard covering where the trailer is. How, the fence is it going to be 6' high, how tall is the trailer going to be?

Mr. Durrant; I believe it'll be about, my guess is about 8', I didn't measure the height of the trailer but it's probably 8'.

Chairperson DeFruscio; now in this trailer, how are you going to handle power and any water and drainage?

Mr. Durrant; I'm going to have, I'm going to hookup power just like you'd have at an RV park and I'm going to have a water pump and a waste container and empty the waste container as needed for the sink and all that stuff. Power would be coming from 201 Columbia Street.

Chairperson DeFruscio; so is, so the power and any of the plumbing is going to be setup in a temporary environment, so it can be uplifted and moved at any point in time, is that what you're telling me?

Mr. Durrant; yea absolutely nothing is going to be plumbed to city water. I'll have a water pump so I won't be running any actual plumbing to it, it'll just be like an RV, how you'd do it for a camper.

Member Nadeau; where will that water pump to, the waste water?

Mr. Durrant; I'll empty it and bring it into the waste.

Member Nadeau; what waste, whose waste?

Mr. Durrant; the city's waste

Member Nadeau; alright but where? Specifically into your building into 201 or 205?

Mr. Durrant; 201, everything, I'm doing business in 201, I just needed a little bit of my yard there at 205 for the trailer, pretty much what I'm asking for.

Member Nadeau; do you expect to have that there year round?

Mr. Durrant; yea, it'll probably stay there year round, but doesn't have to be temporary, or it doesn't have to be stationary, it can be moved if you guys decide that you don't want it there in the winter time, I can move it elsewhere in the winter time.

Chairperson DeFruscio; any other questions from other members?

Member Nadeau; well I'd just like to express a concern. I want to see him do well, I want to see him grow as a business but my concern is adding trailers along that Columbia Street route. I know its mixed use, but we have to be considerate of the neighbors, so appearance will be everything Tom. The fence and the presentation of the building aesthetically should look pleasing so the, we don't get feedback from city residents that we're starting to add vending trailers along Columbia Street. It's a great idea, but again my concern is any backlash from the community that we're starting to use vendor trailers along Columbia Street, so the appearance will mean everything.

Mr. Durrant; yea, I've been doing you know a lot of work at the place and everything I do every day to improve everything about the building and the business, so I'm definitely not going to be putting any junk there, that's for sure.

Member Nadeau; I agree with you. If you talk to the establishments, it looked good.

Chairperson DeFruscio; so anybody else? Kizzy, Stephanie questions, comments?

Member Couture; no, between the application and everything that Mr. Durrant just told us, I think it answered all the questions and as long as we're meeting whatever, not we, but as long as the establishment is meeting whatever health codes are necessary to be able to disperse ice cream from that trailer then I'm all set.

Chairperson DeFruscio; have you checked that Tom, the, to see what the health code issues are for using a trailer to disperse the ice cream?

Mr. Durrant; yea I looked up all the, doing the vending at Rock the Block and stuff before, I definitely did all the research as far as all the health department requirements and safety stuff you have to do and as soon as I get the trailer and everything, I was going to go speak with the health department to make sure I'm up to speed on everything before I even put anything in place.

Chairperson DeFruscio; Kizzy you have any questions or comments?

Member Williams; I just want to tell you that I know that when you do sell ice cream they want you to have a grease trap sometimes. So I don't know if you can install a grease trap inside of a trailer when you're selling ice cream. So look into that before you purchase your trailer and I think it's a great idea as long as you follow the health codes and allow your trailer to look a part of the community, you know nice.

Chairperson DeFruscio; I'd like to open up the questions and answers, or comments to the public now. Is there anyone in the public that would like to make a comment or ask a question?

Joe Seman-Graves; nobody raising their hand right now in the chat.

Chairperson DeFruscio; well we'll leave it open for a minute or so just to see if anybody has anything to say.

Member Williams; just let him know that I've actually come and purchased ice cream from your shop and it's definitely a great experience.

Mr. Durrant; thank you very much I appreciate that.

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok I guess I'll close the public comments at the moment. So now I'm looking for a motion to change the use for the application for 205 Columbia Street.

Member Nadeau; I so move to accept

Member Couture; I'll 2nd

Motion carried unanimously

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

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok Tom we've approved that and we look forward to coming up and seeing you put this in place and see how it works out

Mr. Durrant; thank you very much everybody

CONSIDERATION OF A CHANGE OF USE/NEW TENANT APPLICATION FOR A PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL UNIT AT 34 CONGRESS STREET

Chairperson DeFruscio; so the next item on the agenda is consideration of a change of use application for a proposed residential unit at 34 Congress Street. It's converting it from a single family home to a 2 unit home, which I believe it already is a 2 family home. We're just trying to close the paperwork on here. The applicant is going to live on the first floor and rent out the 2nd floor. So to the applicant, do you want to give us an overview of anything that I've missed?

Yucel Ontas; hi everybody. Yes I bought the property in January and it's pretty much there's 2 kitchens, 2 bathrooms and I'm going to live on first floor and I would like to rent out the second floor and I like the Cohoes area that's why I bought my first property. This is my first home and does anybody have any questions that I can answer?

Chairperson DeFruscio; on the first floor, there is an access to a hall then there's an entrance to the first floor and then the stairs that go to the second floor?

Mr. Ontas; yes and there's a carport behind. I'm thinking the tenant upstairs can utilize for off street parking.

Chairperson DeFruscio; and in the back you have an egress from both the first floor and the second floor?

Mr. Ontas; yes, that is correct

Member Nadeau; Joe does the city have to do any pre inspection to make sure that they are separate apartments or capable of being separate apartments?

Mr. Ontas; no, no one has done inspection other than when I bought property I hired inspector but that's different.

Chairperson DeFruscio; you know he's asking the city planner a question?

Joe Seman-Graves; no, I so, I don't believe any inspections have been done yet but normally the first step would be to approve the change of use and then send code in. This is a circumstance where the applicant bought the property as a two unit when you go in there, but we still have it as a one unit listed on the tax roll.

Member Nadeau; ok

Chairperson DeFruscio; so is there separate meters or...

Mr. Ontas; yes there are separate meters, unit 1 and unit 2

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok

Member Couture; ultimately it sounds like this is a formality and then once he is renovated to rent it he would have to get a C/O anyway correct?

Joe Seman-Graves; yes

Chairperson DeFruscio; anybody else have any other questions, any board members? Ok I guess I'll open this up to public comments. We don't have any parking issues right?

Mr. Ontas; no I have a carport and actually 2 cars can fit in carport behind it.

Chairperson DeFruscio; yea off the alley

Mr. Ontas; yup

Chairperson DeFruscio; so I'm going to open this up for any public comments, anybody have any questions or comments regarding this item? Nobody's raising their hand, so I'll close the public comment at this point in time. So now we're looking for a motion to accept the change of use application for 34 Congress Street to a two unit apartment building or deny that application.

Member Couture; I'll make a motion to approve.

Member Nadeau; I'll 2nd

Chairperson DeFruscio; Kizzy's got her microphone shut off so she was trying to 2nd but...

Member Nadeau; in that case put Kizzy down for 2nd

Member Williams; thank you, I 2nd the motion

Motion carried unanimously

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

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok so that's approved we'll move forward...

Joe Seman-Graves; to the applicant, I'll send a letter tomorrow saying it was approved and I'll also send that to the building department and tax assessor.

Mr. Ontas; ok thanks so much

CONSIDERATION OF A CHANGE OF USE NEW TENANT APPLICATION FOR A NEW BUSINESS AT 5 NEW CORTLAND STREET

Chairperson DeFruscio; next item on the agenda is the consideration of a change of use for a new business at 5 New Cortland Street. Is the applicant online or a representative for the applicant?

Yes Paul Falladi here

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok Paul do you want to give us an overview of what you're looking to do?

Mr. Falladi; sure. The past years, for the past 28 years it was REO Welding and REO Welding did a similar operation to what the new user want to do. They brought in steel, fabricated, did welding and metal fabrication. The new user, since REO has moved into a larger facility and the new user is proposing to do a similar use. It's Jack Collett, he owns Collett Mechanical, a large HVAC company. He has a division that does piping for large commercial buildings in which the need to weld the pipes together. So they pre-fab the pipes before they go out to the site and then they get installed, which save them some time versus fabricating in the new building. So, the building is laid out perfect for them, it has 2 cranes in it and it's a similar operation that REO had and to the extent that they used W beams coming down the line, in this scenario there will be 4 8" - 10" pieces of pipe they'll be welding the elbows on them. So what you'll see there is similar operation that is consistent with what has always been there. The building kind of fit like a glove for them. Hours of operation are similar, REO was 7am-6, and Jack put down 7 to 5. They'll do light staging like they do outside now. It'll probably look similar, similar in use.

Chairperson DeFruscio; how many trucks will he have on site?

Mr. Falladi; he has probably for down there 6 or 7 trucks. They do get deliveries of pipes just like REO got their random tractor trailers pulled in to deliver products and then miscellaneous pieces, so the regular vehicles will be Collett and then the rest will be supplemental, it'll be the people delivering the products.

Chairperson DeFruscio; that's just a tricky site to deliver there with the tracks and the people coming up New Cortland Street there.

Mr. Falladi; his is actually less, it'll be less intense to that extent where they don't have, REO had the large beams that came out for building, they had the larger trucks. Collett's are more single lengths of pipes that they end u welding

together so I think the accessibility for the trucks will be much easier for them and then the swing that REO had to get in there.

Member Nadeau; does the, has Collett purchased the building or will they purchase the building?

Mr. Falladi; they have a contract for the building but one of the contingencies is getting approval for the continuing use.

Member Nadeau; ok. Actually I see it as a great opportunity for Collett, it does fit perfectly for that operation.

Mr. Falladi; it was perfect, exactly what they need

Chairperson DeFruscio; are there any variances Joe that they need to get?

Joe Seman-Graves; they don't need to but they did, just today I got an application for a use variance. So while the change of use application allows the new owner to move in as you're reading on the screen, it's technically a non-conforming use in that zone so they'll be seeking to solidify the use with a use variance, just in case they want to at any point extend the operation, expand it I mean or God forbid any natural disaster accident happens they'll be able to rebuild.

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok. Any other board members have any questions? Ok, so let's open this up to public comment at this point in time. Is there anybody in the public that has any questions or comments regarding the use of this building?

Like Joe said it fits perfect for their use, I'm just sorry it's been vacant a little longer than it had to be. Anybody raising their hand Joe?

Joe Seman-Graves; no

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok, so at this time we'll close the public comment and I'm looking now for a motion to accept the change of use application for a new business at 5 Cortland Street or denial of the change of use there.

Member Nadeau; I make a motion we accept and approve this proposal

Member Couture; I'll 2nd

Motion carried unanimously

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

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok we wish the new occupants good luck and they prosper in their business. Hopefully if they need anything we can help them take care of it.

Mr. Falladi; thank you very much for your time and consideration.

CONSIDERATION OF A CHANGE OF USE/NEW TENANT APPLICATION FOR A NEW BUSINESS AT 58 COLUMBIA STREET

Chairperson DeFruscio; so the last item on the agenda is consideration of a change of use for a proposed business at 58 Columbia Street, which is the old mill, Sangamon Mills and they want to open a retail store that sells fabric and accessories. I noticed they've been over there painting at that location at this point in time. Is the applicant on the call? Do they want to give us an overview of what they're looking to do?

Hi, this is John Hall from CPL Architects representing the Yang's, the owners. And just in a capsule the building was a fabric mill which until 6 or 7 years ago, I'm not quite sure when it was left. The new owners are proposing to have a retail fabric store on the first floor, the reviews that existing entry at the corner of Congress and Columbia as a main entrance and there's a side door kind of up the hill a little bit that's at grade which would be their handicap entrance. There's about 3,600 square feet on the floor and they have like Joe said, have cleaned up the inside. They put in new lighting, they put new plumbing fixtures in, they're putting in radiant heat system and apparently they need the, this change of use because the building has been vacant for as I said 6 or 7 years.

Chairperson DeFruscio; yea, and there's a loading door in the back as well, in the alley

Mr. Hall; there is. And I sent along, I did a takeoff on parking between the frontage on Columbia Street and Congress Street there's about, there's 3 off street spaces off the alley, they have about 11 possibly 12, if people are good at parallel parking, they could get 12 cars in the frontage. They're also putting in a fire alarm system and the building with framing has a partial crawl space basement that's just plumbing pipes.

Chairperson DeFruscio; so are they going to have to get a variance Joe because they don't have the number of off street parking spaces that they require?

Joe Seman-Graves; so if the applicant, if you look at the screen, point C on the last item here, the applicant can demonstrate that they permitted use there there's available adjacent on street parking spaces and that there under-utilized, they may include those spaces in their count for the minimum required off street parking. So that's technically up to the planning board if you feel that the current adjacent off street parking is equivalent to the 8.66 spots that they would need or 8 ½ to be fair, and they do have the 3 in the back, so you're looking at 5 spaces.

Chairperson DeFruscio; right and I believe that there's sufficient space on the Columbia Street side, is that, no one parks there that I've noticed at this point in time. Residents are up on Congress Street and across the street on Columbia Street. There isn't many people that park on that side, maybe the people that go to the barber right there, but other than that I think there's sufficient parking on the street there. Questions, comment from board members?

Member Nadeau; just a little clarification on what exactly is fabric and accessories? Are we talking people going in there and ordering yards of fabric? I'm, guess I'm looking for a little clarification and what are accessories?

Mr. Hall; well, that is a question for probably the Yang's to answer specifically. It is my understanding that it would be bolts of fabric, raw if you will, people would purchase and then perhaps they would purchase drapery hardware or upholstering nails and tacks and staples and such.

Member Nadeau; ok

Mr. Hall; not a whole lot different, but not nearly at the scale of a Joann Fabric store

Member Nadeau; ok, got you. Thank you

Member Couture; I just have a couple of questions. Are there going to be any employees there, how many employees do they anticipate working in the establishment?

Mr. Hall; well, the store will be on the first floor, they will definitely have a cashier and I would expect one other person in the store.

Member Couture; and the hours of operation?

Mr. Hall; I would expect 9 to 6

Member Couture; 7 days a week or Monday through Friday?

Mr. Hall; Monday through Saturday

Member Couture; and the last question, the second floor that's strictly just storage and what type of exits are available on the second floor?

Mr. Hall; it would just be casual storage for the business. There is a hoist way between the two floors so they could send stuff up and down without trudging up the stairs. There's an enclosed stair in the front off that entry that you see and there's another on in the back. There's also a fire escape from the second floor.

Member Couture; ok thank you

Chairperson DeFruscio; other questions from the board? Alright, well let's open this up to public comment at this point in time. Is there anybody else on the call that's not a member of the board and not involved in the project?

Joe Seman-Graves; no

Member Williams; when is the opening day for this store, do you know when you'd like to open?

Mr. Hall; they're planning an opening and I think it's dependent on when they clear the city review. I think they're hoping to do it in June.

Member Williams; ok. Well once this is open I'm coming down there ok?

Mr. Hall; ok, I know I've been invited to the grand opening

Chairperson DeFruscio; well, the Sangamon Mills sold the best dish cloths in the capital district ever. Everybody would come from all around to get the dish cloths made at Sangamon Mills.

Mr. Hall; yea, I was interested in that as well, the machinery they had is gone, but clearly they had a fairly robust operation there. Power was heavy duty and they had a lot of big plumbing so they must have had washing machines in there.

Chairperson DeFruscio; so, I'm going to close the public comment at this point in time, so now I'm looking for a motion to approve the change of use for the proposed business at 58 Columbia Street or the denial of the change of use.

Member Couture; I'll make a motion to approve

Member Williams; I 2nd.

Motion carried unanimously

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

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok so we wish you the best of luck and we all look forward to the grand opening and to come and check out your wares. Hopefully you'll have a prosperous business there.

Mr. Hall; thank you and thank you for your time

Chairperson DeFruscio; ok on that note I would like a motion to close the meeting it is 7:03, but I'd also like to have a little discussion after this.

Member Nadeau; I have something also. I make a motion that we close the meeting that we adjourn

Member Couture; 2nd.

Meeting adjourned at 7:03 PM