

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COHOES PLANNING BOARD HELD AT 97 MOHAWK STREET  
COMMON COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2022 at 6:30PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**        **Mr. Mark DeFruscio, Chairperson**  
                                      **Mr. John Carroll, Vice Chair**  
                                      **Mr. Joe Nadeau**

**ABSENT:**                      **Ms. Stephanie Couture**  
                                      **Mr. Robert Bucher**  
                                      **Ms. Kizzy Williams**

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

Chairperson DeFruscio called the September 12, 2022 Planning Board meeting to order at 6:29 pm and asked for roll call. Roll Call; Member Couture, Member Bucher and Member Williams were absent

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 8, 2022 MEETING**

Chairperson DeFruscio; first item on the agenda is consideration of the August 8, 2022 meeting minutes. Everyone was distributed a copy of the minutes, does anybody have any changes, comments, or things they want to review?

Member Nadeau; I'll make the motion to accept the minutes as submitted

Vice Chair Carroll; I'll 2<sup>nd</sup> motion carried

	YES	NO
Robert Bucher	ABSENT	
Joseph Nadeau	X	
Mark DeFruscio	X	
John Carroll	X	
Stephanie Couture	ABSENT	
Kizzy Williams	ABSENT	

**CONSIDERATION OF A CHANGE OF USE/NEW TENANT APPLICATION FOR 301 ONTARIO STREET**

Chairperson DeFruscio; next item on the agenda is the consideration of a Change of Use/New Tenant application for 301 Ontario Street. He asked the applicant to approach the board and give a brief description of what he was looking to do. Jason Worthington approached and explained to the board that he was looking to open a retail store selling tobacco, smoking, waterpipes, vapors, vapes anything that has to do with tobacco. He is also looking to sell household items like incense, air fresheners, wall hangers, posters, personal things like jewelry and clothing, T-shirts, just a small novelty shop. Chairperson DeFruscio you are focusing on products that mainly deal with tobacco.

Mr. Worthington replied yes

Chairperson DeFruscio asked the applicant if he had any other long-term goals

Mr. Worthington replied that they are trying to get an online site open, and then actually in the future do something else with the LLC. He explained that his son is autistic so he wants to do things for kids too, like a candy store that sells sensory toys and things like that for autistic kids.

Vice Chair Carroll asked the applicant if that was part of this application

Mr. Worthington stated no that is separate from this

Chairperson DeFruscio; so you are looking to build up some equity?

Mr. Worthington replied yes that the company he used to work for moved to Texas and he was not in the position to make that move, so he is looking to invest in himself and open a store

Vice Chair Carroll asked if his product line was going to eventually be a dispensary

Mr. Worthington replied no

Chairperson DeFruscio went over the floor plan that was submitted.

Vice Chair Carroll asked what kind of customer flow he was looking at

Mr. Worthington replied it was going to be in and out not a hang around establishment. People would come in and get what they wanted and leave

Vice Chair Carroll stated that his concern was that area is choked with traffic

Mr. Worthington replied that he knew that and they are looking to let people know there would be a limited number of people in the store at any given time

Chairperson DeFruscio asked if the landlord owned the parking lot next store

Mr. Worthington replied that the building is split in two, and the owner of the building behind their building owns that parking lot

Chairperson DeFruscio; I didn't know if you would end up with a parking spot or two

Mr. Worthington stated that he talked to that owner and was told that the tenants pretty much take up that parking lot.

Chairperson DeFruscio made the suggestion of him talking to the owner of the supermarket across the street to see if they would let him use that parking lot for customers

Mr. Worthington replied that his partner know John very well

Chairperson DeFruscio stated that the boards only concern was the safety of you and your customers, it is busy there, its tight there, so people stopping to shop there need to be careful getting in and out of their cars, we don't want to see anyone get hurt.

Chairperson DeFruscio you have Fritz's there that doesn't really have any customer flow, if we could get people to use the public parking and get used to that

Mr. Worthington stated that they would make people aware of the public parking. He also stated that deliveries would be small, so it would just be UPS making quick deliveries.

Chairperson DeFruscio asked if the owner provided trash handling.

Mr. Wellington responded no, that they would actually take their trash with them and he offered to the landlord of the building behind them to take the trash cans to and from the road for him.

Chairperson DeFruscio asked the board members if they had any other questions.

Vice Chair Carroll; his only concern is traffic and parking, but he didn't see where people would be lining up outside the door to get in

Mr. Wellington stated that they have a social media page and he would make sure to let customers know about the parking for his store.

Member Nadeau also agreed that the area is tight and if he could let his customers know about the parking that would be helpful

Mr. Wellington acknowledged the issue and stated that they would let their customers know about the public parking

Chairperson DeFruscio so there is a requirement of, he looked at the square footage of the building

Joe Seman-Graves told the board that they are actually under 400 square feet so no parking is required.

Chairperson DeFruscio they are under 400 square feet, that's good. He stated that he was just trying to figure out if they had to figure in some kind of designation that they could use the municipal parking lot, so we don't need to do that. He then opened it up for public comments

Daniel Delude approached the board and stated that he has already spoken to John Nolan about using his parking lot. He stated that he used to work for Mr. Nolan and has a good relationship with him.

Chairperson DeFruscio that is something that we would recommend and the other thing is possibly in your advertising publish something about parking, look for public parking as there are several parking lots to use

Mr. Wellington acknowledged what was said, and stated that he would put it on his business cards also.

Chairperson DeFruscio asked if there were any other public comments, and asked Member Nadeau if he had any comments

Member Nadeau; just to reinforce about the deliveries and you can't have large delivery trucks there Mr. Wellington stated again that it would be just UPS trucks, and that Mr. Nolan has a pick up and drop off at his location so it would be right there that could be used for deliveries.

Chairperson DeFruscio stated that, that would be good because the store is a UPS pickup and drop off location. If there are no other questions or comments at this point, I'd like to close the public hearing part. At this time we're looking to approve or deny the application for use as a tobacco shop at 301 Ontario Street

Motion made by Vice Chair Carroll to accept the application 2<sup>nd</sup> by Member Nadeau Motion carried unanimously.

	YES	NO
Robert Bucher	ABSENT	
Joseph Nadeau	X	
Mark DeFruscio	X	
John Carroll	X	
Stephanie Couture	ABSENT	
Kizzy Williams	ABSENT	

Chairperson DeFruscio told the applicant to keep in touch with the planning department

### **CONSIDERATION OF A CHANGE OF USE/NEW TENANT APPLICATION FOR 184 REMSEN STREET**

Chairperson DeFruscio; next on the agenda is 184 Remsen Street, seeking to open a single chair barber shop. He asked the applicant to approach state his name and give an overview of the project.

Terrance Flowers approached the board and told them he was looking to open a private barber lounge. He told the board that he already has a business now in Colonie and he is looking to venture out, he's been doing this for 11 years and is looking to have his own personal private space for his clients. He has a business partner in Cohoes, but he is looking to have this business solely on his own. He stated that his business has been running for 5 years in Colonie and he has a large clientele so he is not looking to get new clients, he just liked area and location, he has a lot of clients that come from Saratoga, Clifton Park, Waterford.

Chairperson DeFruscio asked if he was doing regular hours or by appointment

Mr. Flowers responded that he has appointment only but he works six days a week, Tuesday through Saturday and he is booked everyday normally from 8 to 7

Chairperson DeFruscio; being the downtown business district, we know the business day can run a little longer there we just like to know, if you are by appointment only, a lot of barbers are now appointment only. You are only doing one chair?

Mr. Flowers yes one chair, I don't foresee myself doing anything differently, I have an 8-chair shop right now. And in January we're going to open up a 12-chair shop, with this I don't see adding any more barbers because this is something just for me. And I'll also be selling hair products

Chairperson DeFruscio so it is 700 square feet is he required to have one parking space?

Joe Seman-Graves told the board that he is directly across from municipal parking lot.

Chairperson DeFruscio I just want to make sure it is clear that there is a requirement of one space and we are going to waive the requirement based on the public parking directly across the street

Mr. Flowers told the board that there is parking behind his building as well that the landlord allows him to use.

Chairperson DeFruscio then asked about the exterior signage and he is looking to put a barber pole up

Sharon told the board that he already received approval from the Historic Board

Mr. Flowers stated that he doesn't think he is going to do the barber pole, maybe just inside he will do that. He wants to keep the business low key

Chairperson DeFruscio asked if the building owner was going to provide trash services

Mr. Flowers stated yes

Chairperson DeFruscio asked if the board had any additional questions

Member Nadeau stated that he was a little confused, if he's not soliciting people to use the barber shop service, then what are you

Mr. Flowers responded that he has an app, if people want to make an appointment they have to download the app and it would go directly to him and they can make an appointment through the app.

Chairperson DeFruscio stated if there are no other questions from the board, then he wanted to open it up to public comments. Being none he closed public comment period. He then asked for a motion to approve the change of use/new tenant application for 184 Remsen Street

Member Nadeau made the motion to approve the application 2<sup>nd</sup> by Vice Chair Carroll motion carried unanimously

	YES	NO
Robert Bucher	ABSENT	
Joseph Nadeau	X	
Mark DeFruscio	X	
John Carroll	X	
Stephanie Couture	ABSENT	
Kizzy Williams	ABSENT	

### **CONSIDERATION OF A SITE PLAN APPLICATION FOR 155 VLIET BOULEVARD**

Chairperson DeFruscio; next on the agenda is 155 Vliet Boulevard,

Mr. Rubin Hull from LaBella introduced himself to the board and stated that Nicholas Vamvas could not be present. The documentation summary does a nice job of summarizing what the project is. If you're not familiar with it, this has been in the news for awhile where the City is partnering with a developer to put in solar panels on a floating system at the water reservoir. What's in front of you is a set of site plans that show the layout and show the details of how the system is going to be anchored. There's a separate engineering package developed by the solar company that will have more details that are going to be needed for part of the building permit but what we've shown as part of the site plan is the work on the inside of the embankment. The plans are going to be, think of a floating dock, that are going to be anchored and tethered back into the earth dam near the embankment of the reservoir. All the work will be done inside the perimeter and will be unseen from outside the facility. So in the plans we do have erosion control, erosion sediment control that we identified, again they will be anchoring inside the earth dam so we were going to have turbidity curtains or something along those lines to keep whatever is anchoring the structure or anchoring the tethers in, that it's not going to get (inaudible) into the water. That is pretty much the extent of it other than any construction activity with standard erosion control, but it is more of a facility project than a site project, but I believe because of the nature of the use that's why it is in front of you tonight, it is a Type II SEQR which means no further action required for SEQR. Other than that slides were prepared and we think it is a very exciting project for the City

Chairperson DeFruscio I think it is an exciting project for the City too, I guess I was looking for more technical details, because I was very interested in the anchoring, the devices in the water, floating above the water, whether or not the motion during a storm was going to create any deterioration of the bottom of the reservoir, what you were going to do to monitor the equipment that you would use that attaches directly to the grid, I didn't see a whole bunch of information there

Joe Seman-Graves I may be able to answer some of the stuff that's not on the site plan

Mr. Hull replied he appreciated it because what they were looking at was essentially two different packages which are very elementary and will both be a part of a very robust building permit package. It will have all the structural information and it will have to go to DEC dam safety, because it's a registered dam this has to go to them, so all the anchoring that's all being processed by ....

Chairperson DeFruscio that the reason it's a Type II versus a Type I, because you are going to deal with all of those agencies as well

Vice Chair Carroll asked the applicant what exactly he was there for

Mr. Hull there is nothing in zoning that explicitly says this is an approved use in this location and part of why we're here is for consent that this board is in favor of the site plan application for this use on the site

Chairperson DeFruscio I guess I would say the board is in support of this, but just as an interested citizen wanting more information as we all agree this is a unique situation. Has it been done in other parts of the world, or countries, I don't believe there's a site in the country that has done it

Mr. Hull replied that there is one in Arizona that doesn't answer your question about the winter weather, and there is one in New Jersey, and that one is online, but that would be the prototype for the northeast. But again this will be, one of few that will be in existence

Chairperson DeFruscio I'm sure that the citizens would just like some information or assurance that these floating solar panels are not going to impact the quality of water, or require any additional treatment of the water, things of that nature.

Mr. Hull; that is all going through a separate series of environmental reviews with an environmental team that is looking explicitly at that and how it affects the public water supply

Joe Seman-Graves stated that he would be happy to answer questions because he has been working on this

Vice Chair Carroll asked about the mega watts

Joe Seman-Graves responded it is 3.2

Chairperson DeFruscio stated that the board did get that in the overview 3.2 megawatts, 4,000,153 kilowatt hours.

Member Nadeau asked if there are any additional costs to the city for the reservoir itself

Joe Seman-Graves explained the cost factors, after the actual array, it going to be a fraction –stating that it would reduce the algae, we're putting approximately \$160,000 of chemicals into the reservoir per year, and then treating to get the chemicals out. He also explained to the board about the water quality and what he observed in New Jersey.

Mr. Hull stated the benefit is we have covered about 60% of the area which would reduce the amount of evaporation, so the amount of water that is being put into the reservoir right now that is evaporating will be reduced as well.

Vice Chair Carroll in the winter will that create any kind of heat that will affect the water

Joe Seman-Graves responded it is currently in operation for 3 years in New Jersey, that's the closest one to us, so we put the NYS Department of Health in contact with New Jersey. So they're getting an understanding of what questions were asked down there, that is also something that is in the higher elevations in Europe, the upper peaks (inaudible) in the winter months and talking about potential for heat and what that might do to the water, I don't have an answer yet but I can get it. It's not a concern with the partners and State departments that we've talked to so far.

Mr. Hull replied that the solar is designed to not lose any heat

Joe Seman-Graves explained the anchoring system and what he viewed when in New Jersey, he explained the torque and how the specifics work, including the water tables and wind gusts.

Chairperson DeFruscio asked about the 100-year water .....

Joe Seman-Graves responded that we control the water going in and out of the reservoir. We control the actual flow, so let's say there is a 100-year storm, we could either reduce the amount of water so it's not overflowing or just stop the current flow. The array itself is approved for drinking water, that's what the Department of Health will be reviewing. He also explained what the panels are

Chairperson DeFruscio anybody else have any other questions

Member Nadeau asked what the life expectancy is

Joe Seman-Graves 30 years, they go down about 1/2% of production each year

Mr. Hull explained that the technology changes and at some point it is beneficial to change out the modules, they are designed for 30-year life, I've seen where they're 15 years in and the developers are replacing them because the return on investment is more beneficial, and it seems every 3 months or so things are getting more efficient and you are getting more power out of them.

Chairperson DeFruscio it brings up another question, when the panels are installed are they installed in a method or technique that makes them easily replaceable?

Joe Seman-Graves explained to the board the system he viewed in New Jersey, and how they are installed and how the replacement of any panels would take place.

Member Nadeau asked if the panel itself was in contact with the water

Joe Seman-Graves responded no.

Vice Chair Carroll asked about the snow load

Joe Seman-Graves replied that the snow was being accounted for and that the panels are going to be angled

Mr. Hull then explained to the board how the panels would be angled and where they would be placed to get the most sun

Chairperson DeFruscio asked if the panels would be brought online as they are installed or all at once when installation was complete

Mr. Hull responded that the whole system is put in place then gets tied into utility, there is a series of connections that the utility company has to accept, when everything is done then the switch is turned on

Joe Seman-Graves directed the board to the screen and he explained the “dock” system which would be a walkway, and a boat would drag the array’s out and placed, they would be wired but not live until they system is arranged then the power is turned on.

Chairperson DeFruscio asked what the installation period is

Joe Seman-Graves from what I’ve been told it’s a month, it could be pushed to two or three months

Joe Seman-Graves typically if you don’t bring these projects to the planning board, you bring it to the Common Council for SEQR resolution. I think it would be good to bring it here to give people the opportunity to find out about it, I think it might be beneficial to table it tonight and give it another month for review, but just to bring the site plan review and the Common Council would more just look at the action and not how it’s done

Chairperson DeFruscio ok, given that and we’ve had our discussion I’m looking for a motion to TABLE this until the next meeting and we will see if we can get more public here and more information.

Vice Chair Carroll made the motion to TABLE it for the reasons Joe brought up 2<sup>nd</sup> by Member Nadeau motion carried unanimously.

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

Member Nadeau made a motion to adjourn at 7:14 PM 2<sup>nd</sup> by Vice Chair Carroll

Meeting closed at 7:14PM

Submitted by:

*Sharon Butler*

Secretary