



CITY OF GENEVA PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

6:00 PM | May 21, 2025
City Hall – 47 Castle St, Geneva NY

- 1. Roll Call:** Anne Nenneau, Kevin Reed, Bryson Cochran, Dave D'Amico
Excused: Don Cass
Also Present: David West, David Hou, Clr. Pealer, Clr. Brennan, Clr. Petropolous

- 2. A Subdivision application by the developer, Cook Properties, for a vacant lot on Middle St to be subdivided into 4 lots (Tax ID 104.8-3-23) and a Site Plan Review for the construction of 4 houses on the subdivided lots.**

Jake Calabrese (Marathon Engineering) and Scott...(Cook Properties) present application. The proposed subdivision is located on approximately 0.4 acres zoned MR (mixed-residential) at the northeast corner of Middle St and Hallenbeck Ave. Comprised of four lots, each containing a manufactured single-family home. One driveway will come off of Hallenbeck and the other three will come off of Middle St. No required variances have been identified. Each home will connect to existing city utilities.

Lots 1 & 2 have a 10' offset from property line and Lots 3 & 4 have a 15' offset. Maximum unit size is 28x48 sq ft with no garages. Each parcel has a 5' front setback facing Middle St, 5' side setbacks, and a 20' rear setback.

Infrastructure proposed is some storm drainage connected to existing structure to limit ponding. Applicant is waiting to hear about storm structure connections from City engineering.

Mr. D'Amico asks about potential parking for the homes. Applicant states there is a 16' width and approximately 20-25' length on proposed driveways.

Action Taken: Mr. Reed makes a motion to classify this action as an unlisted action under NY Code Rules & Regulations Part 617 and to declare the City of Geneva Planning Board the lead agency for the purposes of the SEQR review. Mr. Cochran seconds.

*Roll was called and the motion was **APPROVED** unanimously (4-1 excused)*

Action Taken: Mr. D'Amico makes a motion to schedule a public hearing at the next scheduled Planning Board meeting on June 18, 2025 at 6:00PM. Mr. Cochran seconds.

*Roll was called and the motion was **APPROVED** unanimously (4-1 excused)*

3. A Site Plan & Special Use Permit Application by Lakeview Mental Health Services Inc. for a 5-Story apartment building located at 218 Genesee St. [Tax ID 104.42-2-44.110]

David West first speaks regarding the Planning Board's roles regarding the application being presented to the board. He states the Planning Board reviews the site plans, the design of the building, and the architecture. It does not review who might live in the building.

Ari Goldberg, attorney for the project, briefly speaks to let the board know they can make a SEQR determination this evening if they are inclined.

Fred Shelley, BME Associates (site designer) and Mark Pandolf (project architect) and Cathy Lovejoy (Lakeview Health Services) are main presenters of the project application.

Applicant is requesting approvals for two applications for a mixed-use building on an approximate 1.04-acre parcel. The parcel is currently zoned Central Business and is an allowed use under the city code. The proposed project is a 5-story, 74-unit apartment building with approximately 2400 sq. ft. of office space located on the first floor.

Two main entrances are proposed - Castle St side & parking lot side (main entrance for staff and residents). Vehicular access to a 26-space parking lot will be on Elm St and Colt St. The Elm St curb cut is shifted slightly north and Colt St would remain in the same configuration. Pedestrian access is provided via two sidewalks – north side connecting to the Genesee St public sidewalk and the other runs from the front entrance to Elm St.

Screened dumpster enclosure and proposed storage shed would be located adjacent to the dumpster on west side of property. Also, a fenced in concrete patio and lawn area adjacent to an interior community room is proposed for resident use.

The site plan reduces impervious cover approximately 0.35 acres and replaces it with lawn and landscape cover. Areas between right of way line and sidewalk will be turned into a tree lawn on the Elm St side and foundation plantings along the Genesee St side.

Lighting plans submitted designed to follow city code – dark sky LED fixtures. Project would be served by existing public utilities. Stormwater design follows DEC regulations. A rain garden is also proposed. Stormwater runoff will be less than what it is currently due to less impervious area.

The applicant is requesting waivers from city code – Chp. 350-7.14B3: Recreation open space requirement per unit. 18,000 sq. ft. would be required and currently 2500 sq. ft. is proposed (lawn, patio, and community room). Chp. 350-8.8.C: Parking space requirement. Instead of the required 1 space per unit, only 25% of residents will require a parking space so 26 spaces are proposed.

Applicant believes this project is a Type 1 SEQR action due to the existing neighboring historic district and thresholds for number of units planned for the building.

Mark Pandolf speaks to the design of the building. He states Lakeview has a proven track record with successful buildings. The building fronts on Castle St and the overall Z-shape of building allows for parking to be tucked away in the rear.

Floorplan is designed to accommodate 4 two-bedroom apartments on the south end and 70 one-bedroom apartments. Central portion houses common areas (lobby, community room, elevator, etc) Building front comes all the way to Castle St to fit into the context of the street. Lakeview support offices will be on the first floor with entrance on Castle St.

First floor is decorative masonry to resemble limestone and upper floors are red brick, engineered wood siding and/or fiber cement. Decorative ground face CMU on first floor, punched windows in similar proportions to neighboring buildings. Distinct cornice wraps the top of the building and there is a horizontal band that separates the upper and lower floors.

Castle Street staff entrance has aluminum storefront and transparent glazing, which is consistent with other downtown buildings.

On other facades, Genesee & Elm, the same materials and design elements will be carried through. Horizontal siding is introduced to keep in mind the residential area. Two recesses in façade, 7' wide and 3' deep that reinforce separation. Designed to project the feel of multiple buildings instead of one monolithic structure using shadows and recesses.

The top floor also sets back from Castle St so 5 stories will not be overlooking the neighbors. It will look like a 4-story building from the street.

Action Taken: Mr. D'Amico makes a motion to open the public hearing. Mr. Reed seconds.

*Roll was called and the motion was **APPROVED** unanimously (4-1 excused).*

Marty Shaw, moved in on Castle St approximately a year ago. Expresses concern about parking and the ratio of parking spaces to number of apartments. Also expresses concern about the closeness of the buildings. Would like more information about the pilot.

Eric Amberg, owner of Rooted by Amberg. Also expresses concerns about the parking and whether it is enough to support the proposed building. States there is no commuter system in Geneva to provide transportation for residents of the building.

Wendy Marsh, lives across the street and owner of neighboring buildings, states the project is massive and will dwarf the neighboring buildings, along with being jammed into a small lot. The waivers required are significant. The code allows 12 units; however, the project is proposing 74 units. Parking is a large concern. The design of the building will have an impact on the surrounding historic district. Ms. Marsh disagrees with the statement from the applicant's lawyer that the SEQR reviews needs to be completed this evening. Having a concentrated use in this area with insufficient parking is not a good project use.

James Wallace, owner of the William Smith Inn, states he doesn't understand the benefit for Geneva when something more useful could be placed there, such as a project pertaining to tourism. He is not against the project itself, but doesn't believe it is in the correct location.

Lowell Dewey, IDA board member, makes some suggestions to improve the site plan. He suggests curbing in front of the green area and to provide separation between grass and pavement. Questions if two handicapped spaces are enough. With only 26 parking spaces, overflow parking should be looked into. Demolition could cause damage to the surrounding area so contractors should be required to repair any damages. Also makes suggestions to storm sewer plan, grading plan, floor elevation and lighting.

Bob Stivers, local resident and property owner, believes this project overreaches the recently passed zoning code. Mr. Stivers expresses concerns about the size of the building and states his commercial downtown businesses are against this project. He also states the amount of parking is not sufficient for the number of apartments. He believes this project does not meet the zoning regulations due to building size, height, parking, and variance requirements. He believes introducing this project into this location is not compatible with the neighboring environment and a better location can be chosen.

Clr. Petropoulos, ward 5 City Councilor, reads a written statement by a constituent who is a resident of Colt St. She is against the project, especially the parking.

Brian Rhodes, resident of Maxwell, reiterates the lack of parking as a concern. He does not care for the design of the building. He is also concerned about the proposed pilot agreement.

Dave Linger, local resident and neighboring business owner, respectfully requests this application be denied due to the size. He believes it will negatively impact the downtown environment, which includes the type of residents who will live there. As of now, half of the apartments are income based and half are Lakeview patients. The building itself is too large and does not conform to neighboring buildings. The number of proposed apartments is inappropriate for the space. He expresses concern about the number of proposed parking spaces. Mr. Linger states there are additional problems affecting the city and in that area specifically, such as drug use, loitering, etc and does not believe this project will help these already present issues. Mr. Linger believes the applicant would have provided more viewpoints and sightlines for the public to see. He passes out a packet to board members with additional photos and perspectives. He states the height of the proposed structure will dwarf the neighboring buildings. Mr. Linger states the applicant has been invited to the next Geneva BID meeting and requests the variances and application be denied.

Mary Henry, resident of Castle St and former real estate agent, states that there is already a large apartment building downtown with residents that intimidate potential customers of the surrounding downtown businesses. States there are currently 1200 units of section 8 housing in the city, many of which are overcrowded. 75 units in this building will be more than 75 residents. No options for people who may want to downsize and people are moving elsewhere.

Tom Burrall, downtown business owner, asks if this project is what Geneva needs or what the applicant wants. He is not against the project itself, but believes it is not the appropriate project for the site. He believes this project will not positively shape downtown Geneva.

Davon Green, speaks that he has seen other Lakeview buildings in other communities and they are conducive to the environment. He addresses some things said previously, such as the belief that 4-5 residents will be in each unit, as untrue. He believes that it is a positive thing that people are skeptical and ask questions, however, he does not want fear and false information to negatively impact progress and the Planning Board's judgement.

Cathy Lovejoy, CEO of Lakeview Health Services, offers comment after no more members of the public come forth to speak. 34 units are considered supportive units for residents with a mental health diagnosis. These residents must be able to live independently and take care of themselves. The staff are there for support only, they are not medical professionals. The first floor consists of staff offices and the remainder

will be community space, laundry rooms, wellness rooms, and the apartments along Genesee St. In terms of security, the only persons with access to the building are those who live and work in the building. All residents are able to freely come and go. Everyone who wants to live in the building must go through a screening, including criminal and financial. 70 units are 1 bedroom and 4 units are 2 bedrooms, with storage built in. Ms. Lovejoy states that the reason for the location in terms of residents, that residents would have the opportunity for walkability.

Applicant lawyer states he learned the SEQR solicitation letter did not go out more than 30 days ago and therefore, the board does not need to make a SEQR determination tonight. Asks for any specific feedback from the board to be sent so the applicant can address in writing. Will also address public comments and questions in writing.

Ms. Nenneau states the public hearing will remain open through the next scheduled meeting.

Mr. Reed states that he sent out some comments directly to the applicant via email that were responded to in writing. Some discussion on the comments.

(All written comments submitted to the clerk will be added to the record and attached to these minutes.)

4. Approval of Minutes from January & April 2025.

Action Taken: Mr. D'Amico makes a motion to approve the minutes from January & April 2025. Mr. Reed seconds.

*Roll was called and the motion was **APPROVED** unanimously (4-1 excused).*

5. Any questions or concerns

No questions or concerns.

6. Adjourn

Action Taken: Mr. D'Amico makes a motion to adjourn at 7:53PM. Mr. Reed seconds.

*Roll was called and the motion was **APPROVED** unanimously (4-1 excused).*

Respectfully submitted by Lauren Karlsen, Administrative Aide