



CITY OF GENEVA PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

6:00 PM | June 18, 2025
City Hall – 47 Castle St, Geneva NY

- 1. Roll Call:** Don Cass, Kevin Reed, Bryson Cochran, Dave D'Amico
Excused: Anne Nenneau
Also Present: Neal Braman, David Hou, Clerk Tillotson, City Manager Amie Hendrix, Clr. Petropolous
- 2. A Subdivision Application by the property owner, Debra Cleveland, at 160, 164 & 166 N Main St.**

Parcel is located on Dorchester & North Main and currently hold a church and two outbuildings supportive of the church. Debra Cleveland is proposing to subdivide all buildings into their own lots. Believe the church will become a single family, a current house on 160 N Main will remain a single family, and the third building to be converted into a single-family home.

Single family homes are permitted uses in this zoning district. Current parcels are non-conforming. Area variances will be required for some parcels due to the buildings being too close to the property line.

Lot #1 is 16,000 sq ft, Lot #2 is 34,000 sq ft, and Lot #3 is approximately 11,000 sq. ft.

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 July 16, 2025 at 6:00PM. Mr. Cochran seconds.

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

3. 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.

Agenda item is tabled until the July 16, 2025 meeting due to addressing engineering comments on the proposal.

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

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. A supplemental submission was submitted on June 6, 2025.

Cathy Lovejoy, president of Lakeview Mental Health Services, Inc, speaks briefly on some background of Lakeview. 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 on site 24/7 and for support only, they are not medical professionals. Everyone who wants to live in the building must go through a screening, including criminal and financial.

There are current Lakeview locations in Seneca Falls, Macedon, and Ithaca ranging from 40-60 units.

Ari Goldberg speaks to housing challenges in Geneva, referencing the 2023 Ontario County Housing Needs Assessment and the 2016 Geneva Comprehensive Plan.

Proposed tenant mix: 6 units at 50% AMI (\$875), 20 units at 60% AMI (\$900-\$1100), 11 units at 80% AMI (\$1250-\$1450), and 37 units of permanent supportive housing for individuals with a mental health diagnosis.

Project benefits include \$38 million investment coming from state level funding, some capital funding as already been secured, job creation, approximately \$50,000 annual taxes with 2% annual escalation, increased density for downtown, local owner/operator, enhanced streetscape, and a sustainable building.

It is explained that affordable housing projects generally apply for PILOTS due to being required by the state to keep their rents affordable and building sustainable. There is not a lot of "leftover" after covering expenses.

Fred Shelley, BME Associates (site designer) and Mark Pandolf (project architect) speak. The parcel is currently zoned Central Business and is an allowed use under the city code. The proposed project is an approximately 17,000 sq ft, 5-story, 74-unit apartment building with approximately 2400 sq. ft. of office space located on the first floor.

(Full site plan and architecture description can be found in the minutes from April 16, 2025 & May 21, 2025)

Mr. Pandolf references City Zoning Chp. 350-10.5.A.7 in terms of the design of the building and historic district. Diagrams are shown to display the size of the building relative to the lot.

Parking is discussed – resident parking at other Lakeview properties is approximately 25% - support staff will be parking in public lots. There are four public parking within a 3-mile walk, 40 on-street parking spots around the site, multiple bus stops nearby and Lakeview to provide transportation for supportive units.

An approximate project timeline is presented, with construction start in Summer 2026 and completion is Winter 2028.

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).*

Mr. Cass reads the names of those who have submitted public correspondence since the previous May 21, 2025 meeting - Ken Camera, Bruce King, Charles King, Mark Varvayanis, Jennifer Carlson, Joshua Fraass, Marissa L. Przepiora, Mary Zelazny, Barbara Pierce-Morrow, and Alen Quints.

Jonathon Taylor, Lakeview Mental Health client, speaks to his experiences as a client and how it has affected his life for the better. He states everyone deals with mental health. He says he is neutral to the building design itself as long as people are being helped. He wants to speak for people in the program because he knows other fear being judged.

Bob Stivers, local resident and property owner, expresses support for the need for affordable housing, but expresses concerns about the size of the building. He also states the amount of parking is not sufficient for the number of apartments. He does not believe the location provides enough green space or amenities such as grocery stores, pharmacies, clothing stores, etc. Believes too much of a concentrated population can

be a detriment to the area and will not work. Community impact will be a detriment – can't see anything but loitering and congestion around the downtown.

Marty Shaw, moved in on Castle St approximately a year ago. Expresses support for mental health and affordable housing, however, expresses concern about the size and the location choice. Believes the concentration of this many people in this area is a recipe for disaster. Believes tax breaks should be used to grow the downtown that locals and visitors alike can use. Unsure how this will benefit the existing population. Asks how we are sure that local persons will be the ones to live in the building.

Charles King, Copeland & Washington St, speaks that Geneva is a care community desert and much of the mental health care is outsourced. Speaks to personal experience with his son and how tax dollars are used for those with mental health. He states that people needing the services and housing Lakeview provides are already here in Geneva. Would like to see a place where disabled persons can live, stay active, and work. He asks the board to consider the care economy & mental health aspects of this project to be a positive thing.

Dave Linger, local resident and property owner, states historic district concerns and expresses concerns with the size of the building. Reads correspondence from Bruce King (correspondence part of the record and included with these minutes).

Tom Burrall, resident of 105 Jay St & 50 Linden St, speaks to personal experiences with family members. He does not believe this project conforms to the city comprehensive plan and believes the definition "independent living" is a stretch for half of the residents. He does not believe the on-street parking is adequate as part of issuing a special use permit. Potential for adverse effects is there.

Walter Adams, resident of High Banks, agrees there is need for affordable housing and mental health housing, but the location is not appropriate. Believes there is not enough parking.

Jerry Buckley, Geneva resident & chair of Historic Districts Commission & Chair of Geneva 2030, is sensitive to the need for housing for those with mental illness. Asks what other sites have been considered for the project. From a density standpoint, finds it interesting that Ithaca & Macedon (larger cities) have 60-unit buildings. Believes worst case scenarios are being painted by other public comments. Mentions "tipping point" and believes Geneva is much improved, but not completely revitalized and it is important for the board to look at the larger picture.

Bethany Haswell, owner of Stomping Grounds, attended the meeting tonight to learn about the project. She believes there is a perception or reality of limited parking downtown. She wants more people living and visiting downtown; however, she does believe the building itself might be too large and parking too limited. She has had some occurrences with people in her shop and just wants to be thoughtful about what is being built downtown.

Wendy Marsh, 91 Castle St resident, believes the project is being presented as affordable housing, but is not affordable housing. The parking is inadequate. No analysis of current parking situation and if it is practical. Asks that SEQRA be further explored as she believes there will be negative impacts on a number of items – historic district, additional community services, stormwater & environmental impacts.

Action Taken: Mr. Cochran makes a motion to keep the public hearing open until the July 18, 2025 meeting. Mr. Reed seconds.

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

(All written comments submitted to the clerk will be added to the record and available on the City of Geneva website.)

Mr. Reed reads the following resolution:

CITY OF GENEVA PLANNING BOARD RESOLUTION

REGARDING SPECIAL USE PERMIT AND SITE PLAN FOR 218 GENESEE STREET (LAKEVIEW HEALTH SERVICES)

SEQRA – DESIGNATION OF LEAD AGENCY

WHEREAS, the City of Geneva Planning Board ("Planning Board"), is considering an application for a Special Use Permit and Site Plan approval for a proposed development project (the "Action") by Lakeview Health Services to be located at 218 Genesee Street, as provided by BME Associates dated March 26, 2025 (the "Application"); and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board has determined that the above-referenced Action is a Type 1 Action under the State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA"); and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board at its April 16, 2025 meeting declared its intent to be designated the Lead Agency for the proposed Action under SEQRA; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board provided written notices to this effect to the involved and interested agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board has previously determined that it is the most appropriate agency to insure the coordination of this Action and for making the determination of significance thereon under SEQRA.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Board does hereby designate itself as the lead agency for the Action identified above herein;

The above Resolution was offered by Mr. Reed and seconded by Mr. Cass at a regularly scheduled Planning Board meeting held on June 18, 2025. Following discussion, a voice vote was recorded:

Donald Cass, Chairperson	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Anne Nenneau	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Bryson Cochran	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Dave D'Amico	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Kevin Reed	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT

5. Discussion & Recommendation for fences allowing 6' tall from the front of the house to the backyard.

Mr. Braman states he receives a large number of requests for 6 ft fences running from the front of the house to the back of the property, which currently requires a variance under city code. Currently allowed is a 6 ft fence from the back of the house to the back of the property. He would like to request a change in ordinance from City Council allowing a 6 ft. fence from the front of a house to the back of the property without a variance.

Mr. D'Amico asks about differences in grade. Corner lots will follow current code guidelines.

Mr. Braman asks for an approval from the board to go before City Council to request an ordinance change. Board members agree that a 6 ft fence from the front of the house to the back of the property is appropriate.

Action Taken: Mr. D'Amico makes a motion to give approval from the board that a 6 ft fence from the front of the house to the back of the property is appropriate. Mr. Cochran seconds.

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

6. Any questions or concerns

Mr. Reed introduces engineering comments submitted to Cook Properties regarding the Middle St. subdivision, including stormwater catch basins and sidewalks.

7. Adjourn

Action Taken: Mr. D'Amico makes a motion to adjourn at 8PM. Mr. Reed seconds.

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

Respectfully submitted by Lauren Karlsen, Administrative Aide