



CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

ROOM 305, WATERTOWN CITY HALL
245 WASHINGTON STREET
WATERTOWN, NEW YORK 13601-3380
(315) 785-7741

MEETING: March 3, 2026

PRESENT:

Michelle Capone, Chair
Scott Garrabrant
Lynn Godek
Maryellen Blevins
Peter Monaco

ALSO:

Michael A. Lumbis, Planning and
Community Development Director
Thomas S.M. Compo, P.E., City Engineer
Geoffrey T. Urda, Senior Planner
Joseph Albinus, Planner
Kerinne O'Donnell, Secretary

ABSENT:

Linda Fields

Planning Commission Chairperson, Michelle Capone, called the March 3, 2026, Planning Commission meeting to order at 5:16 p.m. Ms. Capone asked for a motion regarding the minutes of the February 3, 2026, meeting. Ms. Godek made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Ms. Blevins seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

SUBDIVISION FINAL PLAT APPROVAL – TWO-LOT SUBDIVISION OF 925 MAIN STREET WEST, PARCEL NUMBER 1-17-403.000

The Planning Commission then considered a request submitted by 925 Main Street W, LLC, for a two-lot subdivision of 925 Main Street West, Parcel Number 1-17-403.000. Mr. Adam Storino, PLS, of Storino Geomatics attended to represent the request.

Mr. Urda provided a brief note regarding the Subdivision, informing the public that the Planning Commission would not be voting on the application for state environmental review reasons, but will declare themselves the lead agency, pursuant to SEQR, and will not adopt a Negative Declaration until the Zoning Board of Appeals acknowledges the Planning Commission's status as lead agency.

Mr. Storino then presented the application, stating it was a simple two-lot subdivision where Parcel One will be a 0.51-acre lot and Parcel Two will be a 0.59-acre lot. Both parcels will meet the dimensional regulations of the Zoning Ordinance apart from Parcel Two not meeting the minimum rear yard setback. He said that there will be a 5.7-foot rear yard setback, and an Area Variance will be needed.

Mr. Lumbis informed the Planning Commission that the application for the Variance is running concurrently with the Subdivision request and will be considered by the Zoning Board of Appeals at its March 18, 2026, meeting.

Ms. Capone then read aloud the public hearing notice for the above Subdivision Final Plat Approval that had been published in the *Watertown Daily Times* and opened the Public Hearing at 5:20 p.m. Hearing no comments, she then closed the public hearing at 5:22 p.m.

Ms. Godek made a motion to declare the Planning Commission as the Lead Agency pursuant to SEQR and to acknowledge the Zoning Board of Appeals first needs to also acknowledge the Planning Commission as Lead Agency for the SEQR review.

Ms. Blevins seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN DISCUSSION – PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT 376 BUTTERFIELD AVENUE, PARCEL NUMBER 14-17-103.110

The Planning Commission then considered a conceptual development presentation from GYMO Architecture Engineering & Land Surveying, DPC on behalf of Jake Johnson Properties, for proposed future residential development at 376 Butterfield Avenue, Parcel Number 14-17-103.110.

Ms. Capone began by explaining this was a presentation and discussion, and no action would be taken tonight regarding this agenda item. The developer's representative will present; there will be discussion between the representative and the Planning Commission and then privilege of the floor will be permitted with a three-minute allowance per speaker.

Mr. Mark Crandall with GYMO Architecture, Engineering & Land Surveying, DPC, then presented the proposed future residential development, which would be a three-phase development project that would provide housing units and aid in a grant application for the City. It would also require a Zone Change from Residential to a Planned Development District (PDD). Mr. Crandall used the conceptual site plan as a visual aid for his presentation explaining utilities, parking, design, sidewalks, and a public walking path.

Ms. Capone asked what type of housing would be offered to which Mr. Crandall replied that it would be market-rate housing.

Mr. Monaco asked for clarification regarding the utilities and maintenance of the roads for who is responsible to which Mr. Crandall replied, the City would handle the maintenance of the road and utilities at the conclusion of the project. He noted that everything would be designed and constructed to City standards.

Mr. Garrabrant asked if the fixed-market-rate status would change or if it was set as is.

Mr. Crandall stated that it would be difficult to answer due to the fact the project is still in its very early stages. He suggested that the Commission speak to their legal counsel to see if there is a way to get approval to have a restriction or control over that type of condition.

Ms. Blevins stated she was concerned about the wetlands, and mentioned Marra Drive is currently grandfathered in, but it was her understanding that no new construction is permitted due to the topography.

Mr. Crandall referred to his conceptual site plan, showing where the wetlands and one-hundred-foot wetland buffer would be in reference to the proposed development, and clarified the information was pulled from the public wetland map. He said that both the wetlands and buffers would be avoided for this development. Mr. Crandall then clarified that a certain road connection could infringe on the buffer, but that it would be under an acre and permissible by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and that further mapping and design would be done to ensure it remained permissible.

Ms. Capone stated that the proposed development would likely be a Type 1 Action pursuant to SEQR and would require a significant amount of information and reports to substantiate the action.

Ms. Godek and Mr. Crandall then discussed stormwater management for the area, and due to the project still being in early design phases, she presumed there is a capacity for stormwater management and the project will aid in securing funding to improve the infrastructure of the area, but there will be no definitive answer until studies have been done.

Ms. Capone then asked how the disturbance to the land would affect the current residents and property owners in the area, to which Mr. Crandall stated he could not attest to anything due to the lack of studies done in the area, however, it was mentioned that the topographical viewpoint shows the wetlands are the only downstream areas.

Ms. Blevins stated she understood the need for housing but mentioned there was already proposed apartment development on Sherman Street. Mr. Garrabrant then noted that the potential applicant for Sherman Street development had not submitted a formal application to the City since appearing before the Planning Commission in Summer 2025 for a conceptual discussion.

Mr. Monaco asked what the proposed timeframe would be for this project, to which Mr. Crandall stated this would be a multi-year project that would be based off the market demand study.

Ms. Capone then said that she does not look at Zone Change requests without knowing everything that will be done on the property to remove any risk of speculation. She clarified that this project had a long way to go before it would be able to request a Zone Change, including a market analysis and a SEQR review. Ms. Capone then said that the Commission would need much more information to make an informed decision about the change and the type of land, especially with the new zoning and land use map. Ms. Capone concluded by clarifying the Planning Commission makes recommendations to the City Council for Zone Changes, and the City Council chooses whether they are approved or denied.

The Planning Commission all agreed with Ms. Capone's recommendation.

Ms. Capone informed the attending members of the meeting that this was not a public hearing, but that there would be a three-minute limit for Privilege of the Floor for anyone who chose to speak.

Mr. Crandall reiterated this project was in a very early stage and said they would get to do more work for the project and appreciated the time everyone took in participating and attending in the discussion. Ms. Godek acknowledged the level of detail found in this early conceptual plan is

for the purpose of discussion, and no due diligence would not have been appropriate at this stage in the discussion, and thanked Mr. Crandall for bringing in the presentation.

Mr. Urda then clarified that under the new Zoning Ordinance, applications for new PDD's are made to the City Council, who then refers the application to the Planning Commission, and then upon that referral, the Planning Commission is responsible for making a recommendation to the City Council.

Ms. Capone then opened the floor for public comments and requested that each speaker provide their name and address.

Kyle Zimmerman of 328 Butterfield Avenue said that he was firmly against the project, due to the neighborhood being residential and there being other locations in the City for developing a project like this. Mr. Zimmerman relayed similar comments and concerns from Richards Drive resident, Greg Maneeley., who could not attend the meeting but asked that his comments be passed along.

Madelyn McGuire, who grew up on Barben Avenue, spoke about Summit Wood Apartments and stated the construction of that project about 15 years ago in this neighborhood had changed the wetlands for the worse causing more flooding in backyards and felt that adding more apartments would cause further issues, including significantly increased traffic.

Bob Sawyer of 205 Iroquois Avenue West said that he was concerned about traffic and that motorists speed through the area.

Brian Shepard of 212 Barben Avenue spoke on increased tax base versus quality of life and stated there are issues in that area that have gone unresolved for decades, claiming this is not a viable project.

Steve Tiernan of 327 Butterfield Avenue said there were water issues which would affect the homes that were downstream of the project and spoke on the increased water issues that have arisen since Summit Wood Apartments were built. Mr. Tiernan asked what considerations would be made to encourage slower speed limits.

Adam Ruppe, 316 Butterfield Avenue stated the development would not meet Planned Development District requirements and qualifications, the Plan, nor the Zoning Map or needs of the City.

TK King of Richards Drive said this project would cause significant issues with water that is already resting approximately two inches high, traffic would increase as well and wanted the applicant to consider the statements.

Susan Pizzuta of Butterfield Avenue mentioned her concerns about adding more of the population into that small area as it is already under patrolled by the thinly spread police force of the City.

Gary Pilon of Barben Avenue spoke on the heavy traffic of the area and did not feel the issues of this area would be resolved by this development.

Joe Goss of Marra Drive posed a question regarding the purpose of zoning if it can be changed and also spoke on the requirements for Planned Development Districts, as well as market value and property costs being negatively impacted.

Mr. Monaco made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Blevins seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerinne O'Donnell, Secretary