

Town of Columbia
Regular Planning Board Meeting

February 15, 2023

The Town of Columbia Planning Board held its regular monthly meeting on February 15, 2023 at the Town Building.

Members Present: R. Bayzon, R. Fagan, P. Kidder; D. Rubin; B. Warner-Davis; alt. J. Hotaling

Absent: None

Others Present: Nathan Seamon, John Sweetman, Therese Winchester

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Bayzon.

Planning Board minutes for its Annual and Regular Meetings held January 18 were approved as presented.

Chairman's Report: Nothing to report.

Communications and Reports:

1. Draft minutes of the Town Board's February 9 meeting were routed. Of note, the Board agreed to submit the Town's proposed Moratorium Law on Solar Development to the Herkimer County Planning Board for review and comment. A Public Hearing on the proposed law will be reopened after the County review.
2. P. Kidder reported the current procedure used to submit a Public Notice about upcoming meetings in the Herkimer Telegram is to email the listing to herkimertlegals@gannett.com.
3. D. Rubin reported the City of Rome had set a February 2023 end date for a one year moratorium banning solar array projects in the city. During the moratorium the city updated its solar laws, which do allow for solar development within the city. Included in revisions were regulations requiring decommissioning plans be submitted every five years.
4. D. Rubin noted an article "To (Regulate) AIRBNB Or Not To (Regulate) AIRBNB, That Is The Question" was published in the January/February 2023 issue of Talk of the Towns. The paper provided an overview of tools local governments have available to regulate short-term rentals should such a need arise.

5. P. Kidder reported Assembly Bill A2269 was introduced in January 2023 which would require approval through public referendum prior to certification for establishing a major electric generating facility in a municipality (NY city or town).
6. R. Fagan reported the Town has progressed with its project to purchase, install and link a smart board in the Town meeting hall, and the installation may be made in the near term.

Old Business:

1. EDF Columbia Solar Project: Nothing new to report.
2. Town-wide Solar Proposal Survey: This topic was discussed at length by all present at the meeting, resulting in authorizing R. Fagan to go ahead with the mailing of the latest version of the survey to Town residents in late February. The Town Board is to cover the cost of printing and mailing of the survey, and the Planning Board will receive and compile results on behalf of the Town Board.
3. Drone use and regulations: Nothing new to report.
4. Posting of Planning Board minutes on the Columbia town website. P. Kidder initiated this proposal by submitting January Planning Board minutes to the Town web master.
5. Understanding the PILOT Program and the alternate NYSERDA Solar/Wind (tax) Assessment Model: Nothing new to report.

New Business:

1. Planning Board By-Laws: As agreed to during the Board's January Annual meeting a minor update was made to the Board's By-Laws, and upon approval by all members present the revised document was duly signed and became affective as of the meeting.
2. Town of Columbia Comprehensive Plan: Board members exchanged comments regarding their reviews of the 2018 Plan, identifying those sections which could be updated and/or expanded. It was agreed to initiate an update as a 2023 project, and individual Board members volunteered to draft updates to selected sections.

Board and Public Discussion:

Chairman Bayzon adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Next meeting: March 15, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Kidder
Secretary

Copy: Town Clerk, Planning Board Members and alternate, ZBA Chairman, Codes Enforcement Officer.