

MINUTES OF A MEETING AS HELD BY THE
TOWN OF AURORA PLANNING & CONSERVATION BOARD

November 5th, 2025

Members Present: Chairman, Doug Crow
 Tim Stroth
 Chelsea Root
 Angela Griffis
 Chris Contento

Alternate Member: Ben Garvey

Absent/ Excused: Norm Merriman
 Laurie Kutina
 William Heidt

Also Present: Liz Cassidy, Code Enforcement Officer
 Fred Perez, World Mission Society Church of God
 Varinder Gill, WNY West Falls Inc.
 Chuck Norris, Project & Safety Manager for WNY West Falls, Inc.
 Peter Sorgi, Attorney for Carner Development Group, Inc.
 Rachel Krajewski, President, Carner Development Group, Inc.
 Paul Ernst, Chair, Town ZBA
 Eric Diebolt, member of public

Chairman, Doug Crow presided over the meeting which began at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, 575 Oakwood Avenue, East Aurora, NY. He led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Chairman, Doug Crow states that all 6 members present at tonight's meeting are voting members.

Chairman, Doug Crow asks for a motion to approve the minutes from September 3rd, 2025

Tim Stroth makes a motion to approve the minutes from September 3rd, 2025

Second by Chris Contento

Upon a vote being taken:

Ayes- 6

Noes-0

Motion carried

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

a. South Town Working Group update: Tim Stroth

In lieu of the fall quarterly meeting, Erie County sponsored a training session with NYS Department of State. There were several people from East Aurora in attendance, including members of the Town and Village Boards. The next meeting is scheduled for January. Tim will forward the agenda to the Planning Board for anyone who may be interested in attending. It is typically a low-key dinner meeting. Meal checks are all separate with everyone paying for themselves. The highest attendance is from more rural towns. Erie County schedules informative and interesting speakers for the program.

b. Comprehensive Plan Update: Angela Griffis

In October we held a public workshop to review the current plan and future land use. Comments during the workshop were incorporated into the final draft plan and it was submitted to the county for final review and approval.

Doug Crow added the proposed final draft is set to eliminate ODAs. The plan is to eventually amend the code, to remove ODAs from our code.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

a. The Building Department has received a Site Plan application for 711 Knox Road, SBL: 163.00-3-23 as submitted by Fred Perez, representing World Mission Society Church of God, for a security booth, and to the continued use as a seminary and place of religious instruction.

Fred Perez, representing World Mission Church of God, is here to request the construction of a security booth at the entrance of the property, and the continued use of the property as a seminary and place for religious instruction.

Chairman, Doug Crow mentions that the original Site Plan has been revised. The alteration is to move the security booth to be parallel with the maintenance building to eliminate the need for a Variance.

Tim Stroth asks if the plans for the security booth will include a gate arm and an extra pavement turn around.

Fred Perez confirms there will be a gate arm. A paved turnaround will also be added.

Angela Griffis asks if there are plans for any additional lighting.

Fred Perez states there are no plans for additional lighting, if not required.

Tim Stoth asks CEO, Liz Cassidy for clarification on the Site Plan application, prior to making a motion.

CEO, Liz Cassidy states, it would be a Site Plan approval pending additional information for the security booth and, for the continued use as a religious instruction and education center.

Tim Stroth made a motion to the Planning Board to recommend to the Town Board to approve the continued use for religious instruction and the updated Site Plan application to show complete details for the security booth.

Second by: Chairman, Doug Crow

Upon a vote being taken:

Ayes- 6

Noes- 0

Motion carried

- b. The Building Department has received a Site Plan application for 1045 Davis Road, SBL: 199.01-1-18 as submitted by WNY West Falls Inc., known as The Corner Market.

Chairman, Doug Crow states a Site Plan was approved 2 years ago, however the applicant was unable to start work on the project right away and it expired. The applicant returned in January of 2025, and it was approved again. Currently, they are looking to amend the current Site Plan.

Varinder Gill, owner of WNY West Falls Inc. states the request to amend the current Site Plan would include replacement of the existing fuel pumps and canopy.

Chairman, Doug Crow asks if it would be necessary to remediate the soil around the fuel tanks.

Chuck Norris, Project & Safety Manager for WNY West Falls, Inc., states the present tanks are the property of Sunoco. They will be responsible for the removal and remediation of the tanks and site. They hire a third-party environment company that monitors and does all the sampling per the protocol of New York State DEC.

Chairman, Doug Crow asks about the condition of the parking lot and striping.

Varinder Gill states upon completion of the project there will be all new paving and striping.

Chuck Norris, indicated that the intention is to hopefully start in approximately two weeks following approval. The tentative time of completion would be mid-January.

Angela Griffis asks about the height of canopy. Also, would there be any change in lighting.

Chuck Norris, states the canopy height will be 14 feet. The lighting for the new canopy will be updated to LED.

Tim Stroth asks where the underground drainage goes.

Chuck Norris, that underground drainage will not be installed. All drainage will be above ground directed to existing drainage, which takes most of the drainage.

Angela Griffis makes a motion to the Planning Board to recommend to the Town Board, to approve the amendment to the existing Site Plan to include the replacement of the existing canopy and fuel pumps as proposed at 1045 Davis Road.

Second by: Chelsea Root

Upon a vote being taken:

Ayes- 6

Noes-0

Motion carried

- c. Concept Plan Review discussion for 1196 Big Tree Road, SBL: 165.00-1-28.21, as submitted by Peter Sorgi, agent for owner Carner Development Group, Inc.

Rachel Krawjwewski introduces herself and provides the Planning Board with a brief description of her background and Carner Development Group's desire to improve spaces in the town.

Peter Sorgi is here representing the Carner Development Group.

They are here before the Planning Board, looking for input regarding three possible options for the use of 1196 Big Tree Road. There will be no variances required. They are presently in the engineering process.

The project site is zoned Rural Residential (first 300 feet) and Agricultural. All three options are allowed with Special Use Permit and Site Plan approval. No variances required.

Rachel Krawjewski provides and explains the three options.

1. Option 1: Glamp ground with wellness theme and accessory uses.
A rustic lodge (main house), the existing spa will remain in use, and a common area. There will also be some seasonal cottages, and treehouse retreats. Guests would come here as a wellness hospitality retreat.

Chelsea Root asks why the cottages are seasonal.

Rachel Krawjewski states that due to the way the code is written, they can only be occupied six months out of the year.

Chairman, Doug Crow asks about the common area.

Rachel Krawjewski states it can be used as any accessory use as defined by state law. It can be used as a church, a conference area, and a wedding pavilion. All of which are approved uses.

Tim Stroth inquires about size occupancy of the cottages.

Rachel Krawjewski states typically two to four, depending on structure. Some go up to six.

2. Option 2: Campground with accessory uses.
A traditional RV campground per Town Code with a SUP. They would be preserving the main house as a camp lodge, creating 54 spaces for RVs, which have a maximum stay of 29 days.

Chris Contento inquires if sites will have concrete pads

Raschel Krawjewski confirms. Also, states the property has public water.

Chairman, Doug Crow inquires about the main house.

Rachel Krawjewski states there is a potential to convert into rental spaces.

3. Option 3: Five two- family dwelling rentals

Rachel Krawjewski states with this option the main building would not be kept in its current capacity. There would be 5 separate, two family homes. They would be

income based rentals.

Chairman, Doug Crow asks the Planning Board for their feedback of the three options.

Chelsea Root is more in favor of option one or two. Saving the existing structures. Giving people a desirable destination to come to.

Ben Garvey asks for provisions for emergency services to the furthest treehouse structures.

Rachel Krawjewski states they would be ADA compliant.

Ben Garvey has a preference to the first option due to the intention of utilizing the existing structures and the preservation of the natural land.

Chairman, Doug Crow states he finds option one to be the most desirable use of the buildings. It is a less intrusive use than an RV park, which would have to clear multiple trees to create sites.

Chelsea Root asks about the occupancy potential of option two.

Rachel Krawjewski states other surrounding RV parks are full. If this property had room for one hundred sites, it would be full.

Chris Contento favors option one. Thinks it would benefit the community in many ways, especially when there are weekend events. There is always a need for accommodations.

Angela Griffis agrees with option one for many of the same previously mentioned reasons.

Rachel Krawjewski reiterates that the wellness hospitality would offer the availability of massage, nature trails, to name a couple of things.

Ben Garvey asks if there will be a pool.

Rachel Krawjewski states there is already a pool on the property.

Chairman, Doug Crow, asks if there are anymore questions. No response. He concludes the discussion.

- d. Town Board referral for a review and recommendation of the proposed Lighting Code.

Chairman, Doug Crow states the Planning Board has been asked to review the proposed Lighting Code which has been worked on by the Code Working Group.

Chelsea Root states she is in favor of and happy that there will be a guideline for residential and commercial parcels to follow with more detail.

Chairman, Doug Crow states the Code Working Group tried to make the requirements more lenient for existing properties. Many things presently will be grandfathered in, until the time of repair or replacement.

CEO, Liz Cassidy states with no Lighting Code, there is zero means of enforcement. When a complaint is made by a neighboring property, I can only send a letter requesting the property owner redirect or shield the light.

Chris Contento asks about existing lighting. If this were adopted, what would happen with an existing problem neighboring property.

CEO, Liz Cassidy states it would allow her to cite the property occupant/owner. If the department receives a complaint, we can investigate and verify. Having a code will give a section to reference for a citation, and state, that it is beyond the code allowance. There are also provisions for security lighting, for businesses.

Chairman, Doug Crow made a motion to the Planning Board to recommend to the Town Board to pursue the Lighting Code as proposed after appropriate discussion and public hearing.

Second by: Tim Stroth

Upon a vote being taken:

Ayes-6

Noes-0

Motion carried

Member of the Public, Eric Diebolt states he is in favor of the proposed Lighting Code. He states the proposed code is well written. He is in favor of existing lighting being subject to new codes as well.

CEO, Liz Cassidy states this will hopefully be adopted by the end of the year.

- e. Discussion regarding renewable energy PILOTs and codification.

Chairman, Doug Crow states he attended a three-day conference, also attended by Supervisor, Chuck Snyder pertaining to PILOTs (Payments-in-lieu-of-Taxes. One of the things the State has done is to try to encourage alternative energy. They passed a section of the Real Property Code that allows people who make improvements for solar, wind, etc., not to increase the taxes prior to receiving revenue. The intention is to give exemption from assessed value and then encourage the developers if they are going to do a project, to sign a Payment in Lieu of Tax agreement with the local town, that lets them change the schedule of the timing of the payments. The developer has a sixty-day window to the town negotiate a PILOT. The town can say yes or no, then move to negotiate if granted. It is not necessarily efficient. The State now recommends passing a law to negotiate a PILOT in all cases.

Chairman, Doug Crow created a draft which he felt would be appropriate for our town. If the Planning Board can discuss and get comfortable with the idea, we could recommend the Town Board adopt a version of this.

Tim Stroth questions what needs to be in the contract, and who pays for the negotiations and contract development. How do we make the assurances to cover all bases to protect the Town. There would be a need for legal advice. A contract template should be created.

Chairman, Doug Crow states that would be a fee charged.

Multiple people talking.

Tim Stroth states there are a couple of options. The Town could choose to opt out of this or if they do pass a law, it would make more sense to have a template contract that addresses all the conditions.

Tim Stroth asks CEO, Liz Cassidy, for her opinion of this topic.

CEO, Liz Cassidy states there would be no involvement from the Building and Code Enforcement Department. She feels the request should go to the Supervisor for approval process.

Angela Griffis states she is on the fence with her opinion based on what we are trying to do. If we are trying to encourage more solar in the community, this is going to go against that. However, she feels it to be more beneficial to larger commercial scale.

Chairman, Doug Crow states there would be the potential of three options.

1. Opt out of the discount, which would hurt solar development
2. Pass a PILOT law.
3. Not pass a PILOT law.

Multiple people talking

Chris Contento inquires, other than tax revenue, how do large solar farms benefit.

Angela Griffis states with the increase, there are tax benefits.

Chelsea Root states that it is presently a concept she needs to wrap her head around it, to understand the topic more.

Chairman, Doug Crow states he will speak with Supervisor, Chuck Snyder and share some of the thoughts and discussion from the Planning Board.

CORRESPONDENCES: Erie County Housing Summit training on 11/14/25 via email

PUBLIC COMMENTS: none

Tim Stroth makes a motion to adjourn at 8:57 pm

Seconded by: Chairman, Doug Crow

Upon a vote being taken:

Ayes-6

Noes-0

Motion carried

THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 3RD, AT 7:00 P.M. AT THE TOWN HALL, 575 OAKWOOD AVENUE, EAST AURORA, NEW YORK