

Village of Skaneateles Planning Board Special Meeting September 30, 2015

Special Meeting to consider issues raised by the moratorium on use conversions within the Commercial C and Downtown D Districts.

Present: Bruce Kenan, Chairman
Brian Carvalho, Member
William Eberhardt, Member

Riccardo Galbato, Attorney for the Planning Board
Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Boards

Jonathan Monfiletto, Skaneateles Journal
Michael Byrne, Village Attorney
Rosemary Stack, Esq., Velasko Road, Syracuse
Michael Fogel, Esq., Genesee Street, Syracuse
Robert Kiltz, Skaneateles
Chris Newcomer, Pittsford
Robert Eggleston, Skaneateles

Absent: Stephen Hartnett, Member
Douglas Sutherland, Member

At 7:00 pm Chairman Kenan called the special meeting of the Planning Board to order saying, "When originally scheduled it was planned that this would be a work session which would enable the Planning Board to offer the Board's advice to the Village Trustees on what actions would best take advantage of the moratorium that's now in place with regard to the C and D Zoning districts in the Village. But as such things go, everything doesn't work out the way you planned. Two of our members could not be here tonight. One is an airline pilot who is off somewhere above earth flying around right now, and the other is on a vacation trip. I have spoken with each of them and I learned from them what they suggest our advice ought to be to the Trustees on the subject. Then I conferred with Counsel, Rick Galbato, and relayed to Rick what our combined thinking on the subject was. Rick has taken that and drafted up some language which I suggest may give the Trustees the advantage of the Planning Board's thoughts on the matter. This is not offered as Zoning language as such; it's more in the form of a generic view of what our advice to the Trustees ought to be. I suppose it is a philosophical view of what our advice to the Trustees would be."

Chairman Kenan continued, "I will read through what has been drafted, and if all of us agree that's what I suggest we do and pass it on to the Trustees." Chairman Kenan read this statement, "expertly written by Mr. Galbato":

September 30, 2015

Village of Skaneateles Planning Board

Re: *A moratorium on change of use of dwelling units to lodging or hotel rooms and on special use permits for lodging in the Commercial C and Downtown D Districts.*

The issue: *Investors are converting residential units into hotel lodging, but this does not build community, it weakens the character and fabric of the community. That's our sense of it.*

Findings:

1. *Such conversions are not in the best interest of the Village or its residents.*
2. *Uses of dwellings for this purpose are contrary to the expressed goals of the Joint Comprehensive Plan regarding affordable family housing and maintaining the vibrancy of the Village core.*
3. *Elimination of dwelling units puts further pressure on school district enrollment.*
4. *Proliferation could result in areas of the Village being vacant during parts of the year.*

Recommended actions: *It would be our suggestion that the Trustees create some language that would:*

1. *Prohibit conversions of residential dwelling units into hotel/lodging.*
2. *Examine and extend additional requirements to apply to hotel use, including on-site parking and supervisory management.*
3. *Reexamine additional requirements that apply to lodging use, including on-site parking and supervisory management.*
4. *Determine functional distinction between lodging use and hotel use. Those definitions are quite similar right now.*
5. *Define supplemental apartments as dwelling units; permitted in conjunction with retail, office or owner-occupied dwelling principal uses only.*
6. *Modify Motel, Rooming House and Tourist Home in the Code and Permitted Use Chart accordingly.*

As a follow up to that -- sort of examining the sense of the question: But are there enough places for visitors to stay? I would suggest that the Planning Board's view expressed to the Trustees to be that -- Village government's role is to establish appropriate standards for the land uses, and it is the free enterprise system's role to seek an economic balance. The residents of Skaneateles are pleased that the attractive features of this community make it a pleasant place to visit. However, a delicate balance must be maintained, and our community must not lose its desirable residential qualities.

Chairman Kenan, “Do you have any thoughts or changes? I know we have discussed it one-on-one in the past. I would suggest that there be a motion that it be our recommendation to the Trustees.”

Member Carvalho, “I agree with the statement; I had some ideas to expand on the findings a little bit more. Specifically in Finding 1, I expanded that to read: *Such conversions are not in the best interest of the Village or its residents. Conversion of residential units to hotel lodging replaces residents with transient visitors who have no stake in the community.* For Finding 2, I changed the language to read: *Uses of dwellings for this purpose are contrary to the expressed goals of the Joint Comprehensive Plan regarding affordable family housing and maintaining the vibrancy and population of the Village core. Conversion of residential dwelling units to hotel rooms reduces the pool of affordable units and potentially drives up the cost of these residential units.* For Finding 3, I would expand that to read: *Elimination of dwelling units has a negative impact on population growth putting pressure on school enrollment, churches and volunteer-dependent organizations such as the Fire Department, Village boards and recreational organizations.* I agree with the findings that we’ve got; I thought we should expand on them a bit more to provide more backup of what our thoughts are.” Member Eberhardt, “I agree with Brian. That enhances the points.”

Chairman Kenan, “Do you want to make a motion that we adopt this with Brian’s suggestions as a recommendation to the Trustees?” **Member Eberhardt, “I will make the motion that we adopt the recommendation to the Village Board of Trustees dated September 30, 2015, including the additional findings of Member Carvalho.” Member Carvalho seconded the motion.** Chairman Kenan and Members Carvalho and Eberhardt voted “Aye” and the motion was carried 3 – 0.

The recommendation of the Planning Board to the Village Trustees, as adopted, is set forth on the following page in its entirety:

September 30, 2015
Village of Skaneateles Planning Board

Re: A moratorium on change of use of dwelling units to lodging or hotel rooms and on special use permits for lodging in the Commercial C and Downtown D Districts.

The issue: Investors are converting residential units into hotel lodging, but this does not build community, it weakens the character and fabric of the community. That's our sense of it.

Findings:

1. Such conversions are not in the best interest of the Village or its residents. Conversion of residential units to hotel lodging replaces residents with transient visitors who have no stake in the community.
2. Uses of dwellings for this purpose are contrary to the expressed goals of the Joint Comprehensive Plan regarding affordable family housing and maintaining the vibrancy and population of the Village core. Conversion of residential dwelling units to hotel rooms reduces the pool of affordable units and potentially drives up the cost of these residential units.
3. Elimination of dwelling units has a negative impact on population growth putting pressure on school enrollment, churches and volunteer-dependent organizations, such as the Fire Department, Village boards and recreational organizations.
4. Proliferation could result in areas of the Village being vacant during parts of the year.

Recommended actions: It would be our suggestion that the Trustees create language that would:

1. Prohibit conversions of residential dwelling units into hotel/lodging.
2. Examine and extend additional requirements to apply to hotel use, including on-site parking and supervisory management.
3. Reexamine additional requirements that apply to lodging use, including on-site parking and supervisory management.
4. Determine functional distinction between lodging use and hotel use. Those definitions are quite similar right now.
5. Define supplemental apartments as dwelling units; permitted in conjunction with retail, office or owner-occupied dwelling principal uses only.
6. Modify Motel, Rooming House and Tourist Home in the Code and Permitted Use Chart accordingly.

Q. But are there enough places for visitors to stay?

A. Village government's role is to establish appropriate standards for the land uses, and it is the free enterprise system's role to seek an economic balance. The residents of Skaneateles are pleased that the attractive features of this community make it a pleasant place to visit. However, a delicate balance must be maintained, and our community must not lose its desirable residential qualities.

Attorney Galbato, "Mr. Chairman, how do we present your recommendations? The minutes, when they are prepared probably tomorrow or Friday, how do we present that to the Trustees?" Chairman Kenan, "When do they meet?" Mr. Dundon, "They will meet October 8 as do we." Chairman Kenan, "That's the same night as our next meeting. What time are they meeting?" Mr. Dundon, "They are scheduled to meet at 7:30 pm. The Trustees may request that you and Attorney Galbato present your recommendation to the Trustees earlier that same night." Mr. Dundon said that he would confirm those arrangements and handle the distribution of the minutes to the Trustees.

Mr. Newcomer, "May I ask a question? Where is the Board right now as far as short-term rentals go in the business district?" Chairman Kenan, "The Board meaning the Trustees? I'm not sure." Attorney Galbato, "What's your question?" Mr. Newcomer, "Regarding the moratorium and short-term rentals in the business district?" Chairman Kenan, "I think that question has to be put to the Trustees." Mr. Dundon, "I believe the moratorium applies to those conversions as well." Mr. Newcomer, "Currently the moratorium right now is set to run 'til January?" Chairman Kenan, "I think the end of the year."

At the suggestion of Chairman Kenan, the meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 7:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Boards

