



VILLAGE OF SAUGERTIES  
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## Planning Board Meeting and Public Hearings March 8, 2023 Minutes

**Present:** Planning Board – Michael Karashay, Doug Mulqueen, Anne Meiswinkel, Dara Ellenbogen, Eyal Saad, Rae Stang via phone Others: Ben Neidl

**Michael Karashay** opened the Planning Board Public Hearing and Meeting at 6:30pm.

Public Hearing, Chairman Michael Karashay requested that speakers limit their time to 5 minutes and to be respectful of the speakers.

Requested of the applicant if they had anything to say: The applicant has withdrawn the application for 141 Washington Avenue.

### **Speakers: 141 Washington Avenue**

Kathleen Gray - Thank you for opportunity to speak. While the application has been withdrawn, I will say at the outset I object to removing residential properties turning them into Air BnB's or hotels. These comments are from Former County Executive Pat Ryan when he announced the Housing Action Plan. We need to make sure our front-line workers who have served our community during the pandemic from our teachers, nurses and firefighters, restaurant and grocery workers all the people who kept us safe, fed and well can continue to live in the communities they serve. This applies now, not just because of the pandemic. Housing economic development issue, community health issue and morale issue. I am calling on our whole community, elected officials, business leaders, healthcare, education, and environmental community to address the housing crisis. That was 2021. The housing crisis isn't going away.

I work for the Town on Saugerties, there is a project coming along on Kings Highway rehabilitate a building for warehouse workers. Where will people live coming into our community to work, where will they live; if we eliminate the housing stock that we have? Thank you.

Tom Francello 2179 Rt 32 on behalf Jade Thorton and Family who reside at 143 Washington Ave in the Village of Saugerties. The Thorton Family has lived in this residence for over 100 years and several generations. The main concern is the application for 141 Washington Avenue and opposes the other two applications for the precedent they will set for the zoning districts in the Village. Washington Avenue although the corridor to Saugerties High School is a residential neighborhood surrounded by several different residential districts The application for 141 Washington Avenue is set in R3. The zoning law for the R3 district states intensive residential development as well as professional offices adjacent to the central business district and uses appropriate to the type of structure and character of the neighborhood. This particular neighborhood consists of approximately 95% single family with full-time residents most of which have been owned or occupied and well maintained for many years by the same family. The balance of the houses on Washington Avenue are two family and a few

multi family. I do not believe that there are any properties at this time that are professional offices. With this being said granting this application would not be appropriate and goes way beyond bringing harmony to the neighborhood. A few terms being used, short term rental assuming that means Air BNB and hotel. A classification of what is being requested would be appropriate, each term brings a different group of requirements to the developer and has local and state building code laws that would need to follow. As you can see the plans presented are vague and lack detail and do not show several key elements that need to be in place to allow this board and the public to make an informed decision on what is going on and what is to be expected. A few questions for to be considered by the board, does the applicant meet ADA requirements and guidelines handicap accessibility, lighting, noise, parking – hotel. Egress from the building, firewalls, and setbacks, without knowing it's difficult to determine what needs to be done. Issuance of a special use permit will change the character of this neighborhood I would urge the Planning Board and as the Village Board to visit the schedule of use regulations and see what is currently permitted under special use permit and possible adjust district accordingly. Allowed in R3 other than hotel would be laundry matt, commercial parking lot, just to name a few. Allowing these applications you are setting a precedence for other things as mentioned above, as they say the genie is let out of the bottle it's difficult to get back in. Technically you are changing zoning with out voting with a special use permit. With the increase on short term rentals the Village decreases the availability of single and multi-family to be either purchased or rented by families. Village needs to look at what it wants to be either a vacation destination or a viable residential community. We believe it can be both without altering the integrity of the residential district as well all the other districts that are zoned. The positive to these applications is that the Village Planning Board can deny their use of the special use permit to allow these residential neighborhood to continue with the character and harmony that the Village intended. As this time I would respectfully request that the Village Planning Board to extend the Public Hearing for as long as needed until these questions and requests can be answered. Thank you for your time.

Peter Lawrence – I reserve my time and yield to the next speaker.

Robin Goss - I am concerned with the applications converting private one family homes into hotels in R3 Zoning which would require a special use permit from the Planning Board. What is the definition of a hotel a common entrance, vestibule there is no mention of 24-hour on-site employees. Is this a short term rental? Senator Michelle Hinchey has introduced legislation to compile a statewide registry. Local towns have been adapting for short term rental Hurley, Kingston, New Paltz has the Village of Saugerties? We need to act to protect housing affordability and protect the character of our residential neighborhoods. Our comprehensive Plan addresses this issue in goal 7 housing. Removing housing stock from the Village is inconsistent with section 7 of the comprehensive plan. I appreciate your consideration of these eminent issues.

Carlos Vidal – 157 Washington – 141 Washington next application for 2 family residents. How viable is that and is that going to change the next resident to be a short-term rental or whatever he might modify in the future. The Village hasn't decided or come to a notion on short term rental. Short term – how can a person double capacity from a 30-room hotel vacancy to a 60-room hotel vacancy how does that make sense for a Village that is residential, mixed use. Where are his employees going to live, in a different county, different borough, different city from a different country. Should there be a proximity in affordable housing for everyone. for I don't believe that Diamond Mills is a great hospitality industry, sure it brings in and caters to HITS and everyone else that can afford something over hundreds and hundreds dollars. My visits to the Diamond Mills Tavern for a couple of hours, the hospitality is much lacking. I do not have confidence in Struzziari Inc Property / Diamond Mills to continue and to serve a viable idea of hospitality. Thank you.

Kellen Gold – Opposition to the application for special use permits.

Ann O'Brien – speaking in opposition of the Zoning changes for all the special use permit for all of the properties not just Washington Ave. I think right now in Saugerties any special use permit or zoning change that removes residential housing in Saugerties is completely inappropriate given the housing crisis we have here.

Inka Rector – 135 Washington – most of my concerns were covered by other speakers. I have concerns over the precedent that a special use permit would set, other developers would come in and doing similar things. I agree that changing residents from a typical residential use into something like this is really vague and not the kind of community we choose to move into and raise our families in.

Charlotte Herscher -139 Washington Ave, most of my comments specific to 141 Washington Avenue and now that is been with withdrawn. I agree that setting a precedent to other properties and most of my comments were covered by previous speakers.

Josepha Gutelius – taking a different stand. I can remember a pathetic, depressed in the hay day of IBM. Downtown was ruined. I feel that Saugerties has been revived because of visitors and tourism, I think it's the backbone of the Village. I am not against hotels in the heart in the Village, not like the hotels out by the Thruway just anywhere USA. Take an old building and repurpose it won't deter from the charm of the Saugerties Village. Bring prosperity they are all suffering and mostly women and we all can be proud of that. Housing is an economic development issue. The first thing you should look at are the property taxes. Nobody seems to address, as it makes Saugerties very hard to afford. The hundreds of apartments that are going to be available on 9W in Glasco. They took open space and anywhere USA apartments will assist in the housing shortage will be elevated for better or worse. Sorry for the contrary view.

Melanie Avallone – My thoughts were echoing everyone else. I live at 202 Washington Ave. I don't think we use special permit for taking single family homes out of circulation. Thank you.

Jenny Mangione – born and raised in Saugerties, NY. I have resided in the Village for most of my life and I have seen a lot of changes over the years, mostly good. As a result, I have not had a reason to come before you to discuss a special use permit. However tonight I felt it important to discuss the request by Struzzi Properties Inc, Struzzi Ventures Inc for special use permit for 53 South Partition and 8 Jane St. and as we all know now 141 Washington Ave is off the docket. I understand in the January meeting that there other properties that would be coming forward owned by the Corporation that are not on today's discussion. I don't think that hotel / motel should be allowed with a special use permit in an R3 in a B1 district. I feel strongly that the Board should consider removing that as an option for a special use permit, will change the fabric of our community. My friends from college from New Hampshire would laugh at the Welcome to Friendly Saugerties sign. They thought it was odd that I would have friends from elementary school. Bring in motel / hotel that brings in transient occupancy that doesn't build our community, doesn't add to our community. I feel like our town was a place where everybody knows your name and you know your neighbor. In the Freeman article today about regarding tonight's meeting it was said short rental are a better return on your money. Long term rentals are difficult to rationalize as a businessperson. I venture to say as a long standing resident that I counter that hotel and motels in predominantly in residential area are hard to rationalize as healthy for our community and that 1 to 3 family housing is better return for our neighborhood. Don't define our community by profitable by the relationship

and lives lived. I would strongly urge the board to reconsider allowing special use permit in R3 and B1 district for hotel / motels. Please keep Public Hearing open for the next meeting until this matter is resolved. Thank you.

Adam Bolt – New to the Village, 82 Main Street A lot of people have said similar to things I have to say. Being new I don't know all the issues and processes involved. Balancing the residential and tourism, as someone recently moved. Love tourism it's how I got to know the area. I don't feel tourism is lacking. Sharing my personal experience, I grew up in Colorado. My parents lived in a ski area, vacation destination. The past 20 or 30 years, you can get the balance wrong not saying it's going to happen here. However but most of the homes are empty most of the year, short term rentals, second homes and most of their neighbors aren't around. The traffic is an issue when the tourism is high. Emergency responders can't get to crisis in time. It's a complicated issue and don't pretend to have the answers. People have a lot of questions, thanks for the opportunity to talk about it.

John Schoonmaker – Hello members of the Planning Board, my name is John Schoonmaker I am resident of Saugerties, former Town Board member and a member of the newly formed Saugerties Housing Smart Task Force, State wide housing committee, Working Family Party Justice Campaign Committee. Here to talk to you today about the proposal from Tom Struzzi. I do not need to remind you we are in a middle of a housing crisis. Long time residents finding apartments, my own brother has been looking he has been unsuccessful. His budget is \$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00 a single person. This proposal will contribute to the problem that will take valuable housing out of stock out of circulation. At a time when we need to be creating better tenant protection and increasing affordable housing stock. Such as a suggestion before us should not be considered. We are already struggling with entire streets being taken over by Air BnB's taking over the Village like Janes Street like nothing but short term rentals. Now we are considering a hotel having 4 satellite locations with more likely to come. While often times the Planning Board is restrained in it's ability to deny projects as it's job is to ensure regulations are being followed. That is not the case in this situation, Tom is seeking variances because it's now allowed under current law. Good reason, these are meant for residential neighborhoods or area meant for housing not for profit hotel rooms, there are no legal actions as he would like you to ignore the current rules in place. I would like to quote Tom himself, short term rental is better return for your money. It's clear was not best for Saugerties but was it best for Tom's pocket. If he cared for this community he would be turning these into housing units to help people stay in a place they call home. A healthy functioning community is not filled with Air BnB's, and hotel rooms scattered across our village. It's family, friends and neighbors all living and working together to create an enriching experience living in that neighborhood; all that is lost as more and more housing units are converted into forced rentals. In closing the Village of Saugerties has a monumental decision for tonight to stand up against over development of our town to ensure our fabric of our community are kept together so our residents have a place to call home. To giving into to those with deep pockets looking only to fill them further. To allow our Village to not only host air BnB's but now satellite hotel locations, where will it stop. For those working in the Village watch the crucial housing get ripped off the market. The choice is clear to myself and many others in this room, I urge the Planning Board to deny Tom's request and all future requests of this nature. I also urge the Board to begin work addressing short term rentals so that Tom cannot turn these into short-term rentals as that is another route he will take. Also this is going to go and anyone that wants to help continue to work on this I will be here after the meeting please give your information. Thank you for your time.

### **Speakers: 53 S Partition Street**

Carlos Vidal – 53 S Partition Street is around the corner from another wonderful idea that the board approved which is whatever J Mullens is doing. The traffic from the 11 or 14 units plus the 4 additional Struzziari is seeking and the artery that is South Partition and West Bridge you are asking for a recipe for disaster. If this get approved with four new people that have never been here. It's an artery for trucks, my wife had an accident and closed Partition. If Struzziari if he was successful at hospitality why would he have wanted to sell the hotel at \$14 million, now Blackbarn is a good idea? The problem isn't what he is bring in; it's who he is and what he is doing to the community. He is rich guy who wants to get richer.

Rodney Mazzella – Family has owned properties in Saugerties since 1971. One of those properties is less than 100 yards from the 8 Janes Street property. I am in favor of Struzziari Properties making improvements to buildings that need it. There are a ton of Air BnB's that are in this town, that are not regulated as they should be. Struzziari Properties is asking permission for to do this, e take advantage of this permission by regulating the property besides the zoning. I think we all know what 8 Jane Street looked like 10 years ago, recently registering the Air BnB's, that a good step. Permission of a zoning change, I support this as a building owner in this Village I think there is a benefit to improving all of these buildings and it's what keeping every storefront in business on Main Street and Partition Street. Main and Partition in the 1970's were empty storefronts. I think we can trust what Mr. Struzziari has done in the past with HITS and Diamond Mill, I am impressed that this man wants to invest in this town. I am in support and so is my family. Thank you.

Diane Collello – I am co-chair of the Saugerties Town Housing Task Force and a landlord. I am speaking in favor of affordable housing and against taking residential housing off the market for short term or tourist housing. I know there are new developments going up but are not in the affordable zone. Some of the buildings that don't look tip top but are perfectly adequate for regular people to live in. Talked to Debra Wells who runs the HUD program for Saugerties and she said the HUD program is section 8, I have the funding to assist but no one can find available or affordable apartments. The HUD regulations, that HUD will not allow people to have funding for expensive rents, they review your income.

Carlos Vidal – has already spoke, feels the same.

Michelle Aizenstat – from Dock Street , it's ironic with Air BnB's that everyone has had their fill. This proposal that is the two worst things about Air BnB's, one is the investors come in and buy properties and the quantity of people that come in. Do you want to regulate Air BnB's out of existence? Open the door for big investment as communities regulate Air BnB's. I don't love the quantity of transients that come through this area. The second thing about Air BnB's what it does to the rental and housing market makes everything unaffordable. This is exactly how this happens, big investors. Thank you.

### **RYAN Inc. 19 Barclay Street Special Use Permit and Site Plan**

**Andrew Zink made a motion to keep the Ryan House public hearing open. Anne Meiswinkel seconded the motion to keep Ryan House public hearing open. All in favor. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **8 Jane Street Special Use Permit – Public Hearing**

Andrew Zink thanked everyone for coming out, made a motion to keep the Public Hearing open for 8 Jane Street. Rae Stang seconded the motion to keep Public Hearing open for 8 Jane Street. All in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

**53 S Partition Street Special Use Permit – Public Hearing**

Andrew Zink made a motion to keep the Public Hearing open for 53 S Partition Street. Rae Stang seconded the motion to keep Public Hearing open for 53 S Partition Street. All in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

End of the Public Hearings

REGULAR MEETING

Michael Karashay presented the minutes from the February 8, 2023, Planning Board meeting.

Andrew Zink made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 8, 2023, Planning Board meeting.

Doug Mulqueen seconded the motion to approve the minutes from the February 8, 2023. All in Favor. The motion carried unanimously.

**Rockhaus Realty North Street Permit Renewal Request - Resolution #2**

A motion made by Mike Karashay for Resolution #2 for 75 North Street. Doug Mulqueen second the motion for Resolution #2. Roll call, 6 Aye. All in Favor. The motion carried unanimously.

**Storage 28 LLC Letter request extension 180 day – Resolution #3**

A motion made by Mike Karashay for Resolution #3 for 75 North Street. Doug Mulqueen second the motion for Resolution #3. Roll call, 6 Aye. All in Favor. The motion carried unanimously.

Ryan House – Ben Neidl will not need to keep open the Public Hearing open. They changed the plan which doesn't need a special use permit.

Andrew Zink rescind the motion to keep Ryan House public hearing open. Anne Meiswinkel second the motion to rescind the motion to keep the Ryan House public hearing open.

Close the public hearing, Doug Mulqueen makes the motion to close the Public Hearing for the Ryan House. Dara Ellenbogen seconds the motion to close the Public Hearing for the Ryan House. All in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion among the Planning Board members of short-term rentals, Air BnB's and hotel rooms. The role of the Planning Board.

The date of the next Public Hearing and Planning Board meeting is **Wednesday, April 12th at 6:30pm.**

Submitted by Peggy Melville

March 10, 2023