

SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND FALLS  
December 30, 2023

A special meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Highland Falls was held at the Senior Center, 15 Drew Avenue, Highland Falls, New York on December 30 2023 for a Comprehensive Plan Workshop.

The Meeting was called to order by Mayor D'Onofrio at 9:30AM.

Members present were:

Mayor Joseph E. D'Onofrio  
Trustee James Ramus  
Trustee James DiSalvo  
Trustee Melanie Guerrero

Member(s) absent: Village Attorney, Alyse Terhune  
Trustee Gary Phillips

Also present were:

Village Clerk, Lynae Mesaris  
Village Engineer, Todd Atkinson  
News of the Highlands, Mary Jane Pitt  
Councilmember Joseph DeWitt  
Approximately 25 Community Members

Mayor D'Onofrio opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor D'Onofrio stated this would be the last Comprehensive Plan Workshop before the Public Hearing.

A discussion was held on the area from Pellwood Lake Road to the Mormon church. Trustee DiSalvo stated that that area would be put back to residential.

Trustee Ramus suggests to make the R3 and R4 districts one (1) and reduce the square footage requirements from 7500 to 5,500 square feet. He would like to explore the minimum lot area for two family dwelling units and look at off street parking requirements. He feels the business district would benefit from an architectural historical review board to create rules and regulations. He believes the Main Street in Village should stay as a business district and not in favor of increasing added rental units. Restaurants and retail should be increased.

Mayor D'Onofrio would like Trustee Ramus to create a list of updates he suggests for the Comprehensive Plan and a list of suggested zoning codes to provide to the board members.

Trustee Guerrero comments that zoning should be reviewed again as people need more housing. She states there is a 37 - page document from the Steering Committee that was formed by the board and all of them say we need to increase the density in order to attract more population. There would be more people paying taxes and increasing revenues. Trustee Guerrero comments that she feels Main Street should be mixed with commercial and residential properties.

Trustee Ramus states there could be apartments could be above it as the zoning code states. He does not want to see high volume apartments. High volume apartments are not conducive to the historic value and character of our Village.

Trustee DiSalvo comments it would be a hard sell to take R3 and making three family homes.

Trustee Guerrero questions how 1500 square feet for a lot was decided. She recommended a lower number is needed to make progress.

Trustee Ramus commented that there is not enough parking.

Trustee DiSalvo commented if investors want to build, they still need to go to the Planning and Zoning Boards.

Trustee DiSalvo comments that eventually, parking rules should change, and suggests an interest in Incentive Zoning.

Trustee Guerrero agrees with Incentive Zoning and states investors would like 850 square feet.

Trustee Ramus commented that affordable housing should be investigated to retain employees within the Village.

Trustee Guerrero commented that affordable housing is incentives zoning. She also comments that there are 52 units of low-income housing and 70 units of Section 8 housing. There are only 1,100 households in Highland Falls. We want to get people here that will pay the taxes to generate income.

Trustee Ramus commented that there are 126 single residential family units throughout all of the zones, eight accessory apartments, 123 residential two-family units, 38 residential units and 53 multifamily units.

Trustee Guerrero summarizes that the plan is to have 1500 square foot requirements that can go up or down, and the Steering committee should be part of the Comprehensive Plan, and the residential area from Dale Avenue to Walker Rd. is currently a B1 zone and Dale Ave to 9W will be changed to residential.

Trustee Guerrero commented that the Comprehensive Plan is redundant and outdated.

Trustee DiSalvo commented that he will speak to Mr. Martin to pull certain items from the Comprehensive Plan.

Trustee DiSalvo suggests that the public hearing should be separate from a board meeting.

Trustee Ramus suggests adding the Waterfront District to the Comprehensive Plan.

Mayor D'Onofrio would like to hold a public hearing in January and keep it open.

Todd Atkinson suggested to have a proposed Zoning Map on the wall for the public to view.

Trustee DiSalvo suggest that the public put their thoughts in writing and present to the board.

Trustee Ramus suggested keeping stormwater management in mind.

Trustee Ramus suggested holding a public hearing on a Saturday morning as it seems to work for residents.

Trustee Guerrero motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Trustee DiSalvo and unanimously carried.

The meeting closed at 10:37AM.

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Lynae Mesaris, Village Clerk