
August 2025

Monthly
Report

Department of
Planning and
Development

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New Director of Planning and Development

The Department of Planning and Development is excited to welcome the new Director of Planning and Development Steven (Steve) Vonderweidt.

Planning Commission Zoning Board of Appeals

The PCZBA was canceled in August. Five items are projected to be on the September Agenda. The department has updated intake procedures to better track submittal timelines, and checklists to generate documentation receipts for applicants. This will help improve coordination, across all departments, involved with the PCZBA process.

In-House Grants

The DRI is moving along. The City is in the process of finalizing the scoring for the Form-based Code and Comprehensive Planning Grant RFP proposals. Three firms submitted, and they are:

- Fisher and Associates
- Barton and Loguidice
- Colliers Engineering and Design

Once the remaining scores have been completed, a final round of interviews will be scheduled with the top two firms.

The Oneida Group has started demolition. They continue to work through developing the parking replacement plan for the new municipal lot. The Planning Department will be regularly tracking the demolition process.

A Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure grant was submitted and awarded. The total amount requested with two applications was \$450,710, \$225,355 per site. The grant is a 0% local match. The project sites are at City Hall along Oneida Street, and the corner of Lenox and Cedar Street. Was delayed, but is now back on track. The Planning Consultant, Chris Henry, the City Manager, and the new Planning Director worked with New York State to get the contract executed. Due to staffing and delays with New York State, a request to extend the contracts was made, and City staff is working with NYS officials to make the extension happen.

The Business Assistance Fund continues to be managed by the MRB group. Some of the projects have seen delays due to procurement issues. The BAF is being tracked tightly again, and the New Planning Director has requested detailed progress reports for each project from the MRB group.

Local Law Updates

The Planning Consultant, the City Manager, and the City Attorney drafted an update to Wind Energy Conversion System amendment. The Amendment proposes to reduce the total height to 200' and make the geotechnical studies more extensive. The Common Council referred it to the PCZBA for review and recommendation. The PCZBA will provide their recommendations for the second meeting in September, where the Common Council may act upon the Amendment.

Ongoing work

Daily tasks include regular administration of programs, preparation for Planning Commission Zoning Board of Appeals meetings (agendas, minutes, legal notices, review of applications, preparation of meeting packets, etc.), monthly reports, follow-up on various projects, code interpretation, code research, voucher submissions, assistance to residents and business owners for various applications, Land Committee issues, flood zone questions, consultations on potential projects, questions from the public and other agencies, dissemination of information as requested. FOIL requests have been a major undertaking as of late, due to a prior history of poor filing methods and a lack of digitalization.

Website Updates

The Planning Consultant reviewed the Planning Webpage where minor revisions were made to ensure the applications and website were consistent.

Zoning Map Update

The zoning maps have been updated. This will be a continuous process to help give the community the best available information. Periodically inaccurate zoning data appears in real property data. Planning and the Assessor are working together to make corrections as they arise to ensure all residents have the best information available.