

Village of Fort Edward
Zoning Board of Appeals
Date: July 16, 2025

Roll Call: Bernie Taylor, Nasrene Haj, Doreen Rabine, Tabitha Fish
Absent:

Present: Rick Chiasson, Bobby Chiasson, Mattha Chiasson, Pamela Harrington, Adam Mullin, Denise Mayer, Kathy Prestie, Jeff Hamblin, Irma Hamblin, Rich Lefebvre, Debb Story, Brenda Fosco, Sharon Tasker-Dalton

Approval Minutes from June

Motion by: **Doreen Rabine**

Seconded by: **Bernie Taylor**

All ayes. Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING – A motion to open the public hearing was made by Tabitha Fish, seconded by Doreen Rabine. All ayes. Motion carried.

GRUMBELLIES – SITE PLAN REVIEW – Addition for a stage for entertainment and bandstand.

159 Broadway

Fort Edward NY 12828

Summary

The meeting series addressed the planning, safety, and regulatory aspects of new indoor and outdoor music venues, parking lot management, signage, and a new showroom proposal at a local property. Key decisions included maintaining private control over parking lot exits, enhancing signage and ground markings for safety, ensuring compliance with alcohol and event regulations, requiring matching materials for building additions, and clarifying next steps for business applications. Unresolved issues regarding traffic flow, parking lot boundaries, and pedestrian safety were referred to the village board and Department of Public Works for further action. The board also set conditions for construction timelines and signage and scheduled a public hearing for a new business application.

Outline

1. Indoor Stage Addition and Community Music Venue

- Pamela Harrington clarified that the indoor stage addition is being built onto an area already attached to the drive-thru, which should not present construction issues.
- Community members expressed support for the new music venue, highlighting its potential positive impact on the local area.

2. Concerns About Drive-Thru Lane and Traffic Flow

- Denise Mayer raised concerns about blocking off one lane of the drive-thru, which could complicate entry and exit, especially during busy times.
- There was discussion about the potential for traffic congestion and safety risks if vehicles enter or exit through unintended routes.
- The group acknowledged that the parking lot and drive-thru access have historically depended on the goodwill of the adjacent bank, but are now under private ownership, changing the dynamics of public access.

3. Coordination of Music Events and Impact on Community

- Questions were raised about how the new bandstand and music events would be coordinated with other local venues to avoid scheduling conflicts and noise issues.
- It was noted that other towns with multiple music venues have managed similar situations successfully.
- The potential addition of an amphitheater at the Yacht Basin was mentioned as a factor in overall event planning.

4. Alcohol Service and Enclosure Requirements

- There was a discussion about the need for designated, enclosed areas for alcohol consumption, referencing previous practices at Slick Fin and current plans for the new venue.
- Temporary barriers, such as ropes and pedestals, will be used to delineate areas where alcohol can be consumed during music events.
- The venue owners are responsible for ensuring compliance with these enclosure requirements.

5. Event Hours and Curfew Policies

- The group clarified that previous venues had curfews (e.g., Slick Fin closed at 10 PM), and the new venue plans to close at 9 PM.
- Event hours and curfew policies have already been addressed in prior meetings and will be maintained as previously agreed.

6. Finalizing Parking Lot Access and Traffic Safety

- The board and venue owners agreed that only patrons of the business should use the parking lot exit, and public through-traffic will not be permitted.
- Signage will be installed to direct customers to use the designated exit and discourage improper use of the parking lot, with responsibility for signage falling to the venue owners.
- Concerns remain about the potential for vehicles to back out into public right-of-way, and the lack of physical barriers makes enforcement difficult.
- The group acknowledged that some issues, such as the need for curbs, double lines, or one-way traffic designations, fall under the jurisdiction of the village board and DPW and will require further discussion at that level.
- The need for a clear boundary between the parking lot and public travel lanes was identified, but current surveys and on-the-ground markings are insufficient.

7. Liability and Property Rights

- The venue owner emphasized that liability for accidents in the parking lot rests with them, reinforcing the decision to restrict access to customers only.
- The board confirmed that it cannot require the owner to open the lot for public use, as it is private property.

8. Next Steps and Village Involvement

- Unresolved concerns about traffic flow, parking lot boundaries, and pedestrian safety will be referred to the village board and DPW for further consideration.
- Any future changes to traffic patterns or parking lot access will require site plan review and approval by the appropriate municipal authorities.

9. Parking Lot Signage and Traffic Flow

- The group agreed that clear signage should be installed to direct vehicles to the proper exit and prevent confusion, especially near Terminal Lane.
- Signs will be placed on the south side of the property to guide customers and discourage improper exits; Speaker 1 is responsible for coordinating this.
- There is no authority to restrict public use of Terminal Lane, but signage on private property can help manage traffic.
- The Board of Trustees discussed making Terminal Lane one-way but did not reach a consensus, so no changes will be made at this time.
- Liability concerns were raised, and it was agreed that clear signage and ground arrows would help demonstrate due diligence in case of incidents; Jeff Hamblin will check on repainting ground arrows.

10. Outdoor Bandstand Use and Sound Management

- The bandstand is designed to direct sound northward, minimizing noise spread and potential disturbance to surrounding areas.
- There is no legal restriction preventing music on the property, but the bandstand helps focus the sound.
- Coordination with other local venues is encouraged to avoid overlapping events and sound conflicts, especially with the future amphitheater.
- The current practice is to host outdoor music Mondays from 5 to 8 PM, June through September, but the business seeks flexibility to schedule music as needed, subject to local noise ordinances.
- Concerns were raised about potential conflicts with neighboring businesses and residents, but it was noted that existing venues already operate under similar conditions.

- The business does not want to be limited to specific days for music, preferring to adapt to business needs and special events.

11. Community Impact and Resident Concerns

- The group discussed the impact of live music on nearby residents, noting that current noise ordinances provide sufficient protection.
- Residents have generally been supportive of occasional events that extend past closing hours, and no significant complaints have been reported.
- The addition of another music venue is seen as beneficial for the community and local businesses, provided specifics are communicated and managed.

12. Bandstand Appearance and Placement

- The bandstand is an Amish-built structure painted evergreen to blend with the environment; the interior may be painted white for better visibility of musicians.
- Plans are in place to move the bandstand further back and level the area with topsoil to expand the grassy seating area.
- The bandstand will continue to face the grassy area, and temporary cordoning will be used to separate audience space from parking during events.
- There are 21 parking spots available, and the parking lot will be reopened for vehicles when events are not taking place.

13. Audience Safety and Alcohol Control

- Safe walkways from the restaurant to the seating area will be managed by temporarily blocking off parking areas during events.
- Signage will be installed to indicate "no alcohol beyond this point" to comply with future licensing and ensure responsible consumption; The Hamblin's agreed to implement this.
- The business will notify the group when a beer license is obtained to ensure compliance with regulations.

14. Bandstand Safety and Signage

- There was a concern about guiding patrons safely during events by using ropes to direct foot traffic and minimize liability.
- The group agreed that these were recommendations rather than mandatory requirements.

15. Building Addition Materials and Design

- The brick for the new addition must match the existing building to maintain visual consistency.
- Doors for the addition will be reused from existing matching doors saved from the bank, ensuring uniformity.
- No additional lighting will be installed, as the area is already adequately lit by existing streetlamps.
- Electrical infrastructure is already present, and no further winterization or upgrades are required.
- The sign for the addition will be visible due to sufficient lighting, and no concerns were raised about visibility.

16. Construction Timeline and Certificate of Occupancy

- The addition is expected to be completed within a couple of months, pending health department certification.
- A condition was set that the facade must be finished before the certificate of occupancy for the addition of the stage is issued.
- The board reaffirmed a six-month timeline for completing the addition, with the facade as a prerequisite for occupancy.

17. SEQR (State Environmental Quality Review) Considerations

- The board confirmed that the new improvements do not require a separate SEQR review, as they do not alter prior environmental determination.
- The board agreed to streamline the review process and avoid segmenting the project unnecessarily.

18. Approval of Conditions and Meeting Closure

- The public hearing was formally closed following a motion and unanimous approval. The motion to close the public hearing was made by **Doreen Rabine**, seconded by **Tabitha Fish**. All ayes. Motion carried.
- A motion to approve the project with the conditions discussed was passed by all present members. The motion to approve the application was made by **Tabitha Fish**, seconded by **Bernie Taylor**. All ayes. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

SITE PLAN REVIEW – 128 Broadway Adam Mullin. Kitchen and Bath Showroom and store.

1. Showroom Proposal for Vacant Property

- The applicant clarified plans to install a logo and cabinet displays in the window of the vacant property, with no window blackout.
- The showroom will serve as a display space for kitchen and bath products, with no employees on site.
- The property includes an upstairs apartment, which will remain occupied, and a warehouse/garage for storage and direct shipping.
- The board requested a more precise visual of the proposed signage to ensure clarity and compliance.
- The showroom will not impact residential tenants or require changes to the existing building structure.

2. Parking Concerns and Arrangements

- Doreen Rabine raised concerns about limited parking availability alongside the building, emphasizing that only street parking is permitted.
- Adam Mullin confirmed they have offers for three parking lots, but acknowledged parking remains a challenge due to existing usage patterns.
- The business is expected to have low customer traffic, with most visits by appointment, minimizing parking impact.
- Tenants have historically parked along the building despite "no parking" signs, which were put up by tenants themselves.
- There is a need for a future discussion on how parking lots are utilized among different businesses and tenants.
- Adam Mullin clarified that while there is some parking in the back, it is not practical for regular use, and arrangements with neighboring businesses may be necessary.

3. Property Boundaries and Ownership Issues

- Adam explained that the garage in the back is a separate building, with property lines overlapping neighboring lots due to historical construction.
- There is confusion over which portions of the parking lot belong to which property owners, with references to "Mama's" and "Leslie" controlling different sections.
- The wall of 140 Broadway ownership was clarified, with Adam stating that the mural wall cannot be painted by the neighboring building owner without permission.

4. Site Plan Application and Environmental Assessment

- Chairperson Haj inquired about a site plan application checkbox regarding remediation actions on adjoining properties.
- Clerk Rose clarified that the checkbox was marked due to automated mapping, and no remediation is planned or required.

5. Rationale for Business Location in Fort Edward

- Adam Mullin cited real estate value, community friendliness, and growth potential as reasons for choosing Fort Edward for business expansion.
- The investment required for multiple deals in Fort Edward is less than the cost of a single building in other markets, making it attractive.
- Adam also emphasized positive interactions with local residents and businesses, expressing optimism about the area's future.

6. Building Changes and Signage

- No major structural changes are planned for the building exterior, aside from a new sign in the window.
- There was discussion about the correct capitalization and design of the business logo; Adam will provide an updated logo.
- Adam also mentioned a potential future proposal for a full building repaint but is not pursuing it at this time.

7. Next Steps and Action Items

- The public hearing for the business application is scheduled for August 20th; Adam is required to attend and provide materials in advance.
- The application for tenant Fleshia Volpe for the real estate office was tabled until the next meeting, pending her attendance or withdrawal.

- The matter will be referred to the county for review prior to the public hearing.
- Adam Mullin will email the business logo to Janelle before the next meeting for review by the board.
- The meeting was adjourned following confirmation of next steps and expressions of appreciation among participants.

A motion to accept the application and set a public hearing was made by **Tabitha Fish**, seconded by **Bernie Taylor**. All ayes. Motion carried.

A motion to refer to the county was made by **Tabitha Fish**, seconded by **Doreen Rabine**. All ayes. Motion carried.

A motion to adjourn was made by **Tabitha Fish**, seconded by **Doreen Rabine**. All Ayes. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Janelle Rose
Clerk