

# VILLAGE OF NEW HARTFORD

## PLANNING BOARD

BUTLER MEMORIAL HALL • NEW HARTFORD, NY 13413  
Phone (315) 732-1147

### PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES MARCH 4, 2025

#### PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman James Crumrine  
Member Bernadette DiMeo  
Member Richard Fountain  
Member Barbara Goodman  
Member Jennifer Logue

#### OTHER VILLAGE OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Attorney Gustave DeTraglia  
Trustee Richard Sherman  
Trustee Andrew Alesia  
Trustee William Freiberger III  
Councilman David Reynolds  
DPW Superintendent Thomas Hughes  
Deputy Clerk Shelby Puleo

#### VISITORS:

Frank Donato, Mary Hornett, Nancy Giglio, Donna Frankowski, Phil Sbarra, Zef Vitaj, Alexis Manore, Donald Ehre, Scott Holbrook, Michelle Holbrook, Jan Swartwout, Mary MacEnroe

**AGENDA:** 1) 101 N. Butler Place – changes to hotel plan review  
2) Other Business

Chairman Crumrine called the meeting to order at 5:11 pm.

Upon motion by Barbara Goodman, seconded by Bernadette DiMeo, the Planning Board approved the February 4, 2025 Planning Board Minutes. All voted in favor.

#### **1) 101 N. Butler Place – review of change to hotel plans**

Joe Salerno, representing Champion Road LLC presented the new plans and brand for the proposed hotel at 101 N. Butler Place. He stated that the new rendering was designed to try and fit the Village motif. The hotel will have a condo/apartment look from outside as opposed to a commercial hotel. The hotel will have a restaurant, which will be open to the public as well as hotel guests, as well as a 2,200-2,400 square foot health and wellness spa. The spa will offer services not offered in our area. The square footage for the new hotel is slightly less than the previously presented plans at 15,184 sq. ft. per floor. He stated that all parking requirements set forth by the Village have been met.

Zef Vataj, Mr. Salerno's hotel partner from Universal Hospitality Solutions advised the Board and those in attendance that the main change in the hotel plans is the brand. The hotel will now be a Cambria vs.

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the previously presented Best Western Home2. The Cambria is a Choice Hotels name as opposed to the Best Western. He stated Best Westerns are typically more middle to economy class hotel whereas the Cambria will be a higher end hotel. The idea is to cater to the higher quality of New Hartford, its residents and those staying at the hotel. Universal Hospitality aims to provide higher quality experiences and locations. They designed the hotel to have a Northeastern look which they feel meets the Village feel. When asked by a resident if there will be a conference room in the hotel, Mr. Vataj explained that there is flex space that will not be exclusive conference space but will predominantly be used as conference related events which can also be opened up for the restaurant as needed. Another resident asked if the health and wellness center will have a pool. It was stated that the hotel itself will have a pool.

Chairman Crumrine advised that there is a Cambria hotel in Lake Placid. It is not run by Universal Hospitality but it is the same brand as the hotel proposed in the Village. The proposed hotel will have 114 guest rooms. The developers stated that they do not have someone set to run the restaurant within the hotel yet. Universal operates a number of in house restaurants as well as license out restaurants however in this case the hotel will be have an in house restaurant. It will be local hiring for operations and management.

The overall building height is 45 feet to the roof line. They did add decorative peaks to give the hotel a more residential look. They are a façade on the front of the hotel. Roof unit utilities will be behind façade. It was stated that for the outside of the building, a brick veneer will be added to break up the scale of the hotel. They will incorporate materials of the Village. The brick will highlight certain areas such as the entrance going to where the signage is. A combination of plack board siding and board and batten will be used on the outside of the building. Shutters were added to some areas again to break up the façade and give it some character.

Mr. Salerno advised that one of the previously stated issues was the view from the 4<sup>th</sup> floor rear of the hotel into the neighbor's yards and homes. A cross section view was provided which showed the 4<sup>th</sup> floor window view into the Woodland Road neighbors. Mr. Salerno said that cedar trees will still be added between the hotel property and the residential properties. In addition to the cedar trees, Bahama shutters will also be added to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor rear windows. They will be installed at an angle. The Bahama shutters will prevent hotel guests from looking straight out in to the neighboring properties and will only allow the line of sight to look down. The Bahama shutters will still allow light into the rooms and meet all egress requirements. A sample of the shutter was passed around for those who wanted a closer look.

Chairman Crumrine stated that he did a Google Earth search which shows elevation above sea level which he transferred to what would be ground level in the area of hotel and neighbors. The top of the nearest house behind the hotel is 40 feet to the peak, and across the street from that, the home is 50 feet to the peak. To give an idea as to what 45 feet will look like, Chairman Crumrine said if you stand behind the Georgio's building, the height is 42 feet from the ground to the roofline. The garage building on the proposed hotel lot that will be torn down is 20 feet from ground level. The RockTenn building is 26 feet from ground level. The hotel height is not far off from neighboring buildings and is still below the highest peak behind it.

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Bernadette DiMeo inquired about the wellness spa and asked if parking was taken into consideration for the spa in addition to the hotel itself. It was stated that 9 spots are dedicated strictly for the spa. The topic of an aesthetic business being located right across the street from the hotel was raised. It was determined that it is not a spa and a laser therapy treatment center which provides different services than the wellness center will provide. Attorney DeTraglia asked how the parking need was determined for the spa as it is not listed in the Village ordinance. Mr. Salerno advised that they used the retail space calculation of 1 space for every 250 square foot of retail space. No other retail other than restaurant and spa will be located in the hotel. Based on their calculations, they will have 1 extra parking space than required. The size of the parking spaces will be 9' x 20'. The required handicap spaces have been identified. 1 out of 25 spaces need to be designated handicapped. There are 5 handicap spaces located directly outside of the hotel.

Chairman Crumrine inquired about the ramp and sidewalk proposed to join the hotel parking lot to the Municipal parking lot. Plans were shown to give better detail of where the sidewalk would enter the municipal parking lot.

It was stated that garbage and recycling services would be third party and not be provided by the Village DPW. Property maintenance will also be provided by a third party service.

Per the traffic study completed by the developers, it wasn't determined that any recommendations or changes be done on Campion Road. The traffic study was completed in July 2024.

The prices of the rooms will vary, with the first year being lower than usual. It was determined that the rooms will vary from \$156 - \$200 per room per night.

It was noted that if the Planning Board is unhappy with any of the colors of the hotel that have been proposed, they can be changed to better suit the Village. The shutter color can also be changed.

The wellness center will have signage on the outside of the hotel along with the Cambria sign. It was stated that no internally lit signs are permitted. A separate approval for road signage will need to come before the Planning Board.

The lighting that was selected for the main driveway on N. Butler Place was chosen to match the decorative, old style lighting that exists throughout the Village currently. In front of the building between the hotel and Byrne Dairy will be 20' tall, pole mounted, downward directed double headed lights. They are dark sky compliant. They are designed to not spill over but in the event they do due to mist or various conditions, the residents to west will not be affected as the hotel will block the lighting from reaching the neighbors. Wall pack units will be installed in the rear of the building and along the perimeter. They will be mounted 12' to 14' above the ground level and are downward directed.

Electric and communications will be all underground. There will be no poles. The Village granted a 30' easement for Byrne Dairy for utilities. Don Ehre explained that there are options for brining in electric but National Grid will determine where the utilities are brought in. With any of the options, all utilities will remain underground. Easements will be created for Village utilities.

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The existing retaining wall will be removed and replaced. The existing wall is made up of 4'x2'x2' concrete blocks. The new wall will be constructed of something similar. There is a company that does a decorative face to it. They are waiting for a structural engineer to design the new wall. It could be poured concrete or it could be constructed of similar material. The wall will be set back approximately 2 to 3 feet from existing wall. When the existing wall is removed, sheet piling will be installed while the new wall is erected. The existing wall is broken and crumbling. The whole retaining wall will be replaced. Residents expressed concern the new wall will be too close to their homes. Don Ehre explained the new retaining wall will be approximately 20 feet between neighbor's property line and retaining wall per the survey. Residents did not agree with distances stated and were encouraged to obtain their own surveyor to have their own survey completed to confirm. It was noted that the Planning Board cannot approve or comment on retaining wall until the structural engineer report is furnished. Zangrilli Engineering is working on those plans.

Environmental study came back as a clean Phase 1.

Floor plans for entire hotel were provided. Once concept is approved, full construction blue prints will be provided.

The restaurant seating will hold 40 to 70 people, with use of the flex space. The restaurant will be open to the public as well as hotel guests. The hotel will employ roughly 10 to 14 employees daily. The restaurant will serve all 3 meals but will mainly focus on breakfast.

There will be 129 parking spaces on the property.

Universal Hospitality has been in business for 30+ years. They have 68 hotels in the United States. They had 6 new builds last year. Their main offices are located in Dallas, TX. The hotel will have all local management. The General Manager will be a local hire. Universal Hospitality is open to sponsorships with the Village and residents. Group rates will be offered to local groups and clubs in the area, which is a standard practice to all their hotels. The flex space will be available for community events.

Typically, Universal Hospitality does not accept vouchers. Due to occupancy rates, the vouchers will not cover the cost of the rooms. The Cambria is not considered an extended stay and not geared for those types of stay. Most stays will range between 2 nights to 1 week. There is no law or requirement forcing any establishment to accept vouchers. It is not an issue to not accept. Cambria is a higher end hotel.

A resident asked why the hotel could not be 3 floors instead of 4. It was explained that in order to maintain the luxury, high end brand it would need to be 4 floors. A lower quality hotel would allow 3 floors.

Concerns were raised as to what the hotel/brand will be in 5 or 10 years. Mr. Vataj explained that the trend has been increasing at significant margins. Room rates and occupancy have grown over the past 10 years. He does not expect the rates to lower. If they do, the hotel would still be profitable and would be able to maintain its brand and appearance.

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There is no PILOT requested on this project.

Cameras will be located around the perimeter of the building. If loiterers are found hanging around hotel or behind the hotel, the police would be called to handle. A third party security company/security guard will not be in use. A concierge will be available at the front of the hotel. It was stated the new development would be an improvement from that is there now. Conversations with Police Department need to be continued to ensure they have the staff and continue to support this project.

It was brought up that the residents would like this to go to a Village wide vote. Although that is not feasible, residents are welcome to send in statements, either for or against, to the Village office for review.

No suites in hotel. Double queen rooms and king rooms available.

A vote on the project was tabled pending results from the GML 239 and SEQR.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Dobson  
Recording Secretary

Not Approved