

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING BOARD
Town of Schaghticoke
October 1, 2025

PUBLIC HEARINGS

7: 00 P.M. There were none.

REGULAR MEETING

Members present were: Frank Alessandrini, Kasey Casas, Elizabeth Hale, and Chris Reynolds. Dan Clow, Peter Klotz and Vince Ragone were absent. James LaValle, Attorney, was present.

The Board reviewed the minutes from the September 3, 2025 meeting. Kasey Casas made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Chris Reynolds seconded.

Ayes: Alessandrini, Casas, Hale, Reynolds

Nays: None

Gifford Liberty Ridge Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review Pre-filing

Conference. Cynthia Gifford, owner of Liberty Ridge Farm, appeared. Chairman Alessandrini provided the Board with the history of the Liberty Ridge farm operation located in an RA district on Stillwater Bridge Road. Mr. Alessandrini stated that in 2002 the Giffords, owners of the property, consulted with the then Town Supervisor, Jean Carlson, with regard to the proposal for the operation of a corn maze at the Stillwater location. Ms. Carlson discussed the topic with the Planning Board. At that time the corn maze was considered corn harvesting and growth, and therefore; a function within the framework of agricultural use. Over the years the operation of the farm has greatly expanded to include additional buildings and a variety of activities.

Because of the expansion and development of the property, an application for a Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review are required to meet the Zoning Code

Mr. Alessandrini noted that the Giffords bought the property adjacent to their operation at 96 Bevis Road, adjacent to their property. Currently, the Giffords own both sides of Bevis Road. The Giffords would like the town to abandon Bevis Road, allowing them the advantage of using the additional property to the advantage of their business.

Mr. Alessandrini emphasized that Liberty Ridge is an asset to the Town.

Cynthia Gifford provided the Board with information relating to the development of the property and business. The property with an existing residence was purchased in 1973. The house and a portion of the surrounding property was sold, leaving 96 acres for the growth of corn. In 1999 a pick-your-own operation began. In addition, many festivals are held, including strawberry, blueberry, harvest, as well as school trips, etc.

There is public water and sewer available at the location. She believes that all buildings at Liberty Ridge have been inspected with one exception. The Giffords have been operating the business for 26 years.

Recently, Ms. Gifford met with Scott Frisino, Code Enforcement Officer, David Brennan, Town Attorney, Tim Salisbury, Town Supervisor and a DEC representative. Ms. Gifford is prepared to submit an application for a Site Plan Review, but stated that it was not clear to her that an application for a Special Use Permit was necessary. She stated that she would like to research that requirement. Ms. Gifford emphasized that she wants to work well with everyone, so that the business will meet zoning requirements when the operation is granted to their daughter.

Chairman Alessandrini advised Ms. Gifford that both the Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review may be entertained simultaneously. Mr. Alessandrini explained the sequence of the application process and will forward the necessary forms and materials to Ms. Gifford. In addition, the Chairman will speak with Steve Dean, the engineer who the Giffords have retained.

ASD Solar III (Highway Garage) -Tax Map #21.-2-4.2). Chairman Alessandrini stated that he spoke with Phil Lockenwitz, surveyor with ActiveSolar, to review the screening plan for the ActiveSolar project located at the highway garage site along the NYS Route 67 corridor. Mr. Alessandrini stated that the number of trees removed were not outside of the property lines. However, the remaining trees do not provide adequate screening. He discussed the issue with Mr. Lockenwitz who proposed a sub-planting of either holly or lilac bushes. The Board agreed that holly would be preferable. Chairman Alessandrini will relate the Board's decision to Mr. Lockenwitz on October 2nd.

The public hearing for Frann 697 will be held at the November meeting.

OTHER

Code Enforcement Matters

Chairman Alessandrini provided the Board with an update concerning code enforcement issues at Eastside Marina in Pleasantdale. A court appearance is scheduled for Monday, October 6th.

Chairman Alessandrini plans to speak with Scott Frisino, Code Enforcement Officer, with regard to lack of compliance on the part of David Baker at the Genesis Vault business, NYS Route 40 and Michael Constable of Constable Tree business on NYS Route 40. In addition, Mr. Alessandrini intends to review each of the site plans.

Chris Reynolds made a motion to adjourn at 7:47 pm. Kasey Casas seconded.

Ayes: Alessandrini, Casas, Hale, Reynolds

Nays: None

Abbreviations:

DEC - Department of Environmental Conservation

NYS - New York State

RA - Residential/Agricultural District

Respectfully Submitted,

date: April 4, 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Hale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Elizabeth Hale, Clerk

Planning Board, Town of Schaghticoke