



VILLAGE OF DOBBS FERRY BOARD OF TRUSTEES AGENDA

MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 23, 2021
AGENDA ITEM SECTION: DISCUSSION ITEMS
AGENDA ITEM NO. : 1
AGENDA ITEM: PROPOSED REORGANIZATION OF PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC REVIEW BOARDS
ITEM BACKUP DOCUMENTATION: 1. LETTER DATED NOVEMBER 18, 2021 FROM VALERIE MONASTRA/VILLAGE CONSULTING PLANNER TO MAYOR ROSSILLO AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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1. LETTER DATED NOVEMBER 18, 2021 FROM VALERIE MONASTRA/VILLAGE CONSULTING PLANNER TO MAYOR ROSSILLO AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Rossillo and Members of the Village Board of Trustees

FROM: Valerie Monastra, AICP

SUBJECT: Proposed Reorganization of Planning and Architectural and Historic Review Boards

DATE: November 18, 2021

CC: Richard Leins, Esq. Village Administrator
Lori Lee Dickson Esq. Village Attorney
Ed Manley, Building Inspector
Stephen Hunter, Chairman of Planning Board
Iair Rosenkranz, Chairman of AHRB

Due to the review requirements of the Architectural and Historic Review Board (AHRB) and Planning Board, many applicants are required to obtain approvals from two different boards. If approval from the Village Board is also required, then an applicant needs to appear before three boards before their project is approved. Some of the projects that appear before the Planning Board are small in nature and have minor site plan matters that need review. As a result, when an applicant appears before the Planning Board, the discussion on the minor site plan applications tends to revolve around architecture. At times it can be difficult for an applicant to understand how to respond to two boards providing feedback on the massing and architecture of a project. This redundancy has been a concern of the Building Department for several years. In addition, the AHRB has recently been experiencing difficulties in maintaining a quorum for its meetings. In November, a meeting was held with the Building Department, Interim Village Administrator, Village Attorney, representatives from the Board of Trustees, and the Chairs of the Planning and AHRB Boards to discuss the situation and possible solutions.

CURRENT APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS FOR PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC REVIEW BOARDS

Planning Board

Section 300-52(A)(1) of the Zoning and Land Use chapter requires site plan approval for the following types of projects:

- a. Excavation or filling involving more than 300 cubic feet of earth.
- b. The disturbance of more than 2,000 square feet of land.
- c. The construction of a new building with more than 500 square feet of floor area.
- d. The expansion of any existing building by more than 500 square feet of floor area.

- e. The expansion or reduction of an existing one- or two-family structure by more than 500 square feet, by more than 10 feet horizontally, or by more than 10 feet vertically.
- f. A change of use of more than 1,000 square feet in an existing building.

Architectural and Historic Review Boards (AHRB)

Section 300-18 of the Zoning and Land Use chapter requires AHRB design review and approval for the following types of projects:

- a. The construction, reconstruction or exterior alteration of any structure.
- b. Applications requiring site plan review.
- c. Signs.

Section 300-19(A) of the Zoning and Land Use chapter requires AHRB historical review and approval for the following types of projects:

- a. Construction, reconstruction, exterior alteration or demolition of properties which are one or more of the following:
 - Deemed to be contributing properties located in locally designated historic districts.
 - Locally designated as historic landmarks or scenic landmarks.
 - Designated on the state or national registers of historic places or located within historic districts on the state or national registers of historic places.
 - Listed as eligible for inclusion on the state or national registers of historic places as of the effective date of this section.

PROPOSED REORGANIZATION OF THE PLANNING BOARD AND AHRB

The following is recommended for the Village Board's consideration to provide a more efficient review and approval process for an applicant.

1. The functions of the AHRB would be transferred to the Planning Board. The Village would no longer have a separate AHRB Board, rather the Planning Board would concurrently serve on the AHRB and Planning Board.
2. All applicants that require Planning Board site plan approval and architectural review approvals would only need to appear before one board.
3. The Planning Board would also review and approve all applications that require historical review and approval.
4. All projects that currently require approval from the AHRB that don't require site plan approval and are not a locally designated historic property would no longer be required to seek board approvals. Instead, those applications would be processed within the Building department, similar to the process that has been established for fences. These applications would include replacing or installing of windows, doors, fences, walls, signs, awnings, and canopies.

5. Any applications that would be processed within the Building Department would have the ability to appeal any decision of the Building department through the Zoning Board of Appeals.

In addition, the Section 300-17(B) requires that at least one member of the AHRB is a registered architect in the State of New York, and at least one member:

- a. possesses a degree or certification in historic preservation granted by an institution of higher education; and/or,
- b. demonstrates expertise in historic preservation through a history of employment in the field or in projects involving historic preservation in a related field such as architecture, construction or planning.

The current Planning Board has members that meet these criteria. A consolidation of the AHRB and Planning Board functions would not require a change in the Planning Board makeup. Currently, the Planning Board is a five-member Board. New York State Village Law allows for a Planning Board to have up to seven members. If the Village Board wants to offer any current AHRB members an opportunity to continue serving, the Village Board could consider expanding the current number of members from five to seven.

By consolidating board functions, a more efficient review process would be established, and the consolidation would only minimally increase the current work at the Planning Board because most of the applications that require AHRB approval as outlined above would already require site plan approval or recommendation by the Planning Board. The only change in the types of applications that the Planning Board does not currently review would include applications involving locally historic designated properties requesting façade changes.

NEXT STEPS

If the Village Board is interested in the proposed reorganization, this would require a revision to the Zoning and Land Use chapter of the Village Code. The Village Board would need to authorize the drafting of a local law to revise the AHRB provisions to reflect these changes.