

**City of Schenectady
NEW YORK
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION Minutes
February 18 , 2026**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. ATTENDANCE

Present: Randall Beach; Susan Nadler; Jason Bogdanowicz-Wilson; Junior Hitlall; Alexandra Bland; Adam Roselan; Andrew Dachinger, Corporation Counsel; Jack Connelly - Planner I

Excused: Colin Evers

III. Conflict of Interest Check

There were no conflicts of interest for any of the Commissioners.

Commissioner Beach informed everyone that the meeting will start with the roll call of all the Commissioners that were present, as stated above. Commissioner Beach went on to list the projects that were going to be discussed for the evening, and if anyone was there to speak about a project that wasn't on the list, the Commission wasn't going to be able to speak on it this evening. If the Commissioners have questions, the projects will be introduced, and applicants can come forward to speak about the project to the commissioners. The public will also have an opportunity to speak to the projects.

Commissioner Roselan made a motion to approve the January 21st minutes with **Commissioner Hitlall** seconding. The motion carried unanimously.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Salina Singh** requests an extension on the site plan approval granted in February of 2025 to operate a restaurant on the first floor with one residential unit on the second floor of 1483 State Street, tax parcel # 49.76-5-4, located in the C-2 Mixed-Use Commercial District.

Ms. Salina Singh was present, stating that her proposal has not changed at all from her previous approval in 2025. Commissioner Beach confirmed that the one previous condition of approval, removing the pole sign, had already been completed, however the rest of the previous conditions remained in effect.

Ms. Singh had no issue completing these items, including resurfacing and striping the parking lot, adding green space with shrubbery and trees to both sides of the lot, and repainting the exterior of the building. Ms. Singh added that the reason for the delay in moving forward with the project was funding, which had since been addressed. The plan is to start pulling permits once the weather improves.

The Commission mentioned that the approval would be valid for another year, therefore expiring in February of 2027.

Commissioner Beach opened the floor for the public hearing, which was closed as no comments were heard.

SITE PLAN RESOLUTION

Motion made by **Commissioner Wilson** to issue an extension on the site plan approval. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Bland**, with the following conditions and findings of fact:

1. The extension is valid through February 18, 2027.
2. All previous conditions of approval from 2025 remain in effect.

Motion carried unanimously.

- B. Native Partners LLC** requests site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90(H) of a proposal to construct an office building and flex warehousing buildings at the Maxon Road Extension properties tax parcel #s 39.26-1-1.12, 2, 3, 9 and 10. All properties are located in the M-1 Light Manufacturing and Warehousing District.

Mr. Luigi Palleschi of ABD Engineering came forward to represent the applicant of the project. Mr. Palleschi reminded the Commission that these properties had gone through the Planning Commission and City Council to be rezoned from C-3 to M-1 Light Industrial, meaning that the current proposal is compliant with all zoning requirements.

Mr. Palleschi detailed that while there were many smaller parcels on site now, they would be consolidated so there would only be 3 total parcels between Erie Boulevard and the train tracks.

Following up on the Commission's request during the rezoning meeting, Mr. Palleschi showed how the Maxon ALCO Heritage Trail was rerouted to go behind the buildings, closer to the Mohawk River.

Some of the trees along the river need to be removed, but all those that could be feasibly saved would be,

Due to the City sewer easement in the rear of the property, the buildings were oriented as far up as possible to maximize usable space.

Mr. Palleschi believed the proposed landscaping and architectural treatments shown on the elevations would make for an appealing streetscape view.

Commissioner Beach brought up the SWPPP, which was not submitted in time for full review. As this could not be approved, Commissioner Beach did not think the Commission had enough information to issue a negative SEQR declaration, and therefore could not take formal action on the property.

As there are many sharp turns involved with the rerouting of the bike trail, Mr. Palleschi showed how the applicant softened the main curves on the south side of the property to create a smoother transition back onto the main trail.

Commissioner Hitlall asked about the possibility of connecting the bike bath to the proposed patio. Mr. Palleschi was hesitant to agree to this, as the patio was intended for use by the employees of the business to occupy the building in the future.

Mr. Palleschi confirmed for Commissioner Roselan that there was sufficient space for cars to put in the code to drive through the entry gate without sticking out into Maxon Road.

Commissioner Wilson asked if storage would be solely inside the proposed units. Mr. Palleschi assured him that no storage would take place outside.

Mr. Palleschi stated that a 4 foot fence between the trail in the river was chosen to offer protection and safety while also being low enough to not be intrusive and box riders in.

The Commissioners thought that more street trees would be beneficial for the site. Mr. Palleschi said 5 street trees were currently proposed, and after some discussion it was decided that 10 total trees would be a suitable number.

Commissioner Bland questioned if the 8 foot width was enough to accommodate the needs of the area. Mr. Connelly said that he had reviewed the AASHTO Bicycle Facilities handbook which noted 10-12 feet was the standard for bike paths, but 8 feet was appropriate for short distances where the geography required narrowing. Given the sharp slope to the river, the Commission agreed this was an appropriate width.

Mr. Palleschi agreed with Commissioner Nadler that smaller, flowering trees would be preferable to larger shade trees.

Commissioner Beach opened the floor for the public hearing, which was closed as no comments were heard.

SITE PLAN RESOLUTION

Motion made by **Commissioner Wilson** to table the project. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Wilson**. Motion was tabled for the following reasons:

1. The SWPPP was not yet reviewed or approved by City staff.
2. The new site plan must show 10 flowering street trees throughout the site.

Motion carried unanimously.

- C. Chandrawatie Peetum** requests a Special Use Permit pursuant to Section 264 Schedule A of a proposal to construct a 24 space parking lot at 1306 Fifth Avenue, tax parcel # 49.54-4-8.2 located in the R-2 Two-Family Residential District.

Ms. Chandrawatie Peetum came forward, detailing that she was in the process of purchasing the property from the City to use as a parking lot for her existing banquet hall across the street.

Ms. Peetum had reviewed the staff report and had no objections to any of the comments. She also noted that the existing Webster Avenue curb cut would be closed so all entries and exits would take place solely on Fifth Avenue.

Commissioner Beach reminded the applicant that the proposal would exceed the banquet hall's maximum parking, and therefore any Special Use Permit would be contingent upon the obtention of an area variance from the Zoning Board.

Mr. Connelly told the Commission that the banquet hall opened with all necessary approvals in place, and the occupancy limit set by the Buildings Department far exceeded their current parking space numbers.

Commissioner Beach opened the floor for the public hearing, which was closed as no comments were heard.

SEQR RESOLUTION

Motion made by **Commissioner Bland** to issue a negative SEQR declaration for the project. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Roselan**.

Motion carried unanimously.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT RESOLUTION

Motion made by **Commissioner Roselan** to approve the Special Use Permit with the following conditions and findings of fact. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Nadler**:

1. The approval is contingent upon the applicant receiving an area variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals to allow the excess in parking.
2. Metal roll gates and iron bars will not be installed on any doors or windows at any time in the future.
3. Pursuant to Section 264-93, site plan approval is valid so long as building permits are pulled within one year of approval.
4. The proposed parking lot shall not substantially impact the nature and character of the surrounding neighborhood. As detailed in the application, the use will take cars off of the residential street and keep them in an appropriate, orderly state.
5. The proposed parking lot will not have a substantial or undue adverse effect upon adjacent property, the character of the neighborhood, traffic conditions, parking, utility facilities and other matters affecting the public health, safety and general welfare.
6. Operations in connection with the proposed use shall not be more objectionable to nearby properties by reason of noise, fumes, vibration or flashing lights than would be the operations of any permitted use not requiring a special use permit.
7. The proposed use shall be served adequately by essential public facilities and services, such as highways, streets, parking spaces, police and fire protection.
8. The proposed use will not result in the destruction, loss or damage of any natural scenic, architectural or historic features of significant importance. The current lot is vacant and full of broken asphalt and concrete. The proposal will clean up the lot, as well as add needed green space to the area.
9. The proposed use complies with all additional requirements imposed on it by the provisions of the Zoning Code.

Motion carried unanimously.

- D. **Community Cans LLC** requests site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90(M) of a proposal to operate a bottle redemption center at 14 Willow Avenue, tax parcel # 49.76-5-8, located in the C-2 Mixed-Use Commercial District.

Mr. Adimu Goodwin came forward as owner of the business. Mr. Goodwin said his goal in operating the business was to have trash removed from the street and disposed of in a sustainable manner.

Commissioner Beach confirmed with Mr. Goodwin that the staff comments regarding the creation of a sidewalk and the addition of greenspace and landscaping were agreed to, which Mr. Goodwin said they were.

Mr. Connelly said that there was another similar business nearby which had extensive amounts of trash and litter located outside of the building. Mr. Goodwin stated that there would not, under any circumstances, be any bottles, cans or other business related items outside of the building, besides transporting them to a truck for pickup.

Commissioner Beach opened the floor for the public hearing.

Ms. Kellie Frasier, neighbor of the project, raised concerns about bugs and rodents being attracted to the site. Additionally, Ms. Frasier detailed the lack of parking on Willow Avenue, which she said would be made worse by this project.

Another neighbor spoke who said that odors coming from the business would be a nuisance to the area. He also wanted specific information on which shrubs would be added to the area.

Mr. Goodwin told Commissioner Nadler that bottles could be picked up 2-3 times per week, which he said would mitigate the odors as bottles would be moved in and out on a regular basis.

One neighbor did not believe that Willow Avenue was wide enough to handle the truck that would be picking up the bottles.

Ms. Margaret Wiley was in opposition to the project as she thought the business would attract cockroaches.

With no further comments being heard, Commissioner Beach closed the public hearing and asked Mr. Goodwin to address the public's concerns.

Mr. Goodwin reiterated the longest bottles would ever be left on site was 5 days, but said pickups could occur as frequently as every other day. Mr. Goodwin also had the capability to transport the bottles himself to lower the need for extra trucks driving down Willow Avenue.

There are two garage doors on the building which can be used for employee parking, so employees will not take up valuable street parking spaces.

Commissioner Wilson asked if the building was air conditioned. Mr. Goodwin said it was, which Commissioner Wilson said would help ventilate the building and reduce smell.

Mr. Goodwin told Commissioner Wilson that the garage has drains, so the entire building can be sprayed down and cleaned as necessary to remove all excess debris and contaminants that would attract pests. There is also a slop sink in the building that would be used to clean the bottles before they were stored.

Commissioner Nadler emphasized the importance of having the bottles properly cleaned before they are stored inside.

Commissioner Bland believe the proposed hours of operation being 6am-9pm were excessive. Mr. Goodwin, after discussion with the Commission, agreed to hours of 8am-6pm.

SITE PLAN RESOLUTION

Motion made by **Commissioner Wilson** to approve the application with the following conditions and findings of fact. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Hittall**:

1. The address will be prominently displayed so that it is easily visible from Willow Avenue.
2. Metal roll gates and iron bars will not be installed on any doors or windows at any time in the future.
3. Pursuant to Section 264-93, site plan approval is valid so long as building permits are pulled within one year of approval.
4. All bottles and cans would be fully removed from the site at least two times per week.
5. Hours of operation are limited to 8am-6pm.
6. No tractor trailers or oversized trucks would be used for bottle pickups.
7. All bottles, cans and trash would be stored solely inside the building.
8. A sidewalk will be constructed along Willow Avenue to City standard.
9. Greenspace will be added in the front yard between the left side of the building and the front door, and then again from the other side of the front door to the end of the first garage door.
10. The front of the building and garage doors are required to be painted to cover discoloration.

Motion carried unanimously.

- E. Deoram Rajkumar** requests site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90(M) of a proposal to operate a bar and restaurant at 1526 Van Vranken Avenue, tax parcel # 39.69-1-1, located in the C-2 Mixed-Use Commercial District.

Mr. Deoram Rajkumar discussed the application with the Commission, as he had recently purchased the bar, Rookie's, and was seeking a change in tenancy to continue operation.

Mr. Rajkumar mentioned that some of the items mentioned in the staff report, including the requirement to add sidewalks and green space, was a surprise and a financial burden that he was not anticipating.

Commissioner Beach mentioned that the purpose of the Planning Commission is to correct properties that were out of compliance, and this was no exception. Despite this, the Commission understood that the requirements could be cost prohibitive in the short term, and Commissioner Beach was open to issuing a conditional approval to operate the business so Mr. Rajkumar could return to the Commission at a later date to present a plan on when he would be able to make the necessary changes.

Mr. Connelly mentioned another comment in the staff report regarding parking for the residential units on the upper floor. City code requires that resident parking be prioritized prior to commercial parking, which is not currently the situation for this business. Mr. Connelly recommended that the multiple garages on site

be fitted for residential use in order to provide that parking, and the remainder of the parking lot could be solely for bar patron usage.

Mr. Rajkumar expressed frustration that these issues were not brought up when he was purchasing the property. Mr. Connelly explained that City staff could not monitor every real estate transaction throughout the City and if the buyer had come to the City with these questions before opening they would have been answered in full. Mr. Connelly also stated that these conditions were not unique to Rookie's, and any property with a similar lack of compliance would be met with the same conditions.

Commissioner Hitlall wanted to see green space and trees added to the proposal. Mr. Connelly said his recommendation was to have all asphalt between the building and new sidewalk, with the exception of a paved walkway to the door, removed and replaced with greenery.

Commissioner Beach opened the floor for the public hearing. The previous owner, Sue Rivette, came forward to say that she disagreed with the condition that sidewalks be added because Van Vranken Avenue floods. Commissioner Wilson told her that the lack of green space in the area was a large reason that the flooding was so significant.

Ms. Rivette mentioned that the sidewalk was a condition of approval when she went to the Commission 15 years ago and she chose to never do the work.

Commissioner Beach closed the floor for the public hearing as no further comment was heard.

SITE PLAN RESOLUTION

Motion made by **Commissioner Hitlall** to issue a conditional site plan approval. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Roselan** with the following conditions and findings of fact:

1. The address will be prominently displayed so that it is easily visible from Van Vranken Avenue.
2. Metal roll gates and iron bars will not be installed on any doors or windows at any time in the future.
3. Pursuant to Section 264-93, site plan approval is valid so long as building permits are pulled within one year of approval.
4. The site plan approval is valid for one year, until February 18, 2027. By that date, the applicant must come forward with a revised plan and schedule for when the necessary work for the sidewalks and greenspace will be added to the site. This new proposal will also include a plan to utilize the existing garages for off-street parking for the residents.

Motion carried unanimously.

- F. **Deli Zhang** requests site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90(M) of a proposal to operate a spa at 1833 Broadway, tax parcel # 48.52-2-26.1, located in the C-2 Mixed-Use Commercial District.

The agenda item was skipped as no representative was present.

At the end of the meeting, **Commissioner Hitlall** made a motion to table the application. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Hitlall**.

Motion carried unanimously.

- G. Jamel Williams** requests site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90(F) of a proposal to construct a 20-unit apartment building at 223 Nott Terrace, tax parcel # 39.81-3-30, located in the C-4 Downtown Mixed-Use District.

Ms. Genevieve Trigg and Mr. Manuel Cordero came forward to represent the project, with Mr. Cordero appearing virtually.

Ms. Trigg informed the Commission that the 30 parking spaces detailed in the shared parking agreement with 650 Franklin Street would be fully dedicated to the apartment use. Mr. Connelly confirmed that he had shown the parking agreement to the Zoning Officer, who had approved the submission.

Mr. Connelly spoke to conversations he had with the City Singal Superintendent, Brian Cannon, where they discussed the possibility of removing the 'No Standing' traffic sign in front of the property and replacing with a temporary 15-minute parking sign to allow residents temporary access to street parking to unload luggage or groceries without having to cross Nott Terrace.

Commissioner Wilson spoke positively about the architectural design of the building, although it was mentioned that there should be some sort of awning or covering over the entryway.

Commissioner Beach opened the floor for the public hearing, which was closed as no comments were heard.

Commissioner Hitlall requested a more prominent entryway that was more easily visible from the street. Commissioner Wilson believed that an awning would be sufficient to highlight the entrance. Mr. Cordero responded saying the awning would not be an issue, and they would increase landscaping out front to further highlight the entrance.

SEQR RESOLUTION

Motion made by **Commissioner Wilson** to issue a negative SEQR declaration for the project. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Nadler**.

Motion carried unanimously.

SITE PLAN RESOLUTION

Motion made by **Commissioner Roselan** to issue site plan approval for the project. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Bland** with the following conditions and findings of fact:

1. The address will be prominently displayed so that it is easily visible from Nott Terrace.
2. Metal roll gates and iron bars will not be installed on any doors or windows at any time in the future.
3. Pursuant to Section 264-93, site plan approval is valid so long as building permits are pulled within one year of approval.
4. An awning or overhang would be added over the front entrance door.
5. Front landscaping would be properly maintained.

Motion carried unanimously.

- H. **Sol's Magnetic Barbershop** requests site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90(M) of a proposal to operate a barbershop at 1553 State Street, tax parcel # 50.77-2-16, located in the R-1 Single-Family Residential District.
- I. **Haddy Faye** requests site plan approval pursuant to Section 264-90(M) of a proposal to operate a braiding shop at 1553 State Street, tax parcel # 50.77-2-16, located in the R-1 Single-Family Residential District.

Mr. Carvell Griffin, owner of the 1553 State Street property, came forward to discuss agenda items H and I.

Mr. Connelly detailed his only suggestion in the staff report which was to remove some of the front yard concrete to replace with green space. After discussion with the Commission and Mr. Griffin, it was decided that green space and shrubbery would be added from the edge of the doorway on both sides of the building to the sidewalk.

Commissioner Bland asked about adding additional planters on the pavement, which Mr. Griffin agreed to.

Mr. Connelly informed the Commission that although this was an R-1 zone, discussions with the Zoning Officer detailed that commercial businesses were previously approved for this location, and therefore zoning would not be a barrier to them opening.

Commissioner Beach opened the floor for the public hearing, which was closed as no comments were heard.

SITE PLAN RESOLUTION

Motion made by **Commissioner Wilson** to approve the Sol's Barbershop application. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Bland** with the following conditions and findings of fact:

1. The address will be prominently displayed so that it is easily visible from State Street.
2. Metal roll gates and iron bars will not be installed on any doors or windows at any time in the future.
3. Pursuant to Section 264-93, site plan approval is valid so long as building permits are pulled within one year of approval.
4. All concrete would be removed between the sidewalk and the building, from the front pillars on each side of the building to the property line.
5. Planters would be added on the remaining concrete.

Motion carried unanimously.

SITE PLAN RESOLUTION

Motion made by **Commissioner Wilson** to approve the Haddy Faye application. Motion seconded by **Commissioner Bland** with the same conditions and findings of fact as the Sol's Barbershop approval.

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

ADJOURN

Motion made by **Commissioner Bland** to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by **Commissioner Hitlall**. The meeting adjourned at 7:51 PM.

Motion carried unanimously.