MINUTES
LEWIS COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
October 15, 2026

(1) **Call to Order:** Vice-Chairman Lehman called the regular meeting of the Lewis County Planning Board to order at 2:35 p.m. in the Basement Conference Room #030 at the Lewis County Courthouse, Lowville, New York. Mr. Lehman requested roll call.

(2) **Roll Call:**
Board Members Present: John Lehman, Donald Cook, John Reed, Jessica Moser, and Larry Dolhof.

Staff Present: Lauryn Schell, Community Development Specialist; Casandra Buell, Director of Planning & Community Development; Grace Metzler, Grant Manager; Roxanne Turck, Naturally Lewis; Ben Manning, Building and Code Enforcement. **Public Present**: None.

(3) **Reading and Approval of Minutes:** The draft August 20, 2026 meeting minutes were received and reviewed before the meeting. Mr. Lehman wanted to make sure that the minutes clearly defined all motions, seconders, voting outcomes, and any recusals, and that the meeting minutes should be amended to document unanimous and non-unanimous actions accurately. Ms. Buell reviewed the August 20th meeting minutes and found that a few of the actions did require clarity and that she will make those updates prior to posting the final versions. Mr. Cook moved to approve the minutes; Mr. Lehman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

(4) **Correspondence and Communication:**

- **APA-Public Notice-Variance Application Received**- *Terry Steiner - Town of Croghan-* Construction of a 10' x 20' deck attached to the shoreline side of a pre-1973 single-family dwelling within 100' of the mean high water mark of Long Pond and within the West Branch Oswegatchie Recreational River Area.
- **APA-Major Project Public Notice- Application Completed**- *Ann Yost/Gerald Lucas - Town of Watson-* Construction of a 120 +/- sq. ft dry-land boathouse consisting of a canopy supported by six 5-inch diameter poles and a timber retaining wall and accessed by twin pontoon roller ramps extending within the mean high-water mark.
- **APA-Certificate for Certain Minor Regulated Activities in APA Jurisdictional Freshwater Wetlands** – Bryant Bridge Road / Town of Diana.

The Board had no comments to submit regarding the correspondence provided.

(5) Report of Special Committees:

239-m Review

Mr. Lehman introduced the first review. Jessica Moser moved to approve with the conditions and non-binding notes, which was seconded by Don Cook. Ms. Buell went on to review the following referral and recommendations in further detail. Before jumping into the content of the review, Ms. Buell mentioned that the Town of Martinsburg opted to resubmit this referral for the October County Planning Board meeting, extending the 30-day response period from their September referral submission, upon mutual agreement. Extension follow-up with the Planning Staff was conducted with the applicant because much of the required information was missing. As noted in the technical review, responses have been included in this review and have been shared with the Town of Martinsburg.

TOWN OF MARTINSBURG PLANNING BOARD
Special Use Permit for the proposed reuse of a 1,200 sq. ft. building located at 7049 State Route 12 from office space to a retail convenience store within the Agricultural Zoning District in the Town of Martinsburg.
Tax Map Parcel #228.00-01-06.000
Gurljit Singh – Applicant

The Town of Martinsburg Planning Board Secretary provided the following referral documents: 1) General Municipal Referral Form with Agricultural Data Statement; 2) Application to the Planning Board with Land Use Application; 3) SEAF; and 4) Location Map.

- *Compatibility with Adjacent Uses*
  The proposed action is located on one parcel within the Agriculture Zoning District. The proposed action is not within the Wind Power Overlay Phase 1 or 2, Wellhead Protection Areas, or Water Supply Protection Areas. The proposed reuse of prior office space (commercial use) for a retail convenience store (commercial use) is allowed within the Agricultural Zoning District, subject to a Special Use Permit approved by the Town Planning Board.

  Since the submission notes that the proposed action will include the sale of tobacco and alcohol, it is important to note that the Town of Martinsburg has opted out of allowing marijuana dispensaries and on-site consumption lounges in its jurisdiction. To ensure that these uses are not commingled with the approved retail convenience store use, it may be beneficial for the Town Planning Board to note this prohibited use as a condition of the Special Use Permit.

  On September 28, 2026 the applicant confirmed that all retail/commercial sales will be limited to inside the building. This is a key detail that further ensures compliance with the community character.

The table below shows that the proposed project appears to meet the district's dimensional standards.

Dimensional Standards	Agricultural District	Proposed Action
Lot Area Minimum	1 acre	1.7 acres
Lot Frontage Minimum	200 ft	300 ft
Front Yard Setback	75 ft	Approx. 90 ft
Rear Yard Minimum	25 ft	Approx. 40 ft
Side Yard Minimum	25 ft	Approx. 30 ft

- *Traffic Generation and Effect:*
  The subject property is located on NYS Route 12 between Bealuck Road and Ross Road, and directly across from Markowski Road. There are two (2) driveway egress/ingress for the previously established commercial use. As part of this review, on September 28, the applicant confirmed that the existing driveways will continue to be used; however, they plan to limit use to the southern parking area and driveway. According to estimated measurements taken from GIS, the width of the egress/ingress is estimated to be 26'.

  According to the submitted Short Environmental Assessment Form (SEAF), the proposed action is not expected to substantially increase traffic above present levels. Although the applicant did not originally provide a traffic egress/ingress plan, on September 28 the applicant provided a hand-drawn traffic flow parking plan for the southern parking area, which is currently surfaced with concrete and blacktop.

- *Protection of Community Character:*
  The proposed action is surrounded by commercial, residential, and agricultural uses along a heavily trafficked NYS corridor. The applicant proposes to reuse the existing structure as a retail convenience store to sell breakfast foods, beer and wine, tobacco, and snacks. As submitted, the proposed use appears consistent with the community character.

  According to the submitted SEAF, the proposed action will not encroach upon a Critical Environmental Area or adversely affect any known habitat for threatened or endangered species. Review of the NYS EAF Mapper further indicates that the project site does not contain any known threatened or endangered animal species or associated significant habitats.

  The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Official Species List identified the monarch butterfly as a candidate species that may occur within the project area. However, as the submitted referral does not indicate any ground disturbance or vegetation clearing associated with the proposed action, no significant impacts to threatened or endangered species or their habitats are anticipated.

Review of the NYS EAF Mapper confirms that the project site does not contain, or is substantially contiguous to, a building, archaeological site, or district which is listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, or has been determined by the Commissioner of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places; however, the EAF mapper did identify that the project site, or a portion of it, is located in or adjacent to an area designated as sensitive for archaeological sites on the NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) archaeological site inventory. Upon further investigation, the site was within the boundaries of an archaeological survey completed as part of the Black River to Porter 115kV Transmission Rebuild Project.

- *Signage:*
  While no plans for signage were submitted with the referral, on September 28, the applicant noted that existing 4'x7' signage with a replaced business name will be used. Based on this information, the proposed action appears to comply with §240-23, Signs, of the Town of Martinsburg Development Law.

- *Drainage/Erosion:*
  The SEAF indicates the land disturbance is limited to 0.25 acres, is not within the 100-year floodplain, and does not contain wetlands; however, the NYS EAF Mapper identified that the project site or land adjoining the site contains wetlands or other waterbodies regulated by a federal, state, or local agency. On September 28, the applicant confirmed that the disturbance is limited to the building renovations. Given that the total site disturbance is less than 1 acre, a SPDES General Permit is not required. Upon further investigation using the NYS Environmental Resource Mapper, it appears that the adjoining parcel, owned by The Ramos Irrevocable Trust, hosts a riverine wetland nearly 1,500 feet away from the proposed action.

- *Parking:*
  While no parking plans were included with the initial referral, the applicant confirmed on September 28 that the existing concrete and asphalt parking area located south of the existing structure will continue to be utilized. No resurfacing or reconfiguration of the parking area is proposed.

  The anticipated occupancy of the building is approximately 20 persons. A Traffic Flow Plan, submitted on September 28, identifies a total of 18 parking spaces, including three (3) handicap-accessible parking spaces and 15 standard parking spaces. With this information, it appears that the project complies with § 240-24, Parking requirements, as the applicant has now demonstrated that the use will provide off-road parking for all vehicles during peak use periods and will be utilized to avoid backing out onto the public road.

- *Community Facilities:*
  The proposed action will not connect to existing public/private water supply or wastewater utilities.

- *Lighting:*
  While no plans for the installation or use of existing lighting were submitted with the referral, on September 28, the applicant noted that the proposed action will include upgrades to the existing outdoor lighting with brighter lumens. All outdoor lighting shall be fully shielded and directed downward to minimize glare and light trespass onto adjacent properties and to prevent interference with motorists traveling on NYS Route 12.

- *Noise*
  Given the proximity of nearby residential properties, operational noise may increase compared with the former office use. Potential sources may include customer vehicle activity, deliveries, refuse collection, and mechanical or refrigeration equipment. Significant noise impacts are not anticipated provided that these activities and equipment are appropriately located, screened, and managed through the Town's permitting process.

- *Landscaping and Screening:*
  No landscaping or screening plans were submitted with the referral. On September 28, the applicant confirmed that there will be no additional landscaping or screening of the building or parking area as part of the proposed action.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

The acting municipal body must have a super-majority (majority plus one) vote to disregard the following conditions:

1. All outdoor lighting shall be fully shielded and directed downward to minimize glare and light trespass onto adjacent properties and to prevent interference with motorists traveling on NYS Route 12.

Non-Binding Notes:

These are used as suggestions and/or advice from the County Planning Board, the municipality is not required to take action, nor is a supermajority vote required.

1. Given the proximity of nearby residences, consideration should be given to locating loading areas, refuse facilities, mechanical equipment, and other potential noise-generating activities away from residential properties where practicable. The Town of Martinsburg Planning Board may also consider whether delivery hours, refuse collection, or other operational activities warrant reasonable limitations to minimize potential impacts on neighboring residences.
2. Since the submission notes that the proposed action will include the sale of tobacco and alcohol, it is important to note that the Town of Martinsburg has opted out of allowing marijuana dispensaries and on-site consumption lounges in its jurisdiction. To ensure these uses are not commingled with

the approved retail convenience store use, the Town Planning Board may benefit from noting this prohibited use as a condition of the Special Use Permit.

The Board expressed concern that the store appears to have already opened, and Building Code Officer Ben Manning noted that the applicant was told they could not open until they obtained the proper permits. Ms. Buell reminded the Board that the referral and review are based on the submission's content and are limited to convenience-store products, including tobacco and alcohol. With no further discussion, the Board unanimously carried the motion to approve with the identified condition and non-binding notes.

Mr. Lehman introduced the second project review. Don Cook moved to approve with conditions, and John Reed seconded. Ms. Schell then reviewed the following referral and recommendations in more detail.

TOWN AND VILLAGE OF LOWVILLE PLANNING BOARD
Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review for the proposed reuse of an existing garage for retail sales and service, general (personal service), located at 7686 North State Street (State Route 26) in the Village of Lowville.
Tax Map Parcel #212.07-05-50.100
Amanda Kraeger – Zehr, Elements Day Spa – Applicant

The applicant provided the following project documentation: 1) General Municipal Referral Form; 2) Town and Village of Lowville Planning Board Application Materials; 3) Scope of Work; 3) Correspondence from Lewis County Building & Codes and the Village of Lowville DPW Superintendent; 4) Short Environmental Assessment Form (SEAF) Parts 1 & 2; 5) EAF Mapper Summary Report; 6) Site Photos; 7) DEC Letter of No Jurisdiction; and 8) Parking Plan.

- *Compatibility with Adjacent Uses:*
  The proposed project is located within the Neighborhood Commercial 1 (NC-1) District, "to provide a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use (residential and small-scale commercial) transition area between the Village center and surrounding residential areas." The proposed adaptive reuse of the existing 26' x 26' garage into a wellness studio (retail sales and service, general) that complements the existing day spa use in the principal structure appears to be consistent with the intent of the zoning district and is compatible with the surrounding land uses, which include a mix of commercial, residential, and public facilities.

  With respect to dimensional requirements, the existing garage would be considered nonconforming, as Real Property records indicate it was constructed in 1890. Pursuant to §201-1230, a nonconforming structure

may be used for any use permitted in the zoning district in which it is located. Because "retail sales and service, general" is an allowable use in the NC-1 District, the nonconforming status of the structure itself is not anticipated to create zoning concerns.

- *Traffic Generation and Effect:*
  The proposed project is located on North State Street (State Route 26), which has an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volume of approximately 8,086 vehicles, with access to the parking lot off Davenport Place. According to the submitted SEAF, the proposed action is not expected to substantially increase traffic beyond existing levels. Based on this review, the project is not anticipated to result in significant traffic impacts.

- *Protection of Community Character:*
  According to the submitted SEAF, the project site is not located within a Critical Environmental Area, an archaeologically sensitive area, a habitat for threatened or endangered species, or a 100-year floodplain. However, the SEAF indicates that the site is located within or adjacent to a property listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places. The applicant contacted SHPO in advance and received a letter dated September 8, 2026, indicating no adverse impact is anticipated.

  The submitted SEAF also indicates that the project site is located on or adjacent to a property that has been subject to environmental remediation. According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) Environmental Remediation Database, this refers to the AMF Trinity Avenue site, which was remediated through the NYS Superfund Program at 5502 Trinity Avenue. As no ground disturbance is proposed as part of this project, impacts related to this prior remediation are not anticipated.

- *Signage:*
  There is no additional signage proposed for this project. Should any signage be proposed in the future, it should comply with §201-735 C(1) of the Village Zoning Law.

- *Drainage & Erosion:*
  The submitted SEAF indicates that the proposed project will not result in additional stormwater discharge, and because the project involves no ground disturbance, this is not anticipated to be a concern.

- *Parking:*
  According to §201-830 G, commercial and business uses require "one space per motor vehicle used directly in the business, plus one space per 350 square feet of business area." Based on the submitted materials, the principal structure where the day spa currently operates is 4,039 square

feet, and with the addition of the 26' x 26' wellness studio, that would equate to a total of 4,715 square feet, which would require a total of 14 parking spaces.

The submitted parking plan includes 12 parking spaces, including one handicap parking space. Section §201-830 B allows off-street parking to be located off-site, provided it is within 500 feet of the use; it would be available on North State Street and Davenport Place and would certainly make up for the 2 parking spots lacking in the parking lot.

- *Community Facilities:*
  According to the submitted SEAF, this project would connect to the Village of Lowville water and sewer infrastructure. The applicant contacted the Village of Lowville DPW Superintendent and submitted a letter dated September 10, 2026, indicating that the current infrastructure can accommodate additional use and is not expected to be a concern.

- *Lighting:*
  According to the submitted materials, the garage has an existing light, and no changes to existing lighting are proposed at this time. Should lighting be added or replaced in the future, it should be downward-directed to prevent spillover onto adjacent properties and comply with §201-1030 of the Village Zoning Law.

- *Landscaping and Screening:*
  No landscaping is planned at this time. Should landscaping be undertaken in the future, it should comply with §201-1070 of the Village Zoning Law.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

The acting municipal body must have a super-majority (majority plus one) vote to disregard the following conditions:

1. Should any signage be proposed in the future, it should comply with §201-735 C(1) of the Village Zoning Law.
2. Should lighting be added or replaced in the future, it should be downward-directed to prevent spillover onto adjacent properties and comply with §201-1030 of the Village Zoning Law.
3. Should landscaping be undertaken in the future, it should comply with §201-1070 of the Village Zoning Law.

Ms. Buell presented photographs of the existing accessory structure proposed for adaptive reuse. Ben Manning, Village of Lowville Zoning Enforcement Officer, provided additional context regarding the applicant's proposal, explaining that the applicant intends to expand the massage therapy services currently offered within the principal structure into the existing accessory building. This expansion would allow the applicant to make more efficient use of the property's structures while accommodating the continued growth of her business.

Mr. Manning also informed the Board of a fraudulent invoice the applicant had recently received, purportedly from the Village of Lowville. He explained that the correspondence was determined to be a scam after identifying discrepancies in the sender's email address. Ms. Buell noted that many Planning agencies across the country have raised this issue, and Ms. Moser agreed that deed charges are also a problem.

Following discussion, the Board voted unanimously to approve the project, subject to the conditions established during its review.

(6) **Report of County Planner:**

Responses from municipalities regarding previously submitted/reviewed projects:

- **Town of Lewis Planning Board** | Special Use Permit *(Michael Chrysler):* **Approved with Conditions.**
- **Village of Port Leyden** | (2) Proposed Moratoriums: **Adopted** (Bypassed CPB due to lack of Quorum).
- **Lowville Joint Village/Town Planning Board** | Site Plan Review (White's Farm Supply): **Approved with Conditions** (Bypassed CPB due to lack of Quorum).

(7) **Unfinished Business:** None

(8) **New Business:** None

(9) **Adjournment:** There being no other business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Lehman and seconded by Mr. Cook. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Lehman adjourned the meeting at 3:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Casandra Buell
Director of Planning & Community Development

Note: These minutes have been transcribed from a recording but are not verbatim or quoted version; they are rather a documentation of the meeting events.