



TOWN OF STILLWATER

ESTABLISHED 1788 - SITE OF THE TURNING POINT OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

PO Box 700 ~ 881 Hudson Ave., Stillwater, NY 12170 ~ (518) 664-6148 ~ www.townofstillwaterny.gov

PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

December 8, 2025 @ 6:00 PM

PRESENT

Frank Bisnett, Chairman
Eliot Cresswell, Member
Mary Beth Reilly, Member
Dale Smith, Member
Randy Rathbun, Member
Timothy Scrom, Alternate Member

ALSO PRESENT

James Trainor, Attorney for the Town
Paul Male, Town Engineer
Lindsay Buck, Senior Planner
Erin Herring, Planner
Ellen Vomacka, Town Board Liaison

ABSENT

Carol Marotta, Alternate Member
Peter Buck, Vice-Chairman
Kimberlee Marshall, Member
Ryan Pezzulo, Attorney for the Planning Board
Sheila Silic, Secretary for the Planning Board

Chairman Frank Bisnett called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM and led everyone in the Pledge to the Flag.

Minutes of Planning Board Meeting November 10, 2025

Member Scrom made a motion to approve the November 10, 2025 meeting minutes, seconded by Member Cresswell.

Vote

Chairman Bisnett	Yes
Member Cresswell	Yes
Member Scrom	Yes
Member Reilly	Yes
Member Rathbun	Yes
Member Smith	Yes

PB2025-13: Snake Hill Preserve Site Plan. 663 NYS Route 9P

Chairman Bisnett recognized Alison Yovine, from Saratoga Associates, who will be representing Saratoga PLAN and presenting the project this evening.

Alison Yovine:

I am representing Saratoga PLAN with this project and I am joined by Rob Davies, the Executive Director of Saratoga PLAN, as well as Sarah Walsh who is an employee at Saratoga PLAN. So, Snake Hill is a 29-acre parcel located on the east side of Saratoga Lake. We are proposing to create a walking trail, utilizing the existing trail, as well as a 6-car parking lot using the existing curb cut. It would be made from gravel and will have a gate with a Knox Box and signage. The parking lot would have a turning radius adequate for a school bus to use. There are wetlands on the property and we have had them delineated with the NYSDEC and will not be doing any work in the wetland or buffer area. We have spoken to the Department of Transportation and they have said the plans are good. The Saratoga County Planning Board also gave a comment of 'No Community or County-wide Impact'. There are no concerns of stormwater. It will all runoff naturally into the Lake like it does currently. As mentioned, there will be a Knox Box at the entrance in case emergency services need to access the property if no one from Saratoga PLAN was on site. There will be a small pavilion midway through the trail that would have benches which would come in Phase II of the development. It's a slow-moving project and we want to make sure we have everything sorted before moving into Phase II.

Chairman Bisnett:

Is one of the spaces ADA compliant?

Alison Yovine:

Yes, there is one ADA space.

Senior Planner Buck:

The Saratoga County Planning Board did recommend that the ADA space they have be upgraded to the standard van size, which they are stating is 11-feet with an 8-foot aisle.

Alison Yovine:

We can definitely incorporate that.

Member Reilly:

We also want to avoid people parking in front of the gate and along 9P. Is there something that can be done to prevent that?

Alison Yovine:

We cannot move the gate closer to the road, but we can add signage that says no parking.

Rob Davies:

We can also see if we can get no parking signs along the whole stretch on 9P, since there is limited shoulder there.

Senior Planner Buck:

The Saratoga County Planning Board also stated that a NYSDOT permit would be required for any work done to improve the entrance or any work to be performed with their ROW. Otherwise, there was no community wide impact.

Town Engineer Male:

There are no comments I have either that would prevent the Board from acting tonight.

Chairman Bisnett opened the public hearing, asking if anyone from the public wishes to comment on the project.

James Trauring, 647 and 651 NYS Route 9P:

I received a letter in the mail regarding this hearing tonight. I have concerns about how no one contacted anyone living nearby. The letter said the Site Plan is limited access for just educational programming. What programming will be done? We have trails all throughout the County, so I'm not sure why this pristine area is the one being chosen for educational purposes, and I'm not sure what this area has to offer in that regard. There is also a family of bald eagles that make Snake Hill their home, and I don't know if anything has been done to consider the wildlife that's living there. I think this will also attract public nuisances and loitering. There is no way to police the area besides police and sheriffs driving by. We don't want any more drinking, drugs, or loitering and this will just attract that. Anyone could walk around the gate and get in, so I don't think its very well thought out. I understand that it was donated to Saratoga PLAN with the intention it would remain undeveloped. Now all of a sudden, they want to develop it, so maybe there are federal funds available they want to obtain and that is why they are doing this. I just don't think it's a good idea and the site doesn't serve educational value.

Gerald Korenowski 7 East Cove Rd:

I am in support of this project overall; however, I have a few minor concerns. The access trail going up the hill has benches that are looking into the neighbor's homes. I think around the corner, facing the Lake would be a better view for benches. The pavilion as well would be great for benches, but over the years I worry it will fill with trash that doesn't make it into bins. I also am concerned the pavilion would encourage after hours fun and cause a big mess. We have had issues with people going up there anyway. I think the trail system is wonderful, but the benches hopefully wont produce excess littering.

Camilla Zubieta, 656 NYS Route 9p:

We see a lot of trespassers up there as it is which is a concern of mine. They have many other sites with pavilions, so I am concerned that with limited resources they won't be able to manage increased activity. We hope that everyone will obey the rules, but that may not always happen and we want to make sure the site will be monitored for trespassing. While I think this would be great for the community, I think it'll bring too much traffic and trespassers.

Jennifer Trauring, 647 and 651 NYS Route 9P:

This is the first time we have heard of this project. What will the hours of operation be? What schools will participate? What are they educating people about? There is so much traffic on 9P already and there have been accidents in this area before. Has a traffic study been done? We are worried about trespassing as well and I just don't understand what sort of educational value the property has.

Diane Davies, 7 Windermere Rd:

I support this project. I have lived here for about 35 years and I remember the original idea was to put houses there which was concerning. But using the place for education and keeping access limited to invitation only is ideal. I also think no parking signs along 9P would be great. I support this project overall and think it's a great way to save this land for future generations to learn about.

Chairman Bisnett:

Asked if there were any other comments, and hearing none, Member Rathbun made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Member Smith

Member Scrom:

Tell us a little more about the educational aspect. Also, whether or not it'll be all-season and if so, how will snow removal and ice control be conducted?

Rob Davies:

We plan to have it open for all seasons, and we will talk with the Town about assistance removing snow. Whether we will be able to have the trails plowed we are unsure, but the parking lot would need to be open for this to be a concern anyway and it's invitation only.

Member Scrom:

How many people would you host at a time?

Rob Davies:

We would only have around 5 to 6 events a year to start off. No more than 10 to 20 people at a time, and a guide will always be present. Someone from Saratoga PLAN will be there with the groups as well. As for what we educate on, the site is very unique to the area and the topography and geology is very old. Millions of years ago the site was formed by tectonic plate movement. The dendrology is also unique from one side of the property to the other. The north side is very cool and. The south is completely different and it's dry and warm with different plants growing

there than in the north. The change in habitat is dramatic. The site overall has a lot of educational value and it's in such a small area right in our backyard.

Member Scrom:

Do you have an educator or an idea of what schools you will work with?

Rob Davies:

Yes, we plan to start slowly and we want to gauge interest from nearby schools and universities before we make promises. I'll also mention that we will move the benches to not be looking into the houses nearby. We put them there just to show that we will have them, the location is open. As for concerns about the pavilion, we have heard that there may be a need for a gathering area for classes, which is why we included the pavilion in the plans, but as mentioned that is a part of Phase II and will be implemented if the demand is there, not right away.

Sarah Walsh:

We do have a regular educational series that we run on other sites, where we bring in experts to guide different learning walks, and this site would operate the same. The experts would be leading the walks while accompanied by Saratoga PLAN staff. We always limit group size to be a maximum of 25 people, and registration takes place online. This educational program would be based on the existing programs, just modified to this specific site.

Member Scrom:

Do you plan to use road salt in the winter?

Rob Davies:

No, we do not plan to use road salt. We hope to be able to plow when it snows, but if that isn't possible and conditions aren't safe we will close the site.

Sarah Walsh:

We have 13 other preserves and we work with volunteers and municipalities to manage the snow. If we cannot get volunteers to help us with plowing, we always make sure we inform people on the sites that are safe for walking and the sites that are not. We also have reports that tell people what is going on in the trails so people know about the conditions and what to do to prepare. This is something we do with all our programming so this site would operate the same way.

Member Rathbun:

And there wouldn't be access unless they are invited, correct?

Alison Yovine:

Correct, the gate will remain closed at all times.

Member Reilly:

What about the bald eagle's nest? How do you plan to protect that?

Rob Davies:

We have done ecological assessments and we have seen the bald eagles, but we haven't found any nests on the property. That isn't to say it's not possible that there is one, but the level of activity that would be happening at Snake Hill wouldn't be enough to negatively impact any eagles who may or may not be nesting there.

Sarah Walsh:

We also have a woodcock preserve, and the woodcocks do special mating dances during mating season, and we always close the preserve during that time to ensure the woodcocks aren't negatively impacted during that important time. If there is a nest on Snake Hill we will make sure that we give them appropriate space to nest and we will avoid conducting walks to make sure they can nest peacefully. Usually bald eagles need between 6 to 8 weeks before the hatchlings begin fledging and leave the nest. We would respect that time period in order to avoid disturbing them.

Member Cresswell:

So, you've been doing this for a while, and it seems that you learn as you go. What signals or input do you look for to make sure you are getting the preservation and access dynamics right? Do you use email?

Rob Davies:

We want to work closely with the neighbors. We have walked around to neighbors and given them packets with information on tonight's meeting. We want to be good neighbors and we will have a kiosk at the parking lot that will have the contact information for Saratoga PLAN. Whether people want to share something interesting that they saw or give feedback, we want people to contact us. We also want to use social media to do outreach and surveys, but we mostly rely on the neighbors. Some have already expressed interest in becoming volunteers, which is a part of a formula that we use regularly. We rely so much on volunteers and neighbors to help us be good neighbors. People who live nearby are our favorite because they are always there and they see things we might not, and so we rely on them for feedback.

Town Board Liaison Vomacka:

There are already a lot of parties that happen there, and I think that having this plan will reduce the number of trespassers because there is now attention there and people are keeping their eyes on it.

Rob Davies:

Right, while nothing is guaranteed, we would have a presence there instead of it being vacant. It will give the community a feeling that they are stewards and that they help keep Snake Hill what it is, and they will feel more compelled to help us enforce the rules.

Member Reilly:

Do you anticipate having a few events open to the public so people can come and learn about it and see the views? There might be a lot of interest in that.

Rob Davies:

We have discussed this and we think it'd be a great idea to have small community tours for people who want to come onto Snake Hill and learn and see how amazing it is. We think that'd be a great idea and are open to it.

Member Scrom:

Would the gate be a chain with a lock?

Alison Yovine:

Yes, it would have a lock and, like we mentioned will have a knock box for the fire department to access if there is an emergency.

Member Smith:

As they grow can we continue to evaluate them and make recommendations?

Senior Planner Buck:

No, that is an option used for Special Use Permits. This isn't possible for Site Plans.

Member Reilly:

There must be an error on the resolution. It says "Special Use Permit and Site Plan". The Town is still able to enforce it though.

Senior Planner Buck:

Thank you for that correction. Yes, the Town does enforce Site Plans.

Eliot Cresswell:

Should we make the no parking signs along 9P a condition for approval?

Senior Planner Buck:

You probably should. But that will be up to the NYSDOT to make the decision on the placement, but it might be good to have in the resolution.

Rob Davies:

I was under the impression that getting the signs along 9P would be the responsibility of the Town, is that true?

Senior Planner Buck:

I will have to look into that, it might be the Town who submits that.

Eliot Cresswell:

The Resolutions say this is a Special Use Application, but it's a Site Plan, correct?

Senior Planner Buck:

Correct, this is a Site Plan. We will make sure the Resolutions are corrected.

Chairman Frank Bisnett asked if anyone had any further questions or concerns, and hearing none, he asked to move to discussion of SEQRA.

**TOWN OF STILLWATER
PLANNING BOARD
2025 RESOLUTION NO. 20**

**A RESOLUTION PURSUANT TO SEQRA
REGARDING THE APPLICATION BY SARATOGA PLAN FOR SITE PLAN APPROVAL**

WHEREAS, Saratoga PLAN has submitted an application for site plan approval, at property located at 663 NYS Rt. 9P, known as Snake Hill Preserve, more particularly described as SBL 218.8-1-4.11; and

WHEREAS, the applicant has submitted a fully completed Long Environmental Assessment Form (“LEAF”); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to 6 NYCRR section 617.6, the Stillwater Planning Board is the appropriate lead agency for SEQRA review; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (“SEQRA”) the proposed action is a Type II action requiring SEQRA review; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board has duly reviewed the LEAF and has considered the criteria contained in 6 NYCRR section 617.7 (c) to determine if the proposed action will not have a significant impact on the environment.

NOW, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the Town of Stillwater Planning Board hereby determines that the proposed action by the applicant will not result in significant impacts on the environment and a negative declaration is hereby issued.

A motion by Member Cresswell seconded by Member Rathbun to adopt Resolution No. 20 of 2025.

A roll call vote was taken on Resolution No. 20 of 2025 as follows:

Chairman Bisnett	YES
Member Buck	ABSENT
Member Reilly	YES
Member Marshall	ABSENT
Member Rathbun	YES
Member Smith	YES
Member Cresswell	YES
Alternate Member Marotta	ABSENT
Alternate Member Scrom	YES

Resolution No. 20 of 2025 was passed at a meeting of the Planning Board of the Town of

Stillwater duly conducted on December 8, 2025.

**TOWN OF STILLWATER
PLANNING BOARD
2025 RESOLUTION NO. 21
A RESOLUTION REGARDING THE APPLICATION BY SARATOGA PLAN FOR SITE PLAN
APPROVAL**

WHEREAS, Saratoga PLAN has submitted an application for site plan approval at property located at 663 NYS Rt. 9P, known as Snake Hill Preserve, more particularly described as SBL 218.8-1-4.11; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Resolution 20 of 2025, the Planning Board issued a negative declaration pursuant to SEQRA; and,

WHEREAS, on December 8, 2025, a duly noticed public hearing was held to allow for and receive public comments regarding the application.

NOW, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the Town of Stillwater Planning Board hereby approves the application for site plan approval, at property located at 663 NYS Rt. 9P, known as Snake Hill Preserve, more particularly described as SBL 218.8-1-4.11, conditioned upon:

1. Compliance with the requirements described in the letter dated October 15, 2025 from Paul Male, P.E.
2. Compliance with the requirements outlined in the letter dated November 6, 2025 from Jeffery Williams, Planner for Saratoga County Planning Board.

A motion by Member Rathbun seconded by Alternate Member Scrom to adopt Resolution No. 21 of 2025.

A roll call vote was taken on Resolution No. 21 of 2025 as follows:

Chairman Bisnett	YES
Member Buck	ABSENT
Member Reilly	YES
Member Marshall	ABSENT
Member Rathbun	YES
Member Smith	YES
Member Cresswell	YES
Alternate Member Marotta	ABSENT
Alternate Member Scrom	YES

Resolution No. 21 of 2025 was passed at a meeting of the Planning Board of the Town of Stillwater duly conducted on December 8, 2025.

PB2025-17: Winding Brook PDD Amendment

Chairman Frank Bisnett recognized Mike Robertson from Lansing Engineering, who will be presenting the project this evening.

Mike Robertson:

I am here tonight to request an Amendment to the Site Plan that will remove the sidewalks along the new Town road, Reeds Hollow. This was, in part, because the Highway Department and Planning Department believe they are too close to the road. The sidewalks begin immediately adjacent to the wing wedge, and The Highway Superintendent is concerned about safety and snow removal. The sidewalks are proposed to be removed and they would be maintained by the HOA. The original Site Plan included 11-foot travel lanes and it was agreed to widen that to 12-foot to be concurrent with Town standards. The location of the sidewalks currently is around the interior loop and to the entrance. Instead of sidewalks being adjacent to the road, we want to relocate them to be in the center of the site, which would provide connectivity between the visitor parking lots and the mailbox cluster. I am here tonight to hear your questions and concerns for feedback.

Member Smith:

The houses are too close to the road and now everyone will walk in the middle of the road. The original plan had sidewalks in ideal locations, and now you cannot fit them because there isn't enough space. We definitely want sidewalks near the road so that people aren't walking in the road.

Member Smith showed Chairman Bisnett an image of the current sidewalks that are deemed to be removed.

Member Reilly:

This is definitely a safety issue for people who are walking. I live in the neighborhood and I see children playing in the road and people will walk all the time in the road because there is no other place for them to walk. And that is in the large neighborhood. This is an even smaller neighborhood that will have cars and traffic, which is a safety issue. At one-point children riding bikes in the road caused a big argument because it was unsafe and safety should be a priority in a high-density area like this. We have even had people coming from Saratoga Pointe to walk. They don't have sidewalks either. This makes safety for pedestrians my biggest concern.

Town Engineer Male:

I don't understand why you couldn't run the sidewalks from the entrance and along the outside of the road rather than the inside as originally approved. Especially with the commercial area to the north, we need connections there and we need more thought put into where the sidewalks are going. Why couldn't you shift the footprint of the buildings backward to make space around the inside?

Mike Robertson:

We can't shift the building anymore because of the buildings behind it being in the way. It would not be able to meet NYS Building Code setbacks required for fire safety.

Town Engineer Male:

You could make the buildings smaller.

Member Reilly:

Why can't they put sidewalks around the back?

Senior Planner Buck:

Can they shift them back and keep it away from the easement that's there?

Town Engineer Male:

They can put a sidewalk on the easement. But, everyone is going to have to walk a long way to get their mail.

Jim Trainor:

Will roads be dedicated to the Town?

Senior Planner Buck:

The roads are proposed to be dedicated to the Town. They have not yet been dedicated as there are some outstanding items that need to be corrected.

Jim Trainor:

Everything in the right-of-way would be dedicated to the Town, including the sidewalks?

Lindsay Buck:

Yes, the roadway and right of way would be dedicated to the Town. The HOA would be responsible for the maintenance of the sidewalks.

Jim Trainor:

The Town would be responsible for them?

Senior Planner Buck:

The HOA will have a maintenance agreement with the Town to maintain the sidewalks, even though they are in the Town Right-Of-Way.

Town Engineer Male:

They are also going to dedicate the 4 drainage ponds in the single-family development, and no Certificates of Occupancy will be issued until the ponds are cleaned. There currently has been no intention to clean them out and that will also halt the dedication process.

Member Reilly:

They have been cleaned recently.

Town Engineer Male:

If that's the case then we need documentation that verifies that.

Senior Planner Buck:

The Town has obtained access easements for the stormwater management ponds. They will not be dedicated to the Town. The trees were cut within the ponds. The Town will require certification from the engineer of record that the ponds are in conformance with the approved plans prior to dedication of the new roadway, Reeds Hollow.

Randy Rathbun:

Going back to sidewalks, what is the concern with them as they are right now?

Town Engineer Male:

The sidewalks are right up against the wing edge which means snow will be plowed onto the sidewalk.

Member Smith showed Member Bisnett an image of the current sidewalks that are proposed to be removed.

Town Engineer Male:

The Board should approve something that will result in the Town having some sort of benefit, so the developer doesn't get a freebie. Without the sidewalks the developer will be saving thousands of dollars and the Town should be compensated for it.

Member Bisnett:

Clearly the Board is unhappy with the sidewalks as they are and unhappy with the new proposed sidewalks. You should come up with an alternative plan before any action takes place.

Mike Robertson:

Would the original sidewalk layout be acceptable at this point?

Senior Planner Buck:

The Highway Superintendent is very unhappy with the narrow entrance and the proximity of the sidewalks wing wedge. There is also concern with the length of the driveways to the sidewalks when parking vehicles. With the length of the driveways, one car parked in the driveway would be hanging over into the sidewalk.

Town Engineer Male:

Some of them have already been built, so they can't move either.

Member Scrom:

Some are built already?

Member Reilly:

There are 3 buildings that are built and one that is in progress.

Member Smith showed Chairman Bisnett an image of the built condos.

Mike Robertson:

Do you think you would be happy with something closer to the original?

Member Rathbun:

What exactly was the original proposal?

Senior Planner Buck:

The original plans show the sidewalks being around the interior loop, only on one side of the road.

Member Bisnett:

Now the sidewalks will only fit on the outside of the loop?

Senior Planner Buck pointed on the screen to where the original sidewalks were meant to be.

Member Smith:

I have to agree with Marybeth about the safety of the sidewalks as they are, as well as that the new proposed sidewalk location will result in people walking on the road which is also unsafe.

Member Reilly:

It's definitely a safety issue for those who live in the neighborhood.

Mike Robertson:

Understood, but the road only serves this development. The majority of traffic would be residents, and so traffic wouldn't be heavy.

Member Reilly:

I live in this neighborhood and we have so much traffic every day. People who live there and Amazon delivery trucks and things like that are always coming through.

Member Rathbun:

Most developments in Town have an HOA, that includes this one, right?

Mike Robertson:

Yes, this will have an HOA.

Member Rathbun:

It is a part of the deal that the HOA will take care of the sidewalks. It seems like maintenance isn't the biggest issue, but that when snow is plowed onto the sidewalk that people won't be able to use it and will need to walk in the road, which is the issue. And people will definitely use the road when the sidewalk isn't clear.

Senior Planner Buck:

It is not just the snow, but the proximity to the wing edge itself that is unsafe.

Member Rathbun:

The curb itself is an issue too.

Member Cresswell:

Do we all agree the original plan is better than this new proposal?

Member Reilly:

The original plan was better for the Town.

Town Engineer Male:

The Town would have preferred the original layout; however, the Town feels it is unsafe as installed in the entrance and where the currently constructed buildings were placed. The Town is concerned about the wing wedge not having a curb and where the snow will pile up. Is it possible to make the sidewalks narrower and go from 5-feet to 4-feet?

Senior Planner Buck:

I believe that the ADA requires sidewalks to be 5-foot wide, so they cannot make the sidewalks narrower.

Town Board Liaison Vomacka:

Did you say there was retail and commercial there too?

Town Engineer Male:

There are parcels designated for commercial use on the east and west side of the entrance to Winding Brook along 423. The Town would like to see sidewalks connect the development to the commercial parcels.

Town Board Liaison Vomacka:

Does that align with the Comprehensive Plan that wants to preserve the rural character of the Town?

Member Cresswell:

The Comprehensive Plan mentions sidewalks as being important for connectivity.

Member Reilly:

I don't think this development qualifies as being rural, so there is no rural character to protect that would make removing the sidewalks a reasonable decision.

Town Engineer Male:

The Town believes that all PDDs should have commercial components.

Town Board Liaison Vomacka:

Well suburban areas should constitute sidewalks and rural should mean no sidewalks. Snow would be all over the sidewalks if they are in rural areas.

Town Engineer Male:

Other Towns require sidewalks be cleaned off by residents when it snows.

Town Board Liaison Vomacka:

I have to clean my sidewalks myself.

Town Engineer Male:

In this development, the HOA would take responsibility to maintain the sidewalks, not the homeowners.

Senior Planner Buck:

The Town recently adopted an Open Space Plan, which does demonstrate the optimal locations for pedestrian connectivity.

Town Engineer Male:

Anything that isn't in the Rural Conservation Transect District should have priority for sidewalks.

Member Bisnett:

I think we need a better plan before the Board feels comfortable acting.

Mike Robertson:

So, the original Plan isn't good as it is and this updated plan won't work either?

Member Reilly:

Right. There is a middle ground that needs to be reached before we are happy with it

Chairman Bisnett:

Yes, there is a middle ground. So, let's table this project until we receive some new plans.

Mike Robertson:

Alright, we will come up with something else and bring it back to the Board.

Adjournment

Member Scrom:

Made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Member Randy, at approximately 7:08 pm.