

Regular Meeting Minutes

City of Oneida Planning Commission / Zoning Board of Appeals
May 12, 2026
City Hall Basement Conference Room
109 North Main Street, Oneida, NY 13421

The regular meeting of the City of Oneida Planning Commission / Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order by Chairman Perry Tooker at approximately 5:45 PM.

Roll Call

Members Present:

- Perry Tooker
- Todd Schaal
- Gregg Myers
- Pat Thorpe
- Dave Scholl

Members Absent:

- Kipp Hicks (Excused)

Staff Present:

- Steve Vonderweidt, Director of Planning & Development
- Jeannie Markle, Clerk for Codes & Planning
- Jay Ackerman, Code Enforcement Officer
- Steve Yaworski, Code Enforcement

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the April 14, 2026 regular meeting minutes with a minor correction noted regarding member identification within one motion entry.

Motion by: Pat Thorpe
Seconded by: Gregg Myers
Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

1. 1610 Crescent Avenue – Site Plan Modification – Wireless Communication Facility

The Board reviewed a request from Crown Castle USA Inc. / T-Mobile for a site plan modification associated with an existing wireless communication facility located at 1610 Crescent Avenue in the Agricultural (A) Zoning District.

A representative for the applicant explained the proposal involved co-location of T-Mobile equipment on the existing tower, including:

- installation of a new antenna platform,
- four panel antennas,
- associated cabling,
- ground equipment,
- and a modest expansion of the existing compound area.

The applicant stated there would be:

- no increase in overall tower height,
- no significant traffic impacts,
- no change to the access road,
- and no substantial operational impacts to surrounding properties.

The Board discussed:

- tower structural reinforcement,
- FAA no-hazard documentation,
- bird nesting protections,
- maintenance and inspection procedures,
- and mapping discrepancies associated with the access drive shown on GIS materials.

239 Review

No referral was required.

SEQRA Review

The Board reviewed the submitted Short Environmental Assessment Form.

A motion was made to classify the proposed action as an Unlisted Action pursuant to 6 NYCRR Part 617.

Motion by: Pat Thorpe
Seconded by: Todd Schaal
Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made to issue a Negative Declaration determining that the proposed site plan modification would not result in significant adverse environmental impacts.

Motion by: Pat Thorpe
Seconded by: Dave Scholl
Motion carried unanimously.

Site Plan Approval

A motion was made to approve the Site Plan Modification for the wireless communication facility at 1610 Crescent Avenue, Tax Map No. 54.-1-6.1, in substantial conformance with the revised plans dated April 21, 2026 and associated supporting documentation, subject to the following conditions:

- all work shall comply with submitted structural reports and approved plans;
- no increase in tower height shall occur beyond approved plans;
- all work shall remain within the approved lease area;
- FAA requirements shall be maintained;
- applicable federal and state protected species regulations shall be followed;
- all required permits and inspections shall be obtained;
- and any future expansion or modification beyond the approved scope shall require additional review and approval.

Motion by: Gregg Myers
Seconded by: Pat Thorpe
Motion carried unanimously.

2. Upper Lenox Avenue Solar Project – Conditional Use Permit / Site Plan Modification – Extension Request

The Board reviewed a request from LSE Norma, LLC (GS Power Partners) seeking an extension of the construction completion deadline associated with the previously approved Upper Lenox Avenue Large-Scale Solar Energy System.

The applicant provided an update regarding:

- ongoing civil work,
- utility coordination,
- directional boring work beneath Cowaselon Creek,
- upcoming racking and module installation,
- and anticipated construction completion timelines.

The applicant requested an extension due to remaining construction and utility coordination activities.

The Board discussed:

- project progress,
- utility infrastructure coordination,

- nearby easements and force main considerations,
- and maintaining continued project oversight through progress updates and milestones.

239 Review

No referral was required.

SEQRA Review

The Board determined the request constituted a Type II Action as an administrative modification involving no material change to the approved project.

No further environmental review was required.

Approval

A motion was made to approve the extension request for the Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan Modification associated with the Upper Lenox Avenue Solar Project through May 13, 2027, subject to the following conditions:

- all previously approved conditions remain in full force and effect unless expressly modified;
- no expansion or modification of the approved scope is authorized;
- all required permits and approvals shall remain current;
- progress updates shall be provided upon request;
- the Board may establish construction milestones as necessary;
- and lack of continued progress may impact future extension requests.

Motion by: Todd Schaal

Seconded by: Dave Scholl

Motion carried unanimously.

3. 221 Broad Street – Area Variance – Freestanding Sign

Todd Schaal recused himself from discussion and voting on this agenda item and stepped down from the dais.

The Board reviewed a request from Oneida Healthcare for an area variance to permit installation of a freestanding sign at 221 Broad Street in the R-3 Residential Zoning District.

The applicant explained the proposed sign was part of ongoing facility rebranding efforts and was intended to improve visibility and identification for visitors entering the property.

The Board discussed:

- sign placement,

- visibility from the roadway,
- setbacks from the public right-of-way,
- and consistency with nearby freestanding signage.

239 Review

No referral was required.

Public Hearing

A motion was made to open the public hearing at 6:17pm.

Motion by: Dave Scholl

Seconded by: Gregg Myers

Motion carried unanimously with Todd Schaal recused.

No public comments were received.

A motion was made to close the public hearing at 6:18pm.

Motion by: Pat Thorpe

Seconded by: Gregg Myers

Motion carried unanimously with Todd Schaal recused.

SEQRA Review

A motion was made to classify the proposed action as a Type II Action pursuant to SEQRA.

Motion by: Dave Scholl

Seconded by: Pat Thorpe

Motion carried unanimously with Todd Schaal recused.

A motion was made determining that the proposed action required no further environmental review.

Motion by: Pat Thorpe

Seconded by: Dave Scholl

Motion carried unanimously with Todd Schaal recused.

Area Variance Approval

A motion was made to approve the requested area variance from City of Oneida Code §190-15(D) to permit installation of a freestanding sign in the R-3 Residential District, subject to the following conditions:

- sign face area shall not exceed 24 square feet;

- overall sign height shall not exceed 8 feet above grade;
- installation shall substantially conform to submitted plans;
- no encroachment into the public right-of-way shall occur;
- the sign shall remain non-illuminated unless separately approved;
- all required permits shall be obtained prior to installation;
- and future modifications shall require additional Board review and approval.

Motion by: Pat Thorpe

Seconded by: Gregg Myers

Motion carried unanimously with Todd Schaal recused.

Other Business

The Board briefly discussed the current vacancy on the Planning Commission / Zoning Board of Appeals and potential candidates for appointment. Discussion included the value of architectural and environmental perspectives on the Board and the process for forwarding recommendations to the Mayor for consideration.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by: Pat Thorpe

Seconded by: Todd Schaal

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Vonderweidt, MBA

Director of Planning & Development

Minutes summarize the substance of discussion and actions taken by the Board and are not intended to be a verbatim transcript of proceedings.