

**VILLAGE OF COXSACKIE  
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES  
April 23, 2026**

Chairman Robert Van Valkenburg, Jr. called the Planning Board Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Present were Planning Board Members: Matthew Bennett, Debra Jung, Jarrett Lane, and Patricia Maxwell.

A motion to approve the minutes from the March 19, 2026 Planning Board Meeting was made by Patricia Maxwell and seconded by Jarrett Lane. Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. voted yes. Matthew Bennett voted yes. Debra Jung voted yes. Jarrett Lane voted yes. Patricia Maxwell voted yes. The motion carried.

**New Business**

**1. 14 Lawrence Avenue-**Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. asked Tom Chenaille, who was present on behalf of the applicant, if he had an updated Site Plan to present tonight.

Tom Chenaille submitted an updated Site Plan to the Board for review.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that one of the previous issues was in relation to creating 4 parking spots behind the property. He does see on the updated Site Plan that there are 4 parking spots shown, which does meet the requirements of what the Board is looking for. He does see that some of the spots are angled, so there may need to be further discussion on that.

A motion to accept the Site Plan received from Abraham Kessler, for 14 Lawrence Avenue, as complete, for purposes of holding the Public Hearing was made by Patricia Maxwell and seconded by Matthew Bennett. Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. voted yes. Matthew Bennett voted yes. Debra Jung voted yes. Jarrett Lane voted yes. Patricia Maxwell voted yes. The motion carried.

**Public Hearing**

**1. 14 Lawrence Avenue Public Hearing-** Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr called the Public Hearing to order at 6:03 p.m. for the review of the Special Use Permit application received from Abraham Kessler for 14 Lawrence Avenue.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. read the following received public comment letter aloud:

Elizabeth Galle  
P. O. Box 231  
21 Lawrence Avenue  
Coxsackie, NY 12051

20 2026

VILLAGE OF COXSACKIE

April 20, 2026

Robert Van Valkenburg, Jr.  
Planning Board Chairperson

Dear Mr. Van Valkenburg,

I was notified of the Public Hearing re: the Special Use Permit application received from Abraham Kessler for 14 Lawrence Avenue in Coxsackie. I will unfortunately not be in town for the meeting but I do want to express my concerns.

Lawrence Avenue has become a much-used component of local travel. Cars move faster than the posted speed limit on a consistent basis. More cars are parking on the road due to the increased number of residents living here and the limit of available off-street parking. The risk of an accident on the street has gone up over the last year.

Adding another apartment to the building at 14 Lawrence Avenue is going to compound the problems those of us who live here are already finding. There has been a "No Parking" sign in the front yard of the house next door to 14 Lawrence for a while now. Depending on how many people move into the new unit there will be at least one more car but it could be two or more. Where are you planning to have additional cars park?

In the winter snow removal is an issue. There isn't much of a front yard at that location to pile snow. All the homes on the street depend on a fire hydrant. There is one located just south of 14 Lawrence limiting where residents and visitors can park and where snow can be piled.

Off street parking would need to be required. If cars were to park on both sides of the street, the school bus, emergency vehicles and the rest of us would struggle to get through in both directions. Cars routinely park on the sidewalk now just to be sure to be far enough over not to get hit.

The building may be able to support a third apartment but the street isn't going to support the parking and snow removal needs of the community.

Sincerely submitted for your review and consideration.



Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that this is for a Special Use Permit for a 3-unit building, which is required per the Village's Zoning Code. Per the Code, there is a requirement of 6 parking spots, 2 per apartment. In the past, the Board has considered the spots in front of the building as usable spots to offset the amount of newly created spots. The Board asked the applicant to create an additional 4 spots in the rear of the building. The updated Site Plan shows that they can do this. The other issue with this property was that it was unclear who owned the driveway between 10 Lawrence Avenue and 14 Lawrence Avenue. However, they have come to a legal agreement between both parties to

be able to utilize the driveway as access to the rear of the building. It is his understanding that this building has been operating as a 3-unit for the past 10 years. However, it did not have a Special Use Permit. So, Mr. Kessler is trying to do the right thing, and go through the proper approvals.

Elizabeth Stiteler, of 3 Lawrence Avenue, stated that the residents of 10, 14, and 16 Lawrence Avenue, routinely park their cars up on the sidewalk. There are kids that walk to school, and cars are either parked on the sidewalk, or the property itself, blocking the sidewalk. She asked if the applicant had a survey done, because she also has concerns about whether or not the applicant actually has enough room to create parking in the back of the property. She is not in objection over apartments; she is in objection over the parking situation. There is also a fire hydrant in front of 10 Lawrence Avenue, and she believes that you cannot park within 10 feet of a fire hydrant on either side.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that it is a 50-foot-wide lot, and parking stalls need to be 9' x 18' per Village Code. That does work for angled parking spaces at the back of the property.

Elizabeth Stiteler asked if the property was surveyed.

Tom Chenaille stated that it has not been surveyed.

Elizabeth Stiteler stated that she is just concerned that people are going to be backing out on a County Road, which is illegal.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that they technically have room to maneuver at 47 feet wide.

Rich Sitcer III stated that they have 47 feet back there, but they are not considering the stairs that comes out of that back apartment. Those feet need to be dismissed as part of the parking area.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that the updated Site Plan does show the bump out for the stairs, and the angled parking.

Rich Sitcer III stated that there are orange pins back there, where it looks like he owns more than he does.

Elizabeth Stiteler stated that that is why she asked if it was properly surveyed.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that they did not have a survey done when they bought the house. A Special Use Permit does not require a survey.

Elizabeth Stiteler stated that this creation of a parking lot affects the whole street.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that it is up to the applicant to provide the Board with correct information on Site Plan. If the information provided is not correct, than the Board would have to address that.

Rich Sitcer III asked if there were plans to put in drainage.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that it is just going to be a stone service.

Rich Sitcer III asked if there are any setback requirements for the parking lot.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that there are not property line setbacks for parking that he knows of.

Patricia Maxwell stated that there are just setback requirements for a driveway.

Elizabeth Stiteler asked about ADA compliance. If there is a tenant with a disability, does there have to be special accommodations made.

Patricia Maxwell stated that if the apartments aren't advertised as ADA compliant, then they do not need to have ADA parking.

Daniel Stroud, previous tenant of 14 Lawrence Avenue, stated that the previous owner of 10 Lawrence Avenue told him that he owns all of the way to the center of the driveway on the left-hand side of 10 Lawrence Avenue.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that part of the Board's discussion at the previous meeting, was that the ownership of the driveway needed to be made clear. The two property owners came together and entered into a Shared Use Agreement for that driveway. This way, the applicant can have access to the back of the property.

John Coleman, of 16 Lawrence Avenue, stated that right now, the applicant has 2 couples living there. So, there are already 4 cars, without renting out anything else. There are already 3 cars that park in front of his place. He is concerned that if they rent out another apartment, this could create even more cars parking on the street. There is also a fire hydrant down the road, which creates nowhere to park near the hydrant.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that per the Village Code, the requirement is 2 spots per unit. That is what the Board has to use to make their decision. As far as approval for the Special Use Permit, there need to be 6 parking spots.

Elizabeth Stiteler stated that right now, they are parking on the sidewalks. From 19 Lawrence Avenue, down to 7 Lawrence Avenue, there is no parking.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that the Board request 2 on street parking spaces, and for 4 parking spaces to be created in the back of the property.

Elizabeth Stiteler stated that she understands that, but right now, they are parking on the sidewalk. She could contact the Police Department, but the Police Department has better thing to do, and she doesn't want to do that. However, she thinks that the Board needs to look at the property throughout the day, at different times, to see what the residents are really talking about. The property needs to be looked at when it's in full use. Again, she is not objecting to apartments being built in Coxsackie. She is just concerned about the space.

Tom Chenaille stated that he understands the concerns, but by creating this parking lot in the back, it would actually allow for those cars to be moved off of the road.

Elizabeth Stiteler stated that if the applicant has a tenant with a child, that child has no place to play.

Rich Sitcer IV stated that he would like to request that a fence be put up when the parking lot is put in. Now he will be able to see a parking lot from his back deck. Also, he has pins on his property, marking the property line. He can spray paint a line indicating where the property line is located.

John Coleman stated that he also still has pins from 2007 with markers on it.

Rich Sitcer IV stated that personally, he cannot see 4 cars fitting back there at all.

Elizabeth Stiteler stated that she is also concerned about snow removal. Where would they put all of the snow? They can't push it across the street into someone else's property.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that those are all valid concerns that the Board will certainly discuss.

John Coleman asked if they are putting in a studio apartment, or another 1- or 2-bedroom apartment.

Tom Chenaille stated that there was always a studio apartment here, along with a 2-bedroom apartment, and a 3-bedroom apartment. It has been operating that way for 20 years. There are 3 separate electric meters, 3 separate entry ways, etc.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that it was the Board's understanding that this property has been operating as a 3-unit building in the past. However, it was never properly issued a Special Use Permit. So, the applicant is going through that process now, while they are doing renovations. The public does have very valid comments that the Board will discuss.

Elizabeth Stiteler asked if there would be another public meeting. She also feels that giving people 4 days' notice before the meeting is ridiculous.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. asked Mr. Chenaille for the proof of certified mailing receipts.

Elizabeth Stiteler stated that it was sent out on Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. She checked with the Post Office.

Tom Chenaille stated that the certified mail was sent on Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that the certified mail receipts are stamped April 10<sup>th</sup> by the Post Office. He explained that per the Village Code, the applicants need to send the Public Hearing notice, certified, return receipt, to all residents within 500 feet of any point of the property.

John Coleman asked if the applicant does have to work on the north end of their building, should they get permission from him as a neighbor first, since his property is so close to the side of their property. He said that if someone was going up a ladder, and fell, they would be on his property.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that he understands Mr. Coleman's concerns.

A motion to accept closing the Public Hearing at 6:19 p.m. was made by Matthew Bennett and seconded by Debra Jung. Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. voted yes. Matthew Bennett voted yes. Debra Jung voted yes. Jarrett Lane voted yes. Patricia Maxwell voted yes. The motion carried.

### **New Business**

**1. 14 Lawrence Avenue-** Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that he apologizes for starting the Public Hearing early. He realizes that the notices stated the Public Hearing will start at 6:15, but he actually started it 10 minutes early.

Elizabeth Stiteler asked if the Board is going to make a decision on the Special Use Permit for 14 Lawrence Avenue now.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that the Board will discuss the application, but he doesn't know that the Board is ready to make any sort of decision at this meeting. There is still additional paperwork that is needed. The public is welcome to stay and listen to the discussion.

Elizabeth Stiteler stated that she just wants to reiterate that the Board members need to go out

and see the traffic situation during different times of day. Especially when a school bus is going down the road, and all of the traffic that is there.

Jarrett Lane asked the applicant if all 3 apartments are rented right now.

Tom Chenaille stated that not all 3 apartments are rented right now.

Matthew Bennett asked if he understood correctly that 2 of the 3 apartments are currently rented.

Tom Chenaille stated that that is correct.

Patricia Maxwell asked if in the last 10 years, all 3 apartments were rented at one time.

Tom Chenaille stated that when they bought the property, they had to evict tenants that lived there.

Patricia Maxwell stated that she is just wondering about the number of cars. The Board is looking to allow for the accommodation of 6 cars, and if there were more than 1 family in a 3-unit building, then there must have been parking in the back before. Otherwise, they wouldn't have had anywhere to park.

Tom Chenaille stated that the tenants would double up in the driveway, and at least 1 tenant didn't have a license.

Elizabeth Stiteler stated that the previous owner of the building got away with not doing things per Village Code. She understands that the current owner is looking to do things the right way, but she is concerned with children's safety, and having a usable sidewalk.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that the public all brought up valid points that the Board will discuss.

John Coleman asked if the property has been getting billed as a 3-unit building for water/sewer services all along.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that he does not know. That would be a question for the Village Office.

Clerk, Nikki Berezna, stated that she does not know off of the top of her head. However, it is less of a concern since the Village changed their rate structure years ago, and billing is based solely on consumption, and not the number of units. It is up to the landlord and tenants to decide

who is responsible for what. The Village bills the landlord directly.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. thanked everyone for their comments. He asked Mr. Chenaille if they could address some things. He stated that it sounds like there are property pins in the back. He asked Mr. Chenaille if the Board could get valid measurements to those pins, and some measurements to the house, so that the Board can make a firm determination of where the property lines are. He asked Mr. Chenaille if the applicant would be willing to consider putting up a fence in the back.

Tom Chenaille stated that that shouldn't be an issue.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that the fence would keep the visual impact down a bit, since there would be multiple cars back there. The Board will also need a SEQR form filled out, which he has a hard copy he can provide the applicant with. The Board will need that before they can make a final decision. He said that if the applicant could provide the Board with documented measurements to that property line, that would be helpful.

Rich Sitzer IV stated that he actually has the measurements. It is 81 feet from the front of the street.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that what he is looking for is measurements from the back of the house, to verify that it does have the turning clearance for cars to ingress and egress the property.

Jarrett Lane stated that he would strongly suggest getting a survey.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that the snow removal question is a very valid concern. He asked if the applicant had any sort of plan for dealing with snow back there. There are not really a lot of places to stack snow.

Tom Chenaille stated that he will have to talk with the applicant.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that the Board will need some fresh measurements just to verify that what the applicant has on paper, is going to work there. The Board will continue this discussion at their next meeting.

**2. 49-51 Mansion Street-** Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that the Board needs to continue their review of the Minor Subdivision application received from Colleen VanCuren & Mary Matousek, of 49-51 Mansion Street, LLC.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that the applicants recently were before the Zoning Board of Appeals for an Area Variance. The next step would be to schedule a Public Hearing. Both the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals agreed that they could schedule a Joint Public Hearing, to make it easier on the applicants, since both the Minor Subdivision and Area Variance have Public Hearing requirements. However, in order to move forward, the Board will need an actual stamped survey.

Mary Matousek stated that they are having a hard time getting the survey done. The closest estimate the surveyor provided was 8-10 weeks out.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that unfortunately, it sounds like scheduling a Public Hearing for next month probably would be too soon then.

Mary Matousek stated that unfortunately not, if the Board wanted the survey first.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that the Board is going to need the survey because the application is for a Lot Line Adjustment. He has heard that it is hard to get surveys done quickly. He said that the Board will table moving forward with the application until the survey is completed, and then a Public Hearing can be scheduled. He said that just so the applicant is aware, the Board will need 4 paper copies, and 1 mylar copy, because the survey needs to be filed with the County. The surveyor they use should be familiar with the process. He asked the applicant if they have a surveyor yet.

Mary Matousek stated that they are going with Kaaterskill Associates.

Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. stated that they should be aware of the process, but just so the applicant is aware, it is 5 full size copies, consisting of 4 paper, and 1 mylar. He apologized again for starting the Public Hearing for 14 Lawrence Avenue a little early. Certainly, all of the concerns brought up in relation to 14 Lawrence Avenue are valid ones and need to be addressed and looked at. He thanked everyone for taking the time to attend tonight's meeting.

### **Public Comment Period**

No public comments were offered.

A motion to adjourn the Planning Board meeting was made by Patricia Maxwell and seconded by Matthew Bennett. Chairman Van Valkenburg, Jr. voted yes. Matthew Bennett voted yes. Debra Jung voted yes. Jarrett Lane voted yes. Patricia Maxwell voted yes. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nikki Berezniak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Nikki Berezniak  
Clerk