TOWN OF NORTH EAST PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES
July 22, 2026

The regular meeting of the Town of North East Planning Board ("PB") took place on Wednesday, July 22, 2026 in the North East Town Hall located at 19 North Maple Avenue, Millerton, New York at 7:30 PM. Board members Chairman Culver, Scott Culbreth, Leslie Farhangi, Bill Kish, Chip Barrett, and Dan Sternberg were in attendance. Also in attendance were Chris Langlois, Meg Winkler (via Zoom), Ray Nelson, Milo Tsukroff, Juliete Clarie Mendoza, Gerardo Helguero, Kevin Irish, Chris Mayville, Mathew Ha, Julian A. Strauss, Elizabeth Strauss, Kay Dugon, Jane Taylor, Nate Miller, Lillian Simons, Lauren Simons, and Katie Cariello, planning board secretary.

Chairman Culver requested a motion to open the meeting at 7:30 PM.

Farhangi made a motion to open the meeting. Motion was seconded by Culbreth and passed unanimously.

Minutes
Chairman Culver requested a motion to accept the June 24, 2026 minutes. Kish made the motion. Motion was seconded by Sternberg and passed unanimously.

General Business

Olivet Academy
Public Hearing for Application for Special Permit @ 7:40 PM
425 Morse Hill Road
Parcels #133889-7169-00-202068, #7168-00-136877 & #7169-00-329047

Chairman Culver requested a motion to open the public hearing for Olivet Academy's Special Permit at 7:40 pm. Sternberg made the motion. Motion was seconded by Culbreth and passed unanimously.

Chairman Culver asked for Ray Nelson to provide a quick synopsis of the special permit the applicant was applying for so that the attendees would have all pertinent information for the hearing.

Nelson presented that the state education department has required that all schools have their documentation in their name, including the Certificate of Occupancy (CO), and that Olivet Academy is requesting this special permit to follow this new rule. Nelson shared that there are no building changes, they just are looking for a special use permit.

Chairman Culver asked if anyone in the audience would like to make a public statement. Milo Tsukroff (teacher at Olivet Academy), Elizabeth Strauss, and Julian Strauss (both neighbors to Olivet Academy) all spoke in favor of the board moving forward with the special permit request. The Chairman thanked them for providing their statements to the board.

Chairman Culver asked Attorney Langlois his thoughts on closing or continuing the special permit hearing, and Attorney Langlois said he thought the board could close it. Kish spoke and asked for the board to keep the hearing open to extend the window of time before the board would need to make their final decision on the special permit due to ambiguity in the waiver letter the applicant gave to the board.

Attorney Langlois agreed with Kish, but also posed a question back to the board of whether they believed they wouldn't be able to make their decision in the 62-day window, regardless of the applicant's waiver letter.

Kish asked for the status of the building department's action on the house. Nelson said that the Department of Health had an inspection from them and passed, but that they are now asking for SEQR part 1 to be signed off by the PB with their determination.

Attorney Langlois asked if there are any other agencies involved that need to sign off as well on this document, such as the Department of Health. He went on to say that the PB could circulate the document to the Department of Health and they typically have 30 days to object. The Department of Health could then use the PB's determination as their own.

Chairman Culver said he would like to circulate the SEQR part 1 to the Department of Health because it is a gray area for the board, and he'd like for everything to be as documented, and that the state is also asking for this to happen.

Attorney Langlois laid out the sequence of events for the SEQR part 1 process to move forward: the board would request to be the lead agency, 30 days would go by with no objection, and at that point forward, the board could submit their SEQR determination to the Department of Health for review. Chairman Culver agreed with this, and stated that he would like to keep the hearing for the special permit open to cover all parties and not start the 62-day window prematurely while they are taking care of the lead agency request and SEQR part 1 documents.

Attorney Langlois said that the applicant will also need to submit for SEQR part 2. Attorney Langlois also said that the SEQR determination should not only be reflected in the PB's minutes, but should be a separate resolution document that can be physically sent to the Department of Health. Chairman Culver agreed and said that the board should have as much documentation around this as possible.

Chairman Culver asked for a motion to continue the Olivet hearing to 7:35 pm at the August 12th, 2026 meeting. The motion was made by Culbreth and seconded by Sternberg.

GRJH, Inc./GRJH Grey House Apartment Conversion
Site Plan Application
181-185 US Route 44
Parcel #133889-7271-00-715245

Kish distributed a document of his notes to the board prior to the applicant presenting their updates.

The applicants presented their updated site plan information per the board's requests at the last meeting, including lighting and landscaping details, as well as where the septic is located on the property, and signage.

Kish went through his notes with the board and applicant, with the applicant being able to answer a few of these questions during the meeting, but others needing more time to review and gather information, such as how much wetlands fall on the property and if they pose any issues with the leach field.

The applicants asked how their engineers could provide answers to the questions posed during the meeting, or needed clarification, and Chairman Culver said they could email them to the board.

Chairman Culver asked if the applicants would like to be on the agenda for the August 12th meeting, and they said yes.

Public Comment
There was no additional public comment.

General Business

Kish began a discussion around the notes he provided to the board that evening and having a planning consultant available instead of PB members taking on work that could be done by a consultant.

Kish asked why couldn't the board have complicated applications handled by a planner for they do not have to do it themselves?

Chairman Culver said that this is a building that is already in place and complete, and that the applicant is not planning on changing the footprint of the property, but will be doing renovations inside the building that is not in the purview of the planning board.

Sternberg added that he thinks Kish has a good point that if there were a planning consultant that provided a half page report it would give the PB a starting place to review applications from. Kish asked if the town had an engineer on contract if an applicant wanted to go to them for initial review of their site plan. Chairman Culver asked Town Supervisor Chris Kennan, who was in the audience, if there was an engineer at this time and the supervisor said no.

Farghani remarked that the town is in need of housing and that this application would help the area in creating more units for rent. Chairman Culver also remarked that all the work that is going to happen is inside an existing building that was previously approved as a large-scale restaurant that had septic capabilities for upwards of 200 guests.

Attorney Langlois said that the board seems to be divided into two issues, one side being that the overall impact of the project will not produce a big impact. The second thing is compliance with the town's zoning code, and who is responsible for checking that certain items are up to code.

Sternberg said the board should default to hiring someone to review applications. Attorney Langlois said that at the first meeting with a new applicant the board could decide if they should bring on a consultant for the application process.

Discussion turned to what the threshold would be to have applicants update their projects to meet the town's new zoning codes. Kish used the example of an applicant coming to the PB wanting to change their sign, would the board then ask them to update their lights as well? Attorney Langlois said he did not have a full answer to that, but that it would feel wrong to have an applicant want to update a sign and then be asked to make more changes.

The board continued the discussion about what would constitute the need for a planning consultant, including what sort of updates, or changes, applicants bring during their site plan reviews. The board did not make a motion regarding this discussion.

Close of Meeting
Chairman Culver requested for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 PM.

Farhangi made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Culbreth and passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katie Cariello
Planning Board Secretary

APPROVED August 12, 2026