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County Reply – Mandatory Review of Local Planning Action as per NYS General Municipal Law §239-l, m, & n

Local Referring Board: Village of Chester Planning Board

Referral ID #: CHV 02-21M

Applicant: NY Onnuli Evangelical Church

Tax Map #: 104-5-11

Project Name: NY Onnuli Evangelical Church Site Plan

Local File #: PB-21-04

Proposed Action: Site Plan for demolition of existing historic church and new construction of 6700 sq. ft. church with associated parking, ramps, and appurtenant site improvements

Reason for County Review: Within 500 feet of NYS Route 94

Date of Full Statement: July 15, 2021

Comments:

The Department has received the above referenced site plan and has determined that the intended land use has the potential to cause inter-municipal and countywide impacts. Therefore, the following binding comments should be addressed and may not be acted contrary upon except by a majority plus one vote of the members of the Village of Chester Planning Board or by disapproving the action.

1. **Sewer Capacity:** To the extent that the proposed project will cause an increase in wastewater, and if the wastewater from the proposed project is proposed to be treated at the Harriman Wastewater Treatment Plant pursuant to the 1978 Moodna Inter-Municipal Agreement (as amended), (“Moodna Agreement”), the municipal board who made this referral to the Orange County Planning Department must affirm in any approval that sufficient sewer capacity exists within the municipality’s allocation of sewer under the Moodna Agreement to provide sewer service for the proposed project and state the basis for such reasoning. The receipt of such information shall not constitute the agreement of the County of Orange or Orange County Sewer District # 1 of the information provided as factual.

Additionally, this Department offers the following **advisory comments** for your consideration.

Lighting: The applicant’s proposed lighting is compliant with International Dark Sky Association standards, scaled to be appropriate for pedestrians, and lights only what is necessary. We commend the applicant for their attention to appropriate lighting design.

Environmental Constraints: The proposed project is in an area known to contain habitat suitable for endangered or threatened species, including the Northern Long-Eared Bat. We advise the Town and the applicant to ensure that best practices are followed during construction, in order to minimize any accidental takings of these species. Best practices are likely to include times for tree harvesting, among other measures.

Stormwater Management: The applicant is proposing a small increase in impervious surface onsite, paving what had been a graveled parking area and adding exterior ramps and sidewalks. 100% of the soils onsite are well-drained, and the site sits above a principal aquifer. We advise the Village and the applicant to work together to create a bioretention area onsite to filter out any stormwater contaminants from the proposed parking area, such as automotive fluids, before the stormwater reaches the aquifer.

See reverse side


Historic Resources: Although the current building has been in use for many years as a church and the project site is close to many historic resources, the building is not listed as a contributing structure to the Village of Chester historic district, nor is it listed as a historic building or site itself. The design of the existing building is in keeping with other historic churches in the area, specifically the First Presbyterian Church of Chester right up Main Street from the project site and contains design elements such as the stained-glass window over the entryway that are traditionally associated with historic church buildings. We advise the Village to work with the applicant to try to incorporate more of the traditional church design elements in a way that will serve the needs of the applicant; examples could include a more formal entrance, retention of the stained-glass window, or other measures.

Archeological Resources: The project site, as noted above, is in an area with many known historical, cultural, and archeological resources. As the proposed building conforms almost exactly to the existing building footprint, it is unlikely that archeological resources will be discovered. We advise the Village to include a note on the final site plan reviewing the procedure for preserving such resources if discovered during construction.

County Recommendation: Approval subject to modification as per comment # 1

Date: July 23, 2021

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Commissioner of Planning

As per NYS General Municipal Law 239-m & n, within 30 days of municipal final action on the above referred project, the referring board must file a report of the final action taken with the County Planning Department. For such filing, please use the final action report form attached to this review or available on-line at www.orangecountygov.com/planning.