

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

On September 3, 2026, the regular meeting of the Springfield Planning Board was held at the community center on County Highway 29A.

Present: Henry Miller, Denis Cimbali, Gretchen Sorin, Arlene Druse, Theresa Pullis, Jeannette Armstrong

Guests: Cindy Falk, Cooperstown's Deputy Mayor: Ian Cunningham, Violet and Christina Ackass, Maria Burr, Lauren Berglund, Daniel Zender, Jean Krause, Martha Oakley, Andrea House, Regina Oakes

Miller called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SORIN AND SECONDED BY PULLIS TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 6, 2026, MEETING.
Voted, carried, all votes aye.

Miller reported that he received three residential solar panel applications. Two of them are on roofs and one is in a side yard. He dealt with some lot line adjustments and two ZBA projects.

The lead agency paperwork went out from the planning board and Attorney Gottlieb around September first, and they have 10 days to respond. (September 11) The DEC Commissioner is going to decide who will be the lead agency on the Manochurian Project. That decision is expected to take four to six months.

Miller introduced Cindy Falk and said she was going to walk the board through what it might take to restore the effort to have Springfield Center placed on the national historic register. She said back in 2013, a massive document was created to nominate much of the town of Springfield to the National Register of Historic Places. At that time there was not a lot of community input. There wasn't good communication, and many people were concerned about what this meant. The idea garnered a lot of anxiety. If a town is eligible and nominated for the national register, then all the

protections provided by the national register apply. Right now, those benefits don't exist. The primary benefit right now is historic homeowner tax credits that are available through the State of New York and allow people to apply for up to 20% of the cost of the work they do on their house. There are all sorts of rules and free approvals to recoup those as a credit on their income tax.

Falk was attending the meeting on behalf of the Cooperstown Graduate Program. They have already nominated three buildings in Springfield Center. Those are the elementary school, St. Mary's Church and the Ferris House, now owned by Gretchen Sorin. Instead of focusing on the whole town, it has been decided to just concentrate on Springfield Center, since there is a larger concentration of buildings and the people seem more supportive. The Historic Preservation Office prefers that the whole area be covered instead of selecting individual properties here and there. Falk is interested in input and involvement from people in the town in this process, so it won't seem like it is being forced on anybody. The last effort was not locally driven, and many were against the idea. The planning board will have no responsibility since the graduate students will be doing the bulk of the work. They will be able to go back and look at the old descriptions and make sure they are still in effect, and that the properties look the same as they did before. Plus, now they have access to a tremendous number of electronic resources, particularly newspapers, that weren't accessible in 2013.

Falk wants the planning board to advise her as to whether they think this idea is worth pursuing or a waste of the community's time. She reminded the board that some people have the attitude and think that they are being told what they can do with their property, and what they can't do. She said this idea was absolutely not the case. As long as a person is not using federal or state money, or requires a federal or state permit, it doesn't affect what an individual property owner can do.

Structures that can be called historic are buildings that are at least 50 years old. Buildings are divided into contributing and non-contributing. A modern

structure wouldn't be considered contributing. During the last effort, 473 buildings were contributing and 502 were non-contributing. This effort will not prevent new development or new housing in the historic district, so there are no restrictions. Cooperstown has local ordinances in place that have caused people to be unable to do what they want with their property. The village established those rules. It is not because of the federal or state register designation. Being on both the state and federal register always goes together and are mostly designed as planning tools for the government. At the federal level, there's a commercial tax credit, but it does not apply to an individual homeowner, but someone who has a commercial property could take both federal and state credit. Commercial property equates to 40%. New York State also has a farm tax credit, but they don't have to be on the national register.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY CIMBAL AND SECONDED BY PULLIS TO RECOMMEND SUPPORTING THE HISTORICAL DESIGNATION FOR SPRINGFIELD CENTER AND DOING WHATEVER CAN BE DONE TO HELP. Voted, carried all votes aye.

In September, the town board starts preparing the 2027 budget and Miller made a request for the following four things: An audio recording system regarding minutes, since the Manochurian Project requires complete coverage and accuracy due to the professional participation of lawyers and engineers, etc. He considered using video as well but decided it was too expensive. He asked that the no-wake zone be moved from 200 feet to 1275 feet just to reach a 20-foot water depth. The town has launch areas at Lake and Pines, Bayshore, and Aalsmeer, and the Springfield Landing. Metal signs would be placed at these launch sites. He would like the town board to donate money to the Otsego Lake Association to help pay for buoys, since they are the people who take care of the buoys. His last request was for some software updates. The audio system cost is about \$3500, no-wake signs are about \$50-75 dollars each and \$1500 for the buoys and \$1000 for future maintenance since new ones will be needed, and the software costs will be around \$300.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY CIMBAL AND SECONDED BY DRUSE TO
CLOSE THE MEETING AT 7:30 PM. Voted, carried, all votes aye.

Jeannette Armtsrong, Town Clerk and Recording Secretary