



# VILLAGE OF COLONIE

## VILLAGE HALL

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## PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

**TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026**

**6:30 P.M.**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Village of Colonie Planning Commission was held at Village Hall, 2 Thunder Road, Albany, NY 12205, on Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026.

<b>ROLL CALL:</b>	Chairman:	Chris Dennis	Present
	Commissioners:	John Martin	Present
		Brittany Kendall	Present
		Kenny Hart	Absent
		Jim Splonskowski	Present
		Alison Curran	Present
		John Lemperle	Present
	Alternate:	Carl Kuentzel	Present
	Village Attorney:	Victor Caponera	Present
	Village Engineer:	R.J. Laberge	Present
	Village Liaison:	Frank Prevratil	Absent

Chairman Dennis opened the meeting at 6:30 P.M. Commissioner Kendall led the Pledge of Allegiance and requested that all electronic devices be turned off or muted. Chairman Dennis appointed Commissioner Kuentzel as a full voting member. The Commission reviewed the regular meeting minutes from April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Commissioner Martin made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Kuentzel seconded the motion.

VOTE: Unanimous to approve.

### **Victory Christian Church 29 Vly Road Site Plan Amendment**

Mark Pratt was present on behalf of Victory Church to request a site plan amendment to include 75 additional parking spaces to the site. He explained that approximately an acre and a half of land was purchased from 10 Cypress St in the Southeastern region of the site, and this is where the additional parking is proposed.

Engineer Laberge stated that he did not find any issues with the layout but noted that the final site plan will need to include dimensions and a grading plan to ensure that there is

adequate drainage. He added that there is a Village storm sewer on the site, and an easement should be obtained if there isn't one already. Engineer Laberge also mentioned that the application indicates there is outside storage, and Mr. Pratt explained that the existing shed was considered to be outside storage, and the shed will remain on the site. There will be no additional structures added to the site. Engineer Laberge indicated in his review that a few items were missing from the application, including the submission of the short EAF. The EAF was submitted as an additional item prior to the meeting. Attorney Caponera asked Engineer Laberge if he was comfortable with the location of the existing storm sewer, to which he said yes. Attorney Caponera requested that Mr. Nick Costa contact him to discuss filing a 30' utility easement. Mr. Pratt stated that they are also having a surveyor mark the actual bounds of the property as well, as proposed. Chairman Dennis requested a narrative from the applicant, including current hours of operation.

Commissioner Lemperle indicated that there are some discrepancies on the site plan, including additional parking that was added last summer when the roadway was re-paved. He stated that there appears to have been some clearing and additional parking added on the other side of the site and wondered if those spaces are included in the proposal. Mr. Pratt stated no, the new parking is at the rear of the site, and the proposed site plan should be reflective of the entire existing site. Commissioner Martin stated that there is landscaping shown on the plan, but there is no legend to indicate what is on the site. He requested that this be added.

Chairman Dennis suggested that Mr. Costa investigate adding sidewalks, as patrons would have to walk through the parking lots to get to the building entrances. It was discussed that a sidewalk could be added in front of the new parking lot, and across the Northeastern side of the building. Engineer Laberge asked where the handicapped parking and entrances are, as they are not accurately reflected on the plan. Mr. Pratt stated that there is a handicapped entrance at the Northeastern side of the building, and there are about 10 handicapped spaces at that location. There are also handicapped spaces in the existing parking lot. He added that the site plan will be updated to reflect this. Commissioner Kuentzel asked if there was green space removed to accommodate the new spaces that had been previously added, and Mr. Pratt said there were some trees, but parking was already allowed there. Chairman Dennis asked for confirmation that there was no additional wooded area removed to which Mr. Pratt confirmed. Chairman Dennis requested that the landscaping on the Southeastern side of the property is reviewed, as it appears to be sparse. Commissioner Kuentzel asked if a shed was added as there are now two according to Google Earth, and Mr. Pratt stated that there had always been two sheds on the site, but one has recently been moved. The applicant was advised that any site changes must be approved by the Planning Commissioner. Commissioner Splonskowski asked if there were going to be dumpsters, to which Mr. Pratt stated two dumpsters have recently been delivered. He added that they will be enclosed, and that this will be indicated on the site plan as well. Commissioner Splonskowski requested that Victory Christian Church be added to the application as the property owner.

The applicant will return to the Planning Commission with an updated site plan and application for further review.

**ABD Engineering/Cole's Collision**  
**1517-1529 Central Ave**  
**Site Plan Review**

Luigi Palleschi from ABD Engineering was present on behalf of the applicant to seek site plan approval for the proposed Cole's Collision annex at 1517 and 1529 Central Avenue. The applicant is looking to demolish the existing 12,000 square foot building at 1529 Central Avenue and construct a 10,000 square foot building. This proposal will meet side setbacks, and the building will be pushed away from Central Avenue, allowing for increased parking access, aisle width and green space in front of the site. The proposed building size has been reduced since the last Planning Commission review, resulting in a reduction in variances that will need to be requested from the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Palleschi explained that the parking requirement is now met due to the merging of parcels, and the elimination of the proposed retail use in the new building, as it will remain entirely Cole's operation. He stated that they will need to request a variance for the buffer to the residential area, as they are proposing 5' while Village code requires 25'. The buffer would include arborvitaes and a fence between the site and 5 Nicholas Drive. Currently, there is pavement directly up to the residential property line, and therefore, the proposed buffer would be an improvement. Mr. Palleschi added that there is an existing easement coming from Nash Place to the rear of commercial properties on Central Avenue, and a 24' access driveway has been requested to accommodate this, which impacts the size of the buffer. The proposal also includes a fence along the second row of parking, which would restrict access to Nash Place. Mr. Palleschi hoped for the application to be formally denied and referred to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a buffer variance before returning to the Planning Commission for further review.

Chairman Dennis asked for clarification on the proposed use in the new building, and Mr. Palleschi explained that it will be used by Cole's Collision, but through a sister company that provides different services such as calibration. He explained that there would be no leasing of the space. The applicant further explained what calibration is, and how there is little mechanical work to be done, but more electronic work, such as recalibrating sensors. Commissioner Curran asked what the three overhead doors will be used for, and Mr. Palleschi explained that they will be used for moving vehicles in and out of the building.

Attorney Caponera asked how the elevation changes will be addressed with the merging of parcels. Mr. Palleschi stated that there is currently a 10' setback which allows the grade to be changed quickly, and the building foundation will be used as a retaining wall on the West side of the building. He added that the grade will be cut down on the Eastern side to make the site more comparable to the current Cole's site by changing the level of the new finished floor. Chairman Dennis stated that a grading plan will need to be provided, as well as a finished landscaping plan. He added that the site plan doesn't include the full site. He requested building elevations in color in the next submission.

Chairman Dennis asked if the Commission would like to see the plan continue to develop at the Planning level or go to the ZBA in this state for their review.

Commissioner Martin asked if Attorney Caponera had reviewed the easement, to which Attorney Caponera said yes. He stated that the original easement indicates parking was available at the back of the lot of 5 Nicholas Drive for 1531 and 1533 Central Avenue. The new easement does not allow for parking but still allows for ingress and egress from the sites.

Chairman Dennis stated that they had met with the applicant and discussed making the front of the new building entirely greenspace, rather than offering parking. He suggested having one curb cut amongst the Cole's parcel, since both sites will be merged into one. Engineer Laberge suggested having one point of access to the Cole's property, removing the pavement in front of the new building, and having parking on the side of the new building with a walkway to the front. Chairman Dennis asked if the parking in front of the property is included in any agreements amongst the parcels at 1531 and 1533 Central Avenue. Mr. Palleschi stated that the curb cut at the current Cole's property has DOT restrictions on the entrance, so that it is right out only. He stated that the applicant is improving the parking and the front of the site of 1529 Central Avenue, as the parking is a bit further back and there is the addition of green space. He mentioned concerns about devaluing the property by removing Central Avenue frontage and access, and that the applicant is not looking to change the parking or existing curb cut. Commissioner Kendall stated that the application indicates there are plans for future expansion, and the applicant offered that they could potentially purchase the remaining buildings next door that have the same owner. Engineer Laberge mentioned that the Commission typically requires green space between the right-of-way and pavement where parking is in front of a building, and to accommodate this, the building would have to be slid further back while still considering the easement. Commissioner Martin suggested combining entrances and moving it West to potentially eliminate the restriction placed by DOT. Mr. Palleschi stated that the entrance would not align with the drive aisle, and Commissioner Curran mentioned concerns with large trucks then entering the site and crossing in front of the new building. She suggested closing the entrance in front of 1529 Central Avenue, and opening up the entrance at 1517 Central Avenue, so that cars could enter and still park in front, but it eliminates having two separate entrances for one site. She added that while cars in front of the site could make a left out onto Central Avenue, that would only be the case for those 8 spots, and one entrance may allow for better access to the entire site.

Commissioner Splonskowski asked why there are two entrance doors proposed to be on the new building. Mr. Palleschi stated that there should be more than one door in case of an emergency, but the floor plan and layout are still being worked on. Chairman Dennis reiterated that full site plan review will include building elevations and layouts, and Mr. Palleschi stated that they are hoping to be referred to the ZBA now, so that the applicant can come back in front of Planning for a further review. Attorney Caponera expressed concerns with this site plan going in front of the ZBA in its current state. Mr. Palleschi stated that they would prefer to go to ZBA with the current plan, since the project needs a

variance at the back of the site, and it would give the applicant more time to consider changing the front entrance before returning to the Planning Commission. If the ZBA does not grant the variance for the buffer, it would completely change the potential of the site. Engineer Laberge advised that in his opinion, the Planning Commission should generally be in agreeance on the basis of the site plan before making a referral. If the layout of the site changes, there could be the potential for needing another variance. Commissioner Curran asked if there would be an opening in the fence adjacent to the easement, and Mr. Palleschi said yes, but it will be completely closed off with a 12-foot gate. Mr. Palleschi offered that most of the Planning Commission's comments are regarding the front entrance, which would not impact on the need for the variance for the buffer on the back of the site. He added that the building would have to be made smaller if it needed to be shifted back, since the 24' driveway and easement have to be maintained. Commissioner Curran asked Mr. Palleschi what the current buffer is, and if the driveway is being widened. Mr. Palleschi said the current buffer is 0', so any buffer is an improvement, and the driveway is being widened slightly. Commissioner Curran asked for confirmation in what the buffer will consist of, and Mr. Palleschi stated it will be arborvitaes and a fence, and there cannot be a berm due to the size. Attorney Caponera stated that the 24' access driveway is a Village code requirement, so they could request a variance to lessen the driveway to create a greater buffer. He added that two-way access could still be possible with a smaller driveway. Commissioner Martin suggested removing one row of 14 parking spaces to allow the fence to be moved, increasing the buffer. Commissioner Curran noted that they would then be under the parking requirement, and Mr. Palleschi stated that the availability of parking is crucial to the business operation.

Commissioner Splonskowski agreed that the applicant should go in front of the ZBA with this plan, in case the ZBA does not grant the variance. Attorney Caponera stated that in his opinion, he is concerned that the ZBA will be uncomfortable reviewing the application knowing that the Planning Commission is not satisfied with the proposed plan. However, it is the applicant's decision if they would like to proceed with the ZBA's review at this point. Commissioner Curran stated that the applicant could likely reconfigure the site to allow for a buffer. Mr. Palleschi stated that the ZBA may recognize that the proposal includes an improved buffer to what is currently there, and Attorney Caponera explained the criterion ZBA must consider when deciding whether to grant a variance. He added that they will consider if there's any way to obviate the need for the variance. He also advised that once an application is made and denied by the ZBA, the plan would have to be changed in order to make a different request. Chairman Dennis, Engineer Laberge and Attorney Caponera agreed that the Planning Commission should conduct a further review of the site plan before referring the project to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Commissioners Curran, Martin, Lemperle and Kuentzel stated that the applicant should be referred to the ZBA if they feel strongly about their current site plan. Commissioner Kendall offered that the applicant should reconfigure the site before proceeding to the ZBA.

Commissioner Martin made a motion to deny the site plan application for Cole's Collision at 1517-1529 Central Avenue due to the lack of buffer between the site and the

adjacent residential property, in addition to the lack of green space in the front of the site. Commissioner Splonskowski seconded this motion.

VOTE: Unanimous to approve.  
Motion passed.

Sophie Belokopitsky, Nicholas Drive, stated that Cole's Collision is not following the rules regarding trailers and large vehicles coming out of the back entrance of the site into the residential area. She stated that they are not supposed to be using Nicholas Drive to get to Central Avenue. Ms. Belokopitsky advised that she has spoken with Code Enforcement Officer Steve Meservey, and he has spoken with the business, but it has not been corrected. She expressed concerns with commercial activity in the residential neighborhood. Chairman Dennis asked what time this is occurring, to which Ms. Belokopitsky said all day during working hours. Commissioner Splonskowski offered that the issue seems to be a Code Enforcement issue, and it appears Officer Meservey is already handling it.

Mike Capitula, Nicholas Drive, provided some aerial photos of the site, and expressed concern with the easement allowing vehicles to exit the commercial site into a residential area, which was not designed to accommodate commercial traffic. Commissioner Curran stated that the easement is already existing, and they are continuing to honor it. Engineer Laberge offered that there will likely be less vehicles using it since it will be gated off and only be used by 1517-1529 Central Avenue. Mr. Capitula expressed concern about this easement and the proposed buffer. Attorney Caponera and Engineer Laberge explained that the applicant is going to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance for the residential buffer.

## **Discussion**

Chairman Dennis explained that he is in receipt of an application to the Town of Colonie Planning Board regarding an annexation and expansion of a couple of sites just outside the Village boundary. They are required to make notification to the Village Planning Commission due to its proximity to the boundary. Attorney Caponera explained that MAGRE Holdings purchased 345 New Karner Road (Land Rover) and 347 New Karner Road (Genesis of Albany), and they are looking to merge the parcels to build new dealerships. They are also looking to acquire vacant land at 373 New Karner Road, which is in the Village. The Town of Colonie Planning Board requested comments, if any, from the Village Planning Commission, and requested their approval for the acquisition of 373 New Karner Road. The proposal includes a lease of 140 parking spaces in Kohl's parking lot (1814 Central Avenue) and the potential of temporarily leasing parking spaces in Price Chopper Plaza (1892 Central Avenue). Attorney Caponera mentioned that the lease for parking at Kohl's has been approved by the Village Building Department. A discussion was held regarding Price Chopper Plaza and the availability of parking at that site. Chairman Dennis offered that he does not have any comments for the proposed project, or issue with the proposed merger including the Village parcel of 373 New Karner Road. However, approval of the access road onto the entrance of 1814 Central

Avenue should be supplied to both the Town and Village of Colonie. A letter will be drafted and sent to the Town of Colonie Planning Board prior to their meeting on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

Trustee Lockart asked if the merger of 373 New Karner Road will have any impact on the taxable status of the land for the Village. Attorney Caponera stated that the land is remaining in the Village, and there will be no impact on Village taxes.

A motion was made by Commissioner Splonskowski to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kuentzel.

VOTE: Unanimous to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hannah Curran  
Deputy Village Clerk/Treasurer  
Planning Coordinator  
Village of Colonie