

Town of Manchester Planning Board Meeting Minutes

July 15, 2025 – 7:00pm

Present: Board Members Jefferey Flower, Lee Sanders, Tammy Worden, Christine Ciardi, and Pauline DeCook; Chairman Scott VanAken; Code Enforcement Officer Marty Barnett; and Secretary Laurel Pitcher.

Absent: Board Member Steve Buerman.

Also Present: Virginia Glover, Nancy Whittaker, Geane Aldrich, Robert Johnston, Jeff Roberle, Richard Vienna, and Kristy Aldrich.

Application #4669-25: Consider Use Variance and Site Plan #4669-25 submitted by Robert Johnston who is requesting to put a brewery and restaurant on property located at 1755 Pioneer Rd, tax map no. 44.03-1-22.000 in a LI district pursuant to Chapter 325 Section 325.62 + 325-22.3.

Chairman Scott VanAken began by reading the public hearing notice. Then he asked the applicant to give an overview of his plans for the property. Robert talked about his plans to connect to the Village of Shortsville’s sewer. He also said he brought in a drawing of the layout for the proposed brewery and says he wants to restore the old building to something useful. Richard Vienna, who works for the Town of Manchester and Village of Shortsville water departments, said that they’ve been in communication, and the applicant plans to tap a new water line. He said this has all been approved by the EPA. Rich also said that the Manchester/Shortsville joint sewer is able to handle the additional load that would be presented by this project.

Chairman VanAken reviewed questions from the Ontario County Planning Board and the Ontario County Review Committee as shown below:

Use Variance Response:

CRC Comment

1. If the Town is interested in allowing this type of use in the LI (Light Industrial) zoning district, the Town Board could consider amending their zoning code to update the list of allowable or specially permitted uses.

CPB Comment

1. Under the current zoning code, is a brewery an allowable use in the LI (Light Industrial) zoning district? Could it be considered an “agricultural and food processing, or packaging plant use?”

Site Plan Response:

Comments

1. Will any spaces be marked as ADA-accessible parking spaces?
2. What are the hours of operation? Will there be outdoor music?
3. How will waste (from the brewing process) be disposed of? Will there be a pickup service? Proper disposal needs to be ensured in order to reduce stormwater quality and quantity impacts.
4. Is any of the proposed work (parking areas) in wetlands/flood zones? The location of any NYSDEC Informational Wetlands, FEMA Floodplains, FEMA Flood zoned on the parcel should be shown on the site plan.
5. The proposed parking areas look to be in close proximity to the Canandaigua Outlet. The referring board may want to consider additional fencing/screening to deter vehicles/individuals from going into the outlet.

CRC Comments

1. The parking area is adjacent to the Canandaigua Outlet. Are there any plans for stormwater management? The County Planning Board has an interest in protecting the integrity of Ontario County’s natural resources, such as lakes, streams, forests and other natural areas, as many of these resources cross municipal boundaries, impact tourism and residents’ perception of quality of life, and contribute to the local economy.
2. What is the first floor elevation of the existing building and is it sufficiently above the base flood elevation? In considering the flood risk, the Planning Board and applicant may want to know the elevation of the parking area in relation to the base flood elevation.

CPB Comments

1. The location of any NYSDEC Informational Wetlands, FEMA Floodplains, FEMA Flood zones on the parcel should be shown on the site plan in order to document the applicant’s awareness of the likelihood of future risk.
2. Do the completed or proposed activities in the wetland require an Article 24 permit, general or otherwise?

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Code Enforcement Officer Marty Barnett said the property isn't in wetlands, but he'd like to see the floodplains delineated on the maps. Marty also said that an Article 24 permit is not needed for this project. Robert Johnston said he plans to bring in more detailed plans in the future; he just wanted to get The Board's initial thoughts and see if this project is possible before moving forward.

Chairman VanAken asked how the applicant plans to dispose of waste from the brewery. Mr. Johnston introduced Jeff Roberle who will be managing the brewing. Jeff said that after the beer is made, the spent grains go to local farmers to feed animals. He said that the rest of the process is cleaning the fermenters out and that there isn't much waste overall. Robert said that he currently co-owns a restaurant in Canandaigua, and talked about some of their waste processing there. He said that they have an oil separator in the kitchen that gets pumped out on a monthly basis to avoid backups in the city pipes. It sounded like something similar could happen with this project as well, if needed.

Chairman Scott VanAken began discussing the zoning classification of the property. He said it was rezoned from General Industrial to Light Industrial in 2023, and Robert purchased the property in 2020. Robert mentioned that he wasn't aware that the zoning district had changed until recently. Board member Tammy Worden asked why it was rezoned, and Chairman VanAken said he thinks it was caught up in rezoning another area nearby. This Board wasn't involved in that decision, but the Town Board may be able to offer more insight.

Chairman VanAken read from Robert's application, specifically the section talking about the property's ability to yield a reasonable return under the current zoning district. Robert's application said that the previous zoning (General Industrial) allowed them to use the property as a contractor or building material storage yard. Under the new district (Light Industrial), however, these uses are not permitted. In his application, Robert also said they've been trying to lease the property since 2023, and they've only had one company interested. He said there's very little industrial potential for the property, but there are still significant expenses (taxes, insurance, water, electricity). That's why he's looking to head in a different direction.

A brief discussion was had about the Town of Manchester's current zoning code. Board Member Christine Ciardi noted that there aren't any neighbors close by that would be disturbed by the proposed actions. There is one nearby residence, but Marty Barnett said that it was condemned many years ago. Robert mentioned that his building was built around 1850 and noted that he wants to preserve the history there.

The Planning Board reviewed types of zoning districts. They said that a commercial zone would allow for a brewery. Board Member Christine Ciardi noted that beer will be manufactured on site, if this project proceeds as planned. Board Member Tammy Worden asked the applicant if he plans to be a stop on the railroad, and Robert said that would be something to consider in the distant future, but it's not currently planned that way. Tammy noted that the Light Industrial zoning classification includes the use of the rail system.

Scott VanAken asked if there were any comments or questions from the public, and nobody came forward.

A motion was made by Tammy Worden to close the public hearing for Use Variance and Site Plan #4669-25 submitted by Robert Johnston who is requesting to put a brewery and restaurant on property located at 1755 Pioneer Rd, tax map no. 44.03-1-22.000 in a LI district pursuant to Chapter 325 Section 325.62 + 325-22.3. Motion seconded by Jefferey Flower. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Board Member Lee Sanders asked Robert if he plans to add a barrier to the outlet so that people can't access it and get hurt. Robert said that his insurance is already much more expensive than he originally expected for the property. He said that it's going to be tough to put a fence in because there's rubble at that spot, but they do want to put something there. When the property is transformed into the brewery/restaurant, the insurance will likely go up quite a bit more, so making sure there's a barrier is important to keep the price as reasonable as possible. Chairman VanAken suggested a stone fence, and Robert said they will certainly have something there. Robert also said that he plans for it to be 3 feet tall or more, so that kids can't climb over it. Robert said that he may even put something at the end of the parking lot to prevent vehicles from going too far. Board Member Jefferey Flower said he thinks that the insurance company will likely require some sort of safety precaution in place before the

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brewery/restaurant can open. Robert noted that he wants to keep everyone safe, and that they want to keep things clean for the environment too.

Chairman Scott VanAken asked the applicant if he plans to have a sign for the business. Robert mentioned a few ideas, including putting something at the entrance or on the building, but ultimately decided that would be something to apply for at a later date.

Chairman VanAken noted that 15 neighbors were notified of the public hearing. 2 of these neighbors were in attendance. A brief discussion was had where the Board members said they think this is a really good use of the property. Another brief discussion was had about how this application should proceed. It was decided that this application will not need further review from the Zoning Board of Appeals or the Town Board. However, the Planning Board would like to recommend that the Town Board add additional uses to the Light Industrial District classification.

The Planning Board expanded on the discussion of allowable uses in the Light Industrial District, including agriculture and food processing. Because this application includes approved uses of agriculture and food processing, a motion was made by Christine Ciardi to approve Preliminary Site Plan #4669-25 submitted by Robert Johnston who is requesting to put a brewery and restaurant on property located at 1755 Pioneer Rd, tax map no. 44.03-1-22.000 in a LI district pursuant to Chapter 325 Section 325.62 + 325-22. Motion seconded by Tammy Worden. All voted “Aye.” Motion carried.

A motion was made by Tammy Worden to recommend that the Manchester Town Board consider updating the Light Industrial zoning district to include breweries, wineries, and any other potential uses that may have been overlooked in the list of allowable or specially permitted uses. Additionally, the Planning Board would like the Town Board to review why the zoning district of 1755 Pioneer Rd, tax map no. 44.03-1-22.000 was changed in 2023 from General Industrial to Light Industrial. Motion seconded by Lee Sanders. All voted “Aye.” Motion carried.

A motion was made by Jefferey Flower to accept the SEQR Part 1 as written for Site Plan #4669-25 submitted by Robert Johnston who is requesting to put a brewery and restaurant on property located at 1755 Pioneer Rd, tax map no. 44.03-1-22.000 in a LI district pursuant to Chapter 325 Section 325.62 + 325-22.3. Motion seconded by Pauline DeCook. All voted “Aye.” Motion carried.

Previous Minutes:

A motion was made by Lee Sanders to approve the June 17, 2025 meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Tammy Worden. All voted “Aye.” Motion carried.

A motion was made by Pauline DeCook to adjourn the meeting at 7:45pm. Motion seconded by Tammy Worden. All voted “Aye.” Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott VanAken
Chairman, Planning Board

Laurel Pitcher
Recording Secretary