



Columbia County, New York  
**Planning Board**

*VIA EMAIL ONLY*

19 August 2025

Ms. Elizabeth Brutsch, Town of New Lebanon Planning Board Chair  
Mr. Tony Murad, Town of New Lebanon Zoning Board of Appeals Chair  
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RE: Referral #25-037 – Tilden Project LLC /Tilden Commons  
Area Variance, Special Use Permit, Site Plan Review

Dear Chairperson Brutsch and Chairperson Murad:

Pursuant to the provisions of New York State General Municipal Law (NYSGML) §239-l and §239-m, please find the Columbia County Planning Board (CCPB) recommendation concerning the request of Tilden Project LLC/Tilden Commons for an Area Variance, Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review. The proposed action is construction of a mixed-use residential and commercial development, comprised of one (3) story multi-family residential structure with related amenities, and a retail grocery store use. The site is located at 538 US Route 20 in the Town of New Lebanon, New York.

Pursuant to NYSGML §239-l and §239-m, the CCPB reviews proposed actions for intercommunity or county-wide considerations and shall recommend Approval, Modification or Disapproval of the proposed action, or report that the proposed action has no significant county-wide or intercommunity impact. Upon recommendation of Modification or Disapproval, "...the referring body shall not act contrary to such recommendation except by a vote of majority plus one of all the members thereof". The CCPB may make informal comments to the referring body on the proposed action with any of the recommendations made.

Recommendation: APPROVAL

The CCPB finds that this proposed action will likely result in positive county-wide or intercommunity impacts in terms of increasing the amount of housing stock while catering to the growing demand for rental housing and shifting demographic. This is consistent with Columbia County development policies. The Town of New Lebanon Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals may take final action with a simple majority vote. The basis for this recommendation is the following considerations set forth in NYSGML, Article 12B § 239-l. Coordination of certain municipal zoning and planning actions; legislative intent and policy:

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*(a) compatibility of various land uses with one another;*

*(g) official municipal and county development policies, as may be expressed through comprehensive plans, capital programs or regulatory measures; and*

*(h) such other matters as may relate to the public convenience, to governmental efficiency, and to the achieving and maintaining of a satisfactory community environment.*

The demand for various types of affordable housing has been identified in the Town of New Lebanon and throughout the County. To that end, the County Board of Supervisors established the Columbia County Housing Task Force to identify needs, discuss policy and address ways to increase affordable and workforce housing throughout the County. It is important to note that availability of a variety of housing types plays an important role in the County economy, by supporting business attraction and retention and enhancing the quality of life. Development of affordable housing is supported by the *Columbia County Housing Brief* linked below:

<https://rurallhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/Columbia-County-Housing-Brief-3.10.22-FINAL.docx-1.pdf>

The site is centrally located in the Town with frontage on US Route 20. The existing commercial structure will be replaced, and the fabric of the neighborhood will be altered as a result of this project. The retail grocery store will have frontage on the highway consistent with existing development and character along US Route 20 in this vicinity. The residential use will be to the rear of the store with parking and community open space.

The addition of a grocery store to this corridor has long been a goal of the town. In the Town of New Lebanon Comprehensive Plan 2021 Update “Community Survey” it is ranked highly and identified as a very important need. Providing housing opportunities and affordable rental housing is identified as a goal in the plan as well. Limited housing options, housing cost and lack of rental units in the town are identified as barriers for the Town vitality. This project will likely have positive impacts through the creation of new rental housing and the establishment of a grocery store.

This mixed-use development is in close proximity to the commercial corridor along US Route 20. In addition to the grocery store, the project includes community open space, and will be served by on-lot waste water treatment system and existing well for water supply. It is expected that the target population segment will find this type of housing arrangement attractive and compatible with their lifestyles. It is anticipated that residents will likely support existing businesses in the area and that the project will potentially serve as catalyst for further economic development.

Therefore, CCPB recommends APPROVAL, and the Town of New Lebanon Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals may take final action with a simple majority vote.

The following informal comments are offered for consideration:

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Comments:

1. Access: The CCPB notes that proposed improvements to provide access off US Route 20 require review and approval from the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT).
2. Sidewalk: The CCPB suggests that the full extent of any required sidewalks, including any proposed along US Route 20 be delineated on the site plan.
3. Emergency Access: The CCPB notes that the local Fire Chief reviewed the site plans for adequacy of emergency access.
4. Water and Sewer: The CCPB notes that the proposed development includes use of an existing on-lot well for the water supply and a proposed on-lot wastewater treatment system which require review and approval from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), NYS Department of Health, Columbia County Department of Health, and compliance with the Columbia County Sanitary Code.
5. Stormwater: The proposed construction activity will involve soil disturbance of one (1) or more acres and will require preparation of a Stormwater Pollution and Prevention Plan in accordance with NYSDEC regulations.
6. Grocery Store: The CCPB notes that the proposed grocery store may require review and approval from various county, state and federal entities, which may include Columbia County Department of Health, Columbia County Weights and Measures, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, NYS Liquor Authority, and USDA.

The recommendation of Approval is contingent upon the applicant complying with all necessary reviews and approvals from the Town of New Lebanon, Columbia County, New York State and other regulating agencies having jurisdiction. Please note that within thirty (30) days after final action is taken, the Town of New Lebanon Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals shall file a report of the final action it has taken with the CCPB. For additional information please contact Columbia County Planning Department at 518.828.3375 or [patrice.perry@columbiacountyny.com](mailto:patrice.perry@columbiacountyny.com).

Sincerely yours,



Timothy Stalker, Chair

cc: The Honorable Matt B. Murrell, Chairman of the Columbia County Board of Supervisors - [matt.murell@columbiacountyny.com](mailto:matt.murell@columbiacountyny.com)  
The Honorable Tistrya Houghtling – [supervisortownofnewlebanon.com](mailto:supervisortownofnewlebanon.com)  
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