



PZ Clerk <pzclerk@townofnewlebanon.com>

Fwd: Questions about the Tilden Project

1 message

Elizabeth Brutsch <nlpb.brutsch@gmail.com>

Mon, Jul 14, 2025 at 9:03 AM

To: Stephanie Ferradino <stef@ferradinofirm.com>, Ted Salem <n1zba.salem@gmail.com>, PZ Clerk <pzclerk@townofnewlebanon.com>

Courtney, Please file this with the Tilden Project file. I will circulate to the members.

Ted and Stef, Please see below for your information and reference. I bring to your particular attention Amy's comment regarding interactions between Ted and Tony at the July ZBA meeting.

Thanks,
Elizabeth

Planning Board Chairperson
Town of New Lebanon

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Amy Brueckmann** <amyb@qpa-inc.com>

Date: Sun, Jul 13, 2025 at 10:21 PM

Subject: Questions about the Tilden Project

To: NLPB.Brutsch@gmail.com <NLPB.Brutsch@gmail.com>

Cc: Amy Brueckmann <amyb@qpa-inc.com>

Hi Elizabeth and All Planning Board Members:

Everyone would like a grocery store and additional housing in the town however is this an appropriate project to put on the one small parcel of land where places for the children living there are limited and are right on a parking lot?

Does the current SEQR form match up with this Project? It is very difficult to comment because there are many revisions that have been made to the project.

It seems to be an overstatement that New York State requires the project be larger. It has been made larger because the numbers did not work or as was stated, the smaller 28 housing units did not “pencil out”. The budget for this project must include both the build out of water and sewer, which pushes the total cost up, but also the cost of the parcel with an existing building that must be demolished.

I have been to a number of meetings about the New Tilden Project and have compiled a number of questions that I feel are extremely important to get answers to prior to considering this project:

I have not seen the finalized Project design yet and can imagine that it is lovely . However, I am not sure that this project is a fit for the potential amount of people that will be living in the housing units and people that are coming to shop at the grocery store. We need to keep in mind the safety of any children, families and Seniors that may be living in this housing project . The amount of traffic that this will bring is a potential danger for the children and Seniors. It has been mentioned that there will be one elevator in the housing project, which is great. It is hard to image the younger children trying to get to their homes on the third floor .

Again, there are concerns about the children. This site plan raises issues on the safety of the children with the commercial components of the traffic all around the building. Is there a safe separation of the traffic from the children including to access play areas without crossing a parking lot?

- Are there storage units for the tenants?
- Have you received the information back from the Water Test about the impact on the abutters on using the existing Tilden well as a source of water for the 12,000 square foot grocery store and 41 Unit housing ?
- If the Zoning Board makes an exception to the zoning rules for the Tilden Project, how does allowing this much larger housing unit and grocery store on a 3 acre lot impact holding future projects to the current Zoning Rules?
- My current understanding is that a 12,000 square foot Grocery Store and a 41 Housing Unit is being requested:

13 One Bedroom

15 Two Bedroom

13 Three Bedroom

At the meeting it was mentioned the total project cost is \$25,000,000. The project funding will include a number of funding programs from NYS Homes and Community Renewal.

Breaking out the mentioned cost of the grocery of \$ 3 million leaves \$22,000,000 for the housing part of the project. The developer stated the cost was \$315 a square foot. From these comments the average cost per housing unit will be over \$500,000.

- My understanding is that Code says that this project will need about 240 Parking Spots:

Handicapped Parking

Apartment Unit Parking (how many cars will be allowed per unit and how will this be managed)

Grocery Parking

Parking for Guests of the people that live there

Required Islands in the parking lot

- Does this project meet all of the required setbacks? At the Zoning meeting a request was put in for a variance for the setback. Now however, it is being said that the setbacks are being met. What has changed?
- Has the **DEC (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation)** been notified that this building will be on an aquifer? If so, what is their feedback on this?
- What is the **DOT's (New York State Department of Transportation)** input on this project? Have they been notified? Does the DOT need to review this project before it can move forward? If so, if the Hannaford that was proposed a number of years ago had to have a turning lane, is this a requirement for the new grocery store?
- Should this project be a negative declaration for SEQR? It seems the project has some rather large impacts on the environment.

- Has the provider of the **electrical services** been consulted about the additional electrical usage that will be needed? Have they committed to ensuring that these electrical services are available?
 - Who will be managing the Building? Will there be a building Manager on site to ensure that cleanliness of the building, the noise levels, security of the tenants, the cleanliness of the dumpster units so as not to encourage visits from the local wildlife (bears, skunks, racoons, etc.)?
 - The funding for the Housing Units cannot fund the commercial space (Grocery Store). Where is the money coming from to fund the grocery store.
 - What about Pets? Are they going to be allowed in the building? If so, is there an area to accommodate them?
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- There were questions asked at the Zoning Board Meeting about the five items that must be asked. Here are two that really stood out:
 - Will this impact the Physical Environment of the Neighborhood – This answer is Yes, this totally changes the neighborhood to have such a large building in such a small town with potentially an additional 150 people living on three acres of land.
 - Will there be a noise study for the neighbors and how will the noise levels be monitored?
 - It will also have a potential impact on the school with an additional influx of children.
 - The proposed grocery store is said to have hours from 6AM to 11PM. This will add traffic and additional noise during hours that are generally quiet. This definitely changes the character of the town by adding this large number of additional people in the center of a town that has no existing public water and sewer.

 - Is this a Self-Created Hardship? This seems to be a self-created hardship. The Zoning Laws were in place when this property was purchased. The hardship has been caused because the developers have chosen to develop this parcel in a specific manner that is inconsistent with the zoning and the parcel size. They now want to increase the number of the housing units beyond the zoning limit of 28 Units which was the original submission as a senior project . The addition of a grocery store in addition to the residential adds a series of other issues on this size parcel. The construction budget has high costs due to the need for infrastructure. The sewer was stated as $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million. That is information that should have been researched before purchasing the property, but the owner has other uses that could be

pursued in compliance with the zoning. The large build out on this parcel is seemingly increasing costs above and beyond what an affordable project can support based on the parcel and the zoning.

Now it appears that the town is being held hostage due to the high cost of the project and what was potentially required by town zoning is no longer a consideration.

During the 7/1/2025 Zoning Board meeting, there was no Attorney present as there had been at the other meetings. There was a question that the Zoning Board members that were not recused could not answer. The Zoning Board members had to refer to the recused member for answers. Is this the normal protocol?

- How will the town protect the existing abutting homeowners? Will the town require the developer to post a bond ensuring any future water issues are paid for by the developer and will an attorney in conjunction with an expert determine the required bond amount and time period? The Town is discussing a proposed Water and Sewer facility but it does not seem timely for this project nor is there any certainty of that funding to avert potential future problems this project may cause to the existing aquifer.
- A project of this nature could potentially lower the value of the homes of the abutters. Will the taxes that the abutters pay (both Land and School) be lowered if this happens?
- Are the owners of the project going to ask for a payment in lieu of taxes from the town? My understanding is that Taxes are supposed to be based on the full value. A project projected to cost \$25 million would be anticipated to generate a large tax levy but would seem contrary to achieving affordable rents.

These are just the preliminary questions I have after attending the meetings so far.

We appreciate your help with helping to make sure that these concerns have been voices.

Thank You,

Amy Brueckmann

7/15/25, 6:48 PM

Town of New Lebanon Mail - Fwd: Questions about the Tilden Project

Margaret Brueckmann