

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
VILLAGE OF WARWICK  
MARCH 16, 2026, 11:30 A.M.  
SPECIAL MEETING**

**11,161**

The Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Warwick was held on Monday, March 16, 2026, at 11:30 a.m. in Village Hall, 77 Main Street, Warwick, NY. Present was: Mayor, Michael J. Newhard. Trustees: Barry Cheney, Carly Foster, Thomas McKnight, and Mary Collura. Also, present was Village Clerk, Raina Abramson, Village Board Attorney, Isabelle Hayes, Planning Board Attorney, Elizabeth Cassidy, and Building and Planning Clerk, Kristin Bialosky.

Mayor Newhard called the meeting to order and led in the Pledge of Allegiance. The Village Clerk held the roll call.

**Discussion**

1. Proposed revisions to [Village Code Chapter 145 Zoning](#) as it relates to Special Use Permits

Village Attorney Isabelle Hayes and Planning Board Attorney Liz Cassidy opened the special meeting by explaining that the meeting was scheduled to discuss procedural challenges arising under the current zoning framework for Special Use Permits. Ms. Cassidy outlined that the Village Code presently requires certain projects to obtain approvals from multiple boards, including site plan approval from the Planning Board and a Special Use Permit from the Village Board. She noted that this structure can create inefficiencies, additional costs for applicants, and longer project timelines, even for relatively small developments. Ms. Hayes added that streamlining the process by converting some Special Use Permits to Conditional Uses would allow the Planning Board to conduct a more unified review, while still preserving public hearing requirements and environmental review safeguards. Both attorneys emphasized that the intent was not to reduce oversight, but rather to clarify procedures, avoid duplication, and reduce the potential for inconsistent determinations or legal challenges.

Mayor Newhard facilitated the discussion and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to better understand how the current process affects applicants, staff, and the community before considering any formal amendments to the zoning code. He acknowledged that the issue had arisen in connection with recent applications that required multiple approvals and expressed interest in identifying ways to make the review process more predictable and efficient.

Building and Planning Clerk Kristin Bialosky spoke in favor of streamlining the Special Use Permit process based on her day to day experience working with applicants and coordinating reviews. She explained that the current structure often requires applicants to obtain approvals from both the Planning Board and the Village Board, which can create confusion, delays, and extended project timelines. She referenced a recent situation in which an applicant sought to modify a previously approved project by adding an additional unit, noting that the process required separate actions by multiple boards that could have been handled more efficiently through a unified site plan review. She also cited other projects as examples of how coordinating the timing of reviews and public hearings between two boards can be difficult. Ms. Bialosky stated that streamlining would not remove Village Board involvement, as the Board could still participate in environmental review as an interested agency and provide input on proposals. She noted that the Planning Board already

conducts public hearings, evaluates site specific considerations such as screening, refuse placement, and neighborhood compatibility, and applies detailed zoning criteria during review. She questioned what additional benefit is gained by requiring applicants to appear before both boards to discuss similar issues and described the practical challenges of scheduling joint or consecutive hearings, explaining that aligning meeting calendars can significantly prolong the approval process. Overall, she expressed the view that allowing more applications to be reviewed as Conditional Uses by the Planning Board would provide a more predictable and efficient process for applicants while maintaining appropriate public input and regulatory oversight.

Trustee Foster expressed support for exploring revisions that would streamline approvals, noting that requiring applicants to appear before multiple boards can be burdensome and may discourage housing development or reinvestment in existing properties. She indicated that allowing the Planning Board to handle certain uses as Conditional Uses could still provide adequate scrutiny through site plan review and public hearings.

Planning Board Attorney Elizabeth Cassidy stated that land use outcomes should primarily be guided by clearly defined zoning districts rather than by procedural requirements regarding which board reviews an application. She explained that if certain areas of the Village are intended to remain predominantly single-family in character, those areas could be designated through more specific zoning classifications. Ms. Cassidy emphasized that the proposed streamlining effort was focused on improving procedural efficiency and reducing duplication of review, rather than expanding permitted uses. She noted that establishing more tailored zoning districts could preserve legislative control over land use policy while allowing the Planning Board to administer project-level review more efficiently.

Trustee Cheney reflected on the historical context of the Village's zoning framework, noting that prior to the 2009 zoning revisions, residential districts were more specifically defined. He explained that the adoption of a single residential zoning district permitted one- and two-family dwellings throughout much of the Village, while larger multifamily uses were intentionally subject to Special Use Permit review by the Village Board. He stated that this structure ensured that higher-intensity development proposals would be evaluated by the elected legislative body, which is directly accountable to Village residents. Trustee Cheney expressed concern that expanding Planning Board authority through the conversion of Special Use Permits to Conditional Uses could shift significant land use decisions from elected officials to appointed board members, creating what he described as a greater separation between residents and the decision-making process. He illustrated his concern by describing hypothetical scenarios in which larger apartment developments could be proposed within established residential neighborhoods.

Trustee Collura discussed the importance of public input and neighborhood character, particularly in relation to multifamily housing proposals. She indicated that while

streamlining may be beneficial in some cases, the Village Board should retain jurisdiction over projects with greater potential impacts.

Ms. Cassidy and Ms. Hayes further explained that under the proposed framework, the Planning Board would serve as lead agency for environmental review in more instances, which could simplify coordination and reduce delays. They also noted that clearer procedural language in the code could help avoid disputes over the order of operations for Special Use Permits, site plan approval, and variances.

Village Clerk Raina Abramson discussed the practical challenges staff encounter when administering the current Special Use Permit process. She explained that it is often unclear what level of detail the Village Board is expected to review at the initial stage of an application, particularly when project plans continue to evolve during subsequent Planning Board meetings. She noted that as site plan details change over time, applicants may be required to return to the Village Board for further consideration, creating uncertainty for both staff and applicants regarding the proper sequence of approvals. Village Clerk Abramson also raised questions about what materials should be required at the outset, such as renderings or preliminary site plans, and how advisory reviews, including those of the Historic District Review Board, should be coordinated when a final site plan has not yet been developed. She stated that this lack of procedural clarity can make it difficult for staff to guide applicants through the process and can result in applications being revisited multiple times by different boards. Village Clerk Abramson emphasized the need for clearer direction in the code to reduce confusion, improve coordination between boards, and provide applicants with a more predictable review process.

During the discussion, alternatives were considered, including retaining Special Use Permit review by the Village Board for certain categories of uses while delegating others to the Planning Board. The Board also discussed the possibility of joint public hearings or administrative adjustments to improve coordination between boards.

The Board also discussed concerns regarding three family dwellings currently operating within the Village and the need to determine whether such uses are lawfully established pre-existing nonconforming uses or have been unlawfully created over time. It was noted that this issue raises both zoning and safety considerations, particularly where additional dwelling units may have been added without formal approvals or updated site review. Discussion included the potential need for the Village to investigate the status of these properties and require owners of unlawfully established three family uses to seek appropriate approvals, including Special Use Permit review, in order to ensure compliance with zoning requirements and life safety standards. Trustees acknowledged that clearer procedures for addressing these situations would be beneficial for both enforcement and long term planning purposes.

By the conclusion of the work session, the Board did not take formal action but reached a general consensus that further review of the proposed changes was necessary. Trustees

agreed to examine a draft list of uses that could potentially be converted from Special Use Permits to Conditional Uses and to continue the discussion at a future meeting. It was also understood that applications currently in progress would continue to be reviewed under the existing zoning procedures until any amendments were formally adopted.

Trustee Foster and Trustee McKnight departed approximately fifteen minutes prior to the meeting adjournment.

**Adjournment**

A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Collura, seconded by Trustee Cheney and carried to adjourn the special meeting at approximately 1:00 p.m.

The vote on the foregoing **motion** was as follows:     **APPROVED**

Trustee Cheney Aye     Trustee Foster Absent     Trustee Collura Aye

Trustee McKnight Absent     Mayor Newhard Aye

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Jennifer Mante, Deputy Village Clerk