

City of Olean

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

P.O. Box 668, 101 East State Street, Room 212
Olean, New York 14760, (716) 376-5683

Minutes for Zoning Board Meeting held Wednesday, June 24th, 2026 **Olean Municipal Building – Council Chambers**

Present: Kelly Sweet, Steve Rogers, Bill Eaton, Jim Rucinski, Otto Tertinek, Tom Enright, Linda Edstrom

Staff: Shawn Wing, Jacob Herbert

Other: *See Attached Sign-In Sheet

CALL TO ORDER

Recognizing a quorum, K. Sweet called the meeting to order at 5:52 p.m.

ROLL CALL

T. Enright read roll call. All members present.

READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM June 10th, 2026

S. Rogers wanted his question regarding the condition of 311 Irving to say “good working condition” instead of “working condition”. S. Rogers made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by K. Sweet. Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

- **311 Irving Street – Public Hearing**

T. Enright read the application from the Genesis House of Olean to use the premises as a shelter space for families with children. This request if granted will vary from the Article 4, Section 2.2 of the City of Olean Zoning Law.

The Public Hearing opened at 5:55 pm.

- **Melissa Yaworsky – Executive Director of Genesis House**

M. Yaworsky stated that the mission of the Genesis House is to provide temporary housing and supportive services and at this location, they would be providing that for two families as they transition into more stable housing. New York State certifications would limit the number of people that can be served and family size. They provide case management therefore the apartments will be entered weekly by staff. The families are given an extensive list of rules and expectations and in the past three years, they have only asked a family to leave twice. Two pages of rules and expectations were shared with board members showing rules that Genesis House institutes for residents. They are responsible for cleaning and children cannot be left unattended. They are prohibited from illegal activity, having animals, having weapons, and must follow through with housing applications.

She noted that their certification would not allow them to change who they serve and therefore they would not start to house single adults on a whim. She also points out that to house single adults

they would be required by state law to provide 24/7 staffing which is cost prohibitive. The typical stated stay of residents is 90-120 days.

B. Eaton inquired about the two instances they had to remove a family from housing. M. Yaworsky stated that one family were not following the guidelines of setting goals for themselves. The other instance a family tried to bring in a pet. B. Eaton also asked about their screening process. M. Yaworsky explained that the Catt County DSS does the initial intake and screening of potential residents then refers them to Genesis House. It does not cost Genesis House funds to put homeless families up in hotels, that is funded by the Catt County DSS. It was stated that there is not currently Section 8 Housing in the city of Olean.

T. Enright asked by what definition was considered a family. M. Yaworsky explained that a family with members under the age of 18.

- **Cassi Stives – 121 E. Carroll Road, Portville, NY**

Works for the Genesis House. Explained their difficult upbringing and how helpful programs like the Genesis House can be for someone. She supports the variance.

- **Chuck Walker – 2824 W. Shore, Cuba, NY**

Retire professor at St. Bonaventure. Explained that the university performed a study on homelessness in the area and noted how impactful the Genesis House has been. Explained that the program gets people off the street and research shows that this is the start of what works. He supports the variance.

- **Kim Palmer – 3435 Fortune Dr, Allegany, NY**

She is the Chair of the Genesis House. She read a letter of support from a pastor. Notes that this location would not be advertising itself from the street as a shelter. States that having two families living here would not disrupt the character of the neighborhood.

- **Jonah Mattern – 613 E. State St. Olean, NY**

Explained that a hotel room can provide shelter for children it does not provide a home. Highlighted the importance of safe and stable environments for children growing up. He supports the variance.

- **Katie McMullen – 615 Genesee St. Olean, NY**

States that the impact the Genesis House has affects more than the homeless population. Believes they strengthen the whole community. Supports the variance.

- **Josh Shulman – 116 N. 17th St. Olean, NY**

He is a program manager. Highlights the importance of being able to provide a kitchen for families to make meals and to be able to provide children with bedrooms of their own. He supports the variance.

- **Susan Bly – 236 S. Barry St. Olean, NY**

She is a neighbor to one of the Genesis House locations. She notes what good and responsible neighbors they have been. She supports the variance.

- **Sue Groves – 101 N. Union St. Olean, NY**

She states that the Genesis House and the people who stay there are wonderful neighbors. She supports the variance.

- **Miranda – Allegany**

She helps build mutual aid groups. Is aware of what stability and the lack thereof can do for a family. States that evidence supports the fact that the best treatment for addiction or mental health challenges is stability and getting off the streets. She also notes that the building is a duplex and will continue to be used as such. She supports the variance.

- **Lori McCarthy – 12th Street Olean, NY**

She was on the original Board of the Genesis House. States that she would rather have the Genesis House as a neighbor than some of the landlords and neighbors she has had because Genesis Houses are supervised. She supports the variance.

- **Katie Ward – 605 Genesee Street Olean, NY**

She has volunteered at the Genesis House. Notes that the safety and care provided is exceptional. She believes the Genesis House is a gift to the community.

- **Joan Leckband – 1217 Reed St. Olean, NY**

She has lived in Olean for 24 years. She states the children are the future and the foundation of their lives start with providing them with homes. She supports the variance.

- **Oliver Cashmere – 1900 Johnson Rd. Olean, NY**

Explained that many people in his life who have struggled have stated that what turned them around was going in the Genesis House. He believes this would help the community. He supports the variance.

K. Sweet read through a document provided to the board from a resident highlighting concerns with the variance.* see attached

K. Sweet read a letter of support from Cattaraugus Community Foundation. *see attached

K. Sweet read a letter of support from Sally Shultz. *see attached

K. Sweet read a letter of support from the Piper family. *see attached

L. Edstrom asked for clarification on who actually owns the property. D. Pezzimenti, representing the owner/applicant, stated the original owner passed away and was inherited by his children. Kendrick Samuelson signed the application for the variance. It was again confirmed that 7 individuals viewed the property in the seven weeks that the house was listed before Genesis House engaged for sale

The Public Hearing closed at 6:45 pm.

B. Eaton commented that his wife is a teacher so he understands the need and importance of places like the Genesis House for families. He notes that the Genesis House are held to standards and have a duty whereas the alternative owner of this property could be an unsavory landlord that would have less accountability.

T. Enright wanted to make it clear for everyone attending the purpose of the Board is to consider all factors and input from the neighborhood to allow the applicant to use the property in a way not allowed per the code of ordinances.

K. Sweet reviewed the language used in the law and noted that its intent: The intent of the R3 General Residential Use District is to delineate those areas where predominantly detached single-family, moderate density residential development and some two-family residential development has occurred or is likely to occur, to allow in special instances in accordance with site plan review, multiple-family dwellings and dwelling groups and to protect the integrity of these residential areas by controlling the type and intensity of uses so that the overall character and density of the neighborhood is preserved. The R3 District recognizes the value of such other permissible uses as churches, schools, libraries and other educational buildings, playgrounds, and general hospitals under the conditions set forth in this law.

The Board reviewed the findings. Discussing the second criteria regarding unique circumstances, S. Rogers dissented. Discussing the fourth criteria S. Rogers believes that hardship was self-created. K. Sweet commented that because the owner inherited the property the hardship could be considered not self-created.

The Board determined that the applicant has proven unnecessary hardship. K. Sweet made a motion, seconded by B. Eaton, to approve the variance as submitted. Voice vote.

Ayes from O. Tertinek, T. Enright, B. Eaton, J. Rucinski, L. Edstrom, K. Sweet.
Nay from S. Rogers.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

T. Enright made a motion, seconded by L. Edstrom, to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jacob Herbert