The Town of Deerpark Planning Board met for a SPECIAL MEETING on WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2026 . The Meeting was held at Town Hall 420 Route 209.

The following were present at the meeting:
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT
Robert Vicaretti-Chairman, Craig Wagner-Vice- Chairman
Patrick Kean Robert Luke Schock

MEMBER NOT PRESENT: Theresa Santiago

OTHERS PRESENT:
Glen Plotsky-Town Attorney
Amanda Schultz-Secretary
Al Schock-Town Supervisor
Rob Whitney-Deputy Supervisor
James Farrr-Farr Engineering
Pledge of Allegiance

Special Meeting was brought to order at 7:01pm by Chairman.

DRAGON SPRINGS – GALLEY HILL & GUYMARD TURNPIKE – FEIS DISCUSSION -
Michael Morgante-Engineer for Applicant
Dan Richmond-Attorney for Applicant
Levi Browde-Applicant

Motion made by Craig Wagner, 2nd by Patrick Kean to open the public hearing.
Vote 4 Ayes: Craig Wagner, Patrick Kean, Robert Luke Schock, Robert Vicaretti.

MOTION CARRIED

Public hearing notice was read in by the Town Secretary. Chair asked if the mailings were checked; Secretary, Amanda Schultz stated that all adjoiners were notified. Town Attorney asked all speakers to be courteous to all speakers. He further how the public hearing would run, there will be a brief presentation by the Applicant and Representatives, everyone who signed up will be called up one at a time and will have 3 minutes to speak. Once all the public speaks, the Board will conclude the oral portion and leave the public hearing open for written comment until Tuesday, October 13 at 4PM. It will be added to the agenda for the regular meeting on October 14 just to close the public hearing. All comments should be directed to the Board; the Applicant or the Board will not be answering any questions this evening. There will be written answers to the comments after the public hearing is closed. There will be a break or two. Also, when you come up to speak, please say and spell your name and speak slowly. Mr. Browde explained Dragon Springs is a house of worship for Falun Dafa, it has four entities: Buddhist Temple Grounds, Fei Tian Academy of Arts which teach New York State Curriculum, the Fei Tian College and Shen Yun. Mr. Morgante gave a brief description of the application using power point presentation. He showed the existing conditions and that 70acres are currently developed and 70% will remain undeveloped if this application is approved. There has been wetland mitigation and any disturbance has gone through the DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation), and a meeting regarding SWPPP (Storm Water Pollution Protection Plan) with DEC. Also the subsurface discharge will be treated. The well that will be drilled will make up the difference needed. Parking is needed, another temple will be built along with souvenir snack stalls, a few storage sheds and 286KW roof mount solar system. There will be enhanced erosion control, in regards to wildlife only tree cutting can be from November 1st to March 31st, lightening will be cutoff after a certain time. The traffic will not change, a height variance will be needed for a few buildings but it will be below the tree line. There is a pre-existing fire system with onsite first responders with training. Town Attorney acknowledged that there were several written comments that were submitted prior to the public hearing: Exhibit #1 a letter from Christopher Murray from Rivkin Radler, Attorneys at law; Exhibit #2 letter from Kevin Draganchuk from CEA Engineers, P.C.; Exhibit #3 letter from SIMCO Engineering, D.P.C; Exhibit #4 a letter from Paul Rubin from HydroQuest; Exhibit #5 a letter from Sally Porter; Exhibit #6 a letter from Blaze Vandermark, Chief of Cuddebackville Fire Department; and Exhibit #7 a letter from Frank Ketcham.

Public Comment:

Chris Murray: Mr. Murray stated that the last public hearing was in 2019 for DEIS (Draft Environmental Impact Statement), why the delay, there's been nothing for 6 years. He continued that COVID changed everything in the community and the project has changed substantially, they are increasing the size and scope of project. He felt a supplemental DEIS was needed because not all the concerns were addressed since the DEIS. They will be bringing more people to the site and it is a large development.

Angela Lee: Ms. Lee stated she lives in Lakewood Estates which is owned by former Supervisor, Gary Spears and she is in support of Dragon Springs. She is in the Rotary Club for Deerpark and helped in getting the Town masks from Taiwan during COVID. She felt it would bring cultural richness and positive contributions to the Town.

Robert Majcher: Mr. Majcher expressed he was concerned with the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) expansion, there will be high levels of E.coli. The Town hasn't been able to stop the sewage seepage that has happened in the past. There has been heavy flooding since 2019 and with this development there will be more runoff. He felt that outside testing by an independent lab should be done periodically, with real-time data sharing. He continued that they shouldn't jump to 100,000 gallons/day, and they should give the Town the power to shut down the WWTP.

Anton Khmelev: Mr. Khmelev acknowledged he works at Dragon Springs and an upgraded WWTP is needed, he felt that the plan shows a top-quality treatment system. There will be fences installed to help with erosion control, along with hay to protect the soil, they have helped the Town improve the roads.

Samantha Vandermark: She stated she was with Cuddebackville Fire Department and read a letter from the Chief for Cuddebackville. They have not provided plans in regard to emergency procedures, attention needs to be given before any changes takes place. She continued that communication needs to be established, site access needs to be given to the Fire Department to evaluate procedures in place. They have not received any coordination with Dragon Springs, the Fire Department is only volunteers and are worried about safety of Fire Fighters.

Brett Feather-Chuda: Ms. Feather-Chuda stated she just moved to the area and she moved to the Town to allow for her children to go to the Dragon Springs School, and is in support of Dragon Springs.

John Pruitt: Mr. Pruitt stated he is a resident of Cuddebackville, a US Marine Vet and in the Shen Yun Orchestra, he supports Dragon Springs.

Chen Liang: Mr. Liang explained he was a security guard at Dragon Springs, he felt that Deerpark is beautiful and that is why Dragon Springs came here. He stated that he has come across people trespassing on the property either intentionally and unintentionally. The fences are for safety and he supports Dragon Springs.

Ken Truong: Mr. Truong acknowledged he works for Shen Yun, his parents escaped after Vietnam and he is a law abiding, he works and owns a home in Deerpark, he added that this will invite more people to buy houses in Town and add additional tax payers. This will add growth to the Town, local businesses. He continued that 100 acres will remain green and he supports Dragon Springs.

Matthew Ytsma: He explained he works at Shen Yun and lives in Middletown, he is an immigrant from New Zealand and is proud to work there and supports Dragon Springs.

Ben Smith: Mr. Smith stated that he has a daughter that is a high school student at Fei Tan. He is respectful of the teaching morals. It is a good thing to have in the community. They have world class performers and are peace loving people and supports Dragon Springs.

Chen Wang: He stated he became a US Citizen and live in Mount Hope, he has built a life. He is a security guard there and is trained in Fire Services. They have 2 fire trucks and emergency response trucks, the security team is trained. He added that Huguenot, Port Jervis and Otisville fire departments have been to the site and trained with them. He was in support of Dragon Springs.

Alex Scilla: He acknowledged he was from NY Envirocon, the site plan proposed is pretty much the same that was purposed 7 years ago, it was not a good idea then and it's not a good idea now. There is no mitigation and no designs for the WWTP. There is 200 additional parking spaces, has there been a traffic study. A supplemental DEIS needs to be done. There has been 6-7 years of violations and lawsuits, these plans need to be looked at, it is not time for the FEIS (Final Enviromental Impact Statement).

Joaquin Joe: He represents the Deerpark Rural Alliance, there will be runoff. This will be menacing of the local residence. The fence they installed is illegal, Dragon Springs has mistreated his employees. He continued it should not be approved as proposed and it should be investigated.

PLANNING BOARD SPECIAL MEETING SEPTEMBER 30, 2026 continued –

Frank Ketchum: He stated he was an adjoining property owner in Mount Hope and was not given a certified mailing. He is concerned with the Neversink and Delaware watershed. This development will affect Town of Deerpark and Mount Hope. There has been a ton of matters documented and investigated, he just wanted his statement to be made part of the record.
Janet Lybolt: She acknowledged she has been following this for the past 7 years, she has environmental concerns and traffic. She felt it was way too big for the area and once it was approved it cannot be undone. The Board should consider carefully the Neversink and Bashakill.
Tysan Lerner: She explained she moved to the area in 2014 and has visited Dragon Springs on multiple occasions, it is stunning and is the best decision. It is a wonderful community and is in support of the application.
Zenon Dolnyckyj: He stated he moved up to Huguenot in 2014, but has been a volunteer since 2002 at Dragon Springs. He acknowledged the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) has infiltrated all government agencies and is in support of Dragon Springs.
Doris Chan: She stated is has been a volunteer at Dragon Springs since 2002, they are a community there, they solve concerns. She added that the CCP is on US soil and asked the public to go to Shen Yun and watch the show, it is nice and shows respect and is in support of Dragon Springs.
Loren McCune: He explained he was in support of the application, it is natural development, it will attract people to the area. He met his wife here, she is a choreographer at Shen Yun. He is in construction he is a business man, his company has built many homes in Town and rehabbed old homes. He felt it was a good thing and is positive development.
James White: He is an event organizer and film maker. In 2013 there was a violation to NYS (New York State) DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation) for sewage, that was 13 years ago and it was fixed 13 years ago, the DEC and OCDOH (Orange County Department Of Health) has done multiple inspections and there has been no further issues. He supports the application.
Philip Marsh: He stated he lives on the Neversink River since 2008 and noticed there is a decline in trout in the river. He is former US Navy and has concerns with the WWTP if it fails. He added he is afraid to let his grandchildren play in the river, he is worried about runoff from the site and is afraid of what this will do to the ecosystem.
Sophia Bronwen: She has lived in the Town for 20 years and with every project there is difficulties and Dragon Springs has worked with local government. She is concerned with the environmental agencies that are after Dragon Springs and feels they should be investigated for their links to the Communist Party.
Town Attorney stated that there would be a small break.
Mela Wu: She is in the Shen Yun community and is proud and supports Dragon Springs, she added she felt it would be a benefit to local businesses. She continued that it can be different if everyone worked together.
Rick Kariolic: He asked about visiting the site and was denied. He added he went to the court in New York City when the matter was before them. He felt that money could be used to demonstrate to the residents how to be a responsible neighbor.
Virginia Blanco: She stated she is an elementary teacher at Dragon Springs and the teaching of Falun Dafa is hard work and suggested everyone go online and see what the practices are about.
Jin Pang: She stated she was a Deerpark resident since 2015, she is raising her children in the Town, it is her home. She felt this would support local businesses and more people would buy houses, and feels the application should be approved.
Albert Roman: He acknowledged he lives in Sparrowbush and feels if Dragon Springs complies with Building Code then it should be allowed. He further stated that DEC has done multiple inspections and the leach field has been upgraded and has not had an issue for 13 years.
Matt Tullar: He explained he grew up in upstate NY above Albany, he has lived in Otisville for about 10 years now. He is a contractor and has done a lot of work for Falun Dafa practitioners. He is in support of the project and feels it will be great economic impact, they are honest people.
Dan Noll: He stated he moved to Deerpark 13 years ago and is a teacher at Dragon Springs, a lot of his former students are now buying houses in the Town and paying taxes. He felt all schools need security and added there has been 150 bomb threats over the years at the School.
Grace Woodard: Ms. Woodard acknowledged she is with Deerpark Rural Alliance and the plans from 2019 compared to the recent plans have expanded quite a bit. The FEIS dismissed all the comments from the DEIS, SEQRA (State Environmental Quality Review Act) needs to be taken seriously by all Town officials. She expressed concern for the traffic and wonders if the road can handle the increase.
Michael Fitzgerald: He commented on the amount of people that showed up and it shows how much the community cares. He felt there are safeguards in place for expansion and development brings in commerce. He also trusts the Board will keep the rivers clean and put in provisions to provide for that.

Khrystyna Pentchoukova- She acknowledged she is an English teacher at Dragon Springs, she moved there in 2018. She stated that they are all tax payers and support local economy. She supports the application and feels it will be good for the area.
Robert Howe- He explained he is an environmentalist and monitors the Bashakill, the plans to add a lake, that will remove the habitat. The DEC and DEP (Department of Environmental Patrol) stock the Bashakill with trout. He is worried about what will happen if the WWTP fails.
Jill Nugent- She stated everything she wanted to say has been discussed and her comments were addressed in the letter from Sally Porter that was entered in as an exhibit.
Jim Fogarty- Mr. Fogarty stated he is in support of the application, his family were immigrants. He is a homeowner in Cuddebackville, he feels everyone should research Falun Dafa, it would be very beneficial. He added that Shen Yun performance it exposes the CCP and traditions.
Bruce Quinn- He stated his questions had already been visited.
Simon Vereshaka- He stated he has 2 sons at the Fein Tain College, this revives traditional Chinese culture. He explained he has been a tradesman his whole life, he has done volunteer work at Dragon Springs. He supports the application.
Paul Forrest- He stated he supported the application, he further stated that this will benefit the community with the spiritual and cultural impact.
Biao Liang- He was happy with what Dragon Springs are doing.
Meghan McGregor- She was concerned with the emergency services and asked for an analysis to be done, the local fire departments are volunteer.
Sherri Hummel- Ms. Hummel stated she felt there was a lack of transparency and issues with letting Town Officials in. They only let certain inspectors in and what the plan says and what they plan to do are two different things.
Martin Kritzler- Mr. Kritzler stated he came to the area for Shen Yun, he lives in the community and feels the people have learned to work with the Town now.
Jacob Zocco- He acknowledged he lives in Mount Hope since 2010, his wife works at Dragon Springs, their children go to school there. He felt it was not bad for the environment and there was no negative impact and supported the proposal.
John Friedle- Mr. Friedle is from Birch Hunting Club he added that the bridge is not approved and it is too big. He asked what has gotten resolved since 2019 and why do they need armed guards and guard dogs. He further stated that Dragon Springs asks for forgiveness instead of permission.
Emily Lu- She stated that she works at Dragon Springs and there is a definite need for parking it is a common problem, she supports the project and feels it has created many jobs.
Long Hu- Mr. Hu stated he lives by the Neversink River and it took him 10 hours to look through the FEIS, he recommends reading the document and is in positive support of the proposal.
Michelle Midkiff- Ms. Midkiff stated she came when she was 12 years old and moved to Cuddebackville 11 years ago. She had visited Dragon Springs and there is not enough parking they have to park on the street.
Leeshai Lemish- He explained he moved to Deerpark in 2006 and is in support of Dragon Springs. He has been in Dragon Springs for 20 years, there has been yearly inspections by the County DOH, DEC and New York Fire Department. He stated he is proud to be from Deerpark, and felt everyone should come together and get to know your neighbors and visit Dragon Springs.
Laura Hatton- Ms. Hatton stated she supported the application, she lives in Deerpark and feels the community should come back together. The protections are responsible at Dragon Springs.
Motion made by Robert Schock, 2nd Craig Wagner to close the oral public hearing and leave open for written comment until October 13, 2026.
Vote 4 Ayes: Craig Wagner, Patrick Kean, Robert Schock, Robert Vicaretti.

MOTION CARRIED

Chairman thanked everyone for coming. Town Attorney acknowledged written comment will be taken until Tuesday, October 13, 2026 at 4PM. Dragon Springs will be on the next agenda, just to close out the public hearing. Chairman thanked the Port Jervis School District for the fantastic job they did.

PLANNING BOARD SPECIAL MEETING SEPTEMBER 30, 2026 continued –

MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING

Motion made by Patrick Kean, 2nd Robert Schock to adjourn September 30, 2026 Planning Board Special meeting at 10:15pm.
Vote 4 Ayes: Craig Wagner, Patrick Kean, Robert Schock, Robert Vicaretti.

MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted by,

Amanda Schultz, Planning Board Clerk