

12/13/2007 By William J. Kemble , Correspondent (Kingston Freeman)

ROSENDALE - The Town Board on Wednesday tabled a proposal to work jointly with the Planning Board to lead the environmental review of a proposed luxury resort and housing development at Williams Lake.

Town Attorney Mary Lou Christiana said the state Department of Environmental Conservation would allow the lead role to be handled by both boards.

"I found out it is very rare (but) the DEC does allow it," she said. "I've heard from some planners who said that it does work very well in just this kind of situation."

Canopy Development, the project manager for Hudson River Valley Resorts, has requested a town zoning amendment to allow a "planned resort community" at Williams Lake. The company is seeking to expand the 95-room Williams Lake Hotel into a 130-room facility and build 130 homes on about 325 acres of the 779-acre property.

The complex is proposed to include a 19,000-square-foot spa; a 5,000-square-foot wellness center; a 5,000-square-foot welcome and arrival center; an interpretive center, a courtyard with a skating rink; a yoga and mediation studio; a boathouse, and a teahouse.

Town Planning Board members last week voted to act as lead agency in the environmental reviews despite a call by Councilman Patrick McDonough, the supervisor-elect, to leave that role to the Town Board.

Councilwoman Manna Jo Greene said Canopy Development's request for the Planning Board to take the lead agency role was "disingenuous," since representatives didn't mention that request when they met with the Town Board only one night earlier.

"The way that we were approached was strike two," Greene said. "In that there wasn't an ... open process with the community, the pre-application process was strike one."

It was McDonough who requested the two boards share the lead role in the environmental review. Previously, McDonough said the state Department of Environmental Conservation would decide who would lead the review if the two local boards couldn't resolve the dispute.

However, board members tabled the proposal, saying they felt rushed.