March 20, 2024

Village of Williamsville
C/O: Mr. Gary Palumbo, AICP, Associate Planner
Town of Amherst Planning Department
5583 Main Street
Williamsville, NY 14221

## Re: 26 W Spring Street - Zoning Board of Appeals Application

Dear Mr. Palumbo,
Included with the cover is our application for area variances for our proposed re-development project at 26 W Spring Street. Should you have any questions regarding this application please feel free to contact me at nmdolpp@iskalo.com or at 716-633-2096. Thank you for your consideration.

Below is a list of attachments:

- Zoning Board or Appeals Application
- Exhibit 1: Short Environmental Assessment Form
- Exhibit 2: Project Description and Description of Requested Area Variances
- Exhibit 3: Justification for Requested Area Variances
- Exhibit 4: Drawings (Survey, Site Plan, Floor Plan, and Elevations)

Sincerely,
ISKALO DEVELOPMENT CORP.


Nicholas M. Dolpp
Vice President of Development

Cc: Sean W. Hopkins

## Village Of Williamsville Area/ Use Variance Application

## TYPE OF REQUEST

区 Area Variance

Use Variance

## APPLICANT INFORMATION

Property Owners): Iskalo Spring Street LLC by Iskalo Development Corp., its Manager
Name: Nicholas Dolpp


Email: nmdolpp@iskalo.com
Address: 5166 Main Street, Williamsville, NY 14221
Phone: 716-633-2096

## Applicants) (if other than property owner):

Name: $\qquad$ Signature $\qquad$
Email: $\qquad$
Address: $\qquad$
Phone: $\qquad$
If the applicant is not the property owner, owner's signature or a letter of permission allowing the applicant to file this application is required.

## PROPERTY INFORMATION

Property Address: Primary Parcel - 26 W Spring Street; Secondary parcels - 34 \& 42 W Spring St

SBL: 26 W. Spring - 80.08-1-8.1; Zoning District: MU

34 W. Spring - 80.08-1-8.2;
42 W. Spring - 80.08-1-11

## OFFICIAL USE

239m applicable $\square$ SEQR Short EAF FEE (\$100-residential \$150-commercial) Meeting Date: $\qquad$ Reviewed By: $\qquad$ Appeal \#: $\qquad$
# Village Of Williamsville <br> Area/ Use Variance Application 

## AREA VARIANCE REQUEST

In making its determination on an area variance, the Zoning Board of Appeals shall take into consideration the benefit to the applicant if the variance were granted, as weighed against the detriment to the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood or community by such grant. In making that determination, the ZBA will consider these five questions:

1. Describe whether there will be an undesirable change in the character of the neighborhood or a detriment to nearby properties by the granting of the subject variance; Justification for the requested area variances pursuant to the statutory balancing test and the applicable five criteria pursuant to NYS Village Law Section 7-712(b)(3)(b) is provided at the attached Exhibit "3"
2. Describe whether the benefit sought by the applicant can be achieved by some other feasible method, other than a variance; Justification for the requested area variances pursuant to the statutory balancing test and the applicable five criteria pursuant to NYS Village Law Section 7-712(b)(3)(b) is provided at the attached Exhibit "3"
$\qquad$
3. Describe whether the requested variance is substantial; (How substantial are the potential impacts to neighboring properties?) Justification for the requested area variances pursuant to the statutory balancing test and the applicable five criteria pursuant to NYS Village Law Section 7-712(b)(3)(b) is provided at the attached Exhibit "3"
4. Describe whether the proposed variance will have an adverse effect or impact on the physical or environmental conditions in the neighborhood/district; Justification for the requested area variances pursuant to the statutory balancing test and the applicable five criteria pursuant to NYS Village Law Section 7-712(b)(3)(b) is provided at the attached Exhibit "3"
5. Describe whether the alleged difficulty is self-created; Justification for the requested area variances pursuant to the statutory balancing test and the applicable five criteria pursuant to NYS Village Law Section 7-712(b)(3)(b) is provided at the attached Exhibit "3"

# Village Of Williamsville <br> Area/ Use Variance Application 

## USE VARIANCE REQUEST

1) Describe how the applicant cannot realize a reasonable return, provided that lack of return is substantial as demonstrated by competent financial evidence;
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
2) Describe how the alleged hardship is unique to the subject property and does not apply to a substantial portion of the district or neighborhood;
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$\qquad$
3) Describe how, if granted, the requested use variance will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood;
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$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
4) Describe how the alleged difficulty is not self-created;
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
Note: Please attach additional sheets if necessary when responding the above questions

## Village Of Williamsville Area/ Use Variance Application

## DISCLOSURE AFFIDAVIT

I maintain that the information provided in this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge:

Nicholas Dolpp, VP of Development, Iskalo Development Corp., Manager 3/20/2024
Property owner or applicant name (print):
$\propto \cdot J$ od np

Property owner or applicant signature:

## STATE OF NEW YORK COUNTY OF ERIE

WITNESS my hand and official seal:
On the day of in the year before me, the above individual personally appeared, personally known to me or proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence to be the individual whose name is subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she/they executed the same for the purposes therein stated.


Print Name: $\qquad$

Exhibit 1

# Short Environmental Assessment Form <br> Part 1 - Project Information 

## Instructions for Completing

Part 1 - Project Information. The applicant or project sponsor is responsible for the completion of Part 1. Responses become part of the application for approval or funding, are subject to public review, and may be subject to further verification. Complete Part 1 based on information currently available. If additional research or investigation would be needed to fully respond to any item, please answer as thoroughly as possible based on current information.

Complete all items in Part 1. You may also provide any additional information which you believe will be needed by or useful to the lead agency; attach additional pages as necessary to supplement any item.

| Part 1 - Project and Sponsor Information |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Name of Action or Project: <br> Proposed conversion of an existing 2 story office building to multifamily use and associated site improvements |  |  |  |  |  |
| Project Location (describe, and attach a location map): <br> 26 W. Spring - 80.08-1-8.1 (primary); 34 W Spring-80.08-1-8.2 \& 42 W Spring - 80.08-1-11 (secondary) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Brief Description of Proposed Action: <br> The proposed redevelopment consists of converting an existing vacant two-story office building at 26 W . Spring St. into an eight (8) unit multifamily residential building. The existing structure is approximately 11,000 square feet. No additions to the building are proposed. The project site along with two adjacent sites (also owned by the Applicant) will undergo site improvements consisting of repaving of existing parking lot and expansion of parking to include construction of a retaining wall and an additional driveway onto Glen Ave. Site improvements will also include site lighting, landscaping and drainage. The action has been defined broadly to include all proposed site improvements along with all required approvals and permits. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Name of Applicant or Sponsor: Telephone: 716-633-2096 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Iskalo Spring Street LLC $\quad$ E-Mail: nmdolpp@iskalo.com |  |  |  |  |  |
| Address: <br> 5166 Main Street, Suite 200 |  |  |  |  |  |
| City/PO: State: Zip Code: <br> Williamsville NY 14221 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the proposed action only involve the legislative adoption of a plan, local law, ordinance, administrative rule, or regulation? <br> If Yes, attach a narrative description of the intent of the proposed action and the environmental resources that may be affected in the municipality and proceed to Part 2. If no, continue to question 2. |  |  |  | NO <br> $\square$ | YES |
| 2. Does the proposed action require a permit, approval or funding from any other government Agency? If Yes, list agency(s) name and permit or approval: Area Variances - ZBA, Planning Board, HPC, Building Department; Amherst Industrial Development Agency |  |  |  | NO | YES |
| 3. a. Total acreage of the site of the proposed action? <br> b. Total acreage to be physically disturbed? or controlled by the applicant or project sponsor? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. $\square$ Urban $\square$ Rural (non-agriculture) $\square$ Industrial $\square$ Commercial $\square$ Residential (suburban)  <br> $\square$ Forest $\square$ Agriculture $\square$ Aquatic $\square$ Other(Specify): SS Peter and Paul's Church and School  <br> $\square$ Parkland    |  |  |  |  |  |


14. Identify the typical habitat types that occur on, or are likely to be found on the project site. Check all that apply:
$\square$ Shoreline $\square$ Forest $\square$ Agricultural/grasslands $\square$ Early mid-successional
$\square$ WetlandUrbanSuburban

| 15. Does the site of the proposed action contain any species of animal, or associated habitats, listed by the State or <br> Federal government as threatened or endangered? | NO | YES |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 16. Is the project site located in the 100-year flood plan? | $\boxed{Z}$ |  |

## I CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE IS TRUE AND ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE

Applicant/sponsor/name: Iskalo Spring Street LLC by Iskalo Development Corp.
Date: 3/20/2024
Signature:


Title: VP of Development


Part 1 / Question 7 [Critical Environmental No Area]
Part 1 / Question 12a [National or State No Register of Historic Places or State Eligible Sites]
Part 1 / Question 12b [Archeological Sites] Yes
Part 1 / Question 13a [Wetlands or Other No Regulated Waterbodies]
Part 1 / Question 15 [Threatened or No Endangered Animal]
Part 1 / Question 16 [100 Year Flood Plain] No
Part 1 / Question 20 [Remediation Site] No

Exhibit 2

## EXHIBIT 2

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DESCRIPTION OF REQUESTED AREA VARIANCES OF 34 W SPRING STREET

## I. Description of the Proposed Project:

The project proposed by Applicant involves the adaptive re-use of an existing, vacant and obsolete office building located at 26 W Spring Street together with related site improvements on the 26 West Spring Street property as well as 34 and 42 W Spring Street which also owned by the Applicant (the "Project"). Please note that no modifications to the building located at 34 W Spring Street are proposed as part of the Project. Please further note that Applicant also owns the adjacent single-family residential dwellings located at 109 and 115 Glen Avenue though neither are part of the Project. The Project involves conversion of the building at 26 West Spring Street to multifamily use. Upon completion, the building would offer eight (8) market rate apartments. No addition to the 26 West Spring Street building is proposed as part of the Project. The existing building footprint will remain unchanged.

26 West Spring Street was constructed on or around 1976 by the founders of Scipar, Inc., an engineering firm that provided support to hydroelectric (i.e. damns) control systems. Scipar occupied the building continuously until November of 2023. Iskalo Spring Street LLC acquired the property in February of 2019.

The original two-story part of the building fronts on West Spring Street. It was later expanded with a two-story addition extending northward toward Glen Avenue. At the time of its acquisition by Iskalo, only a few employees worked in the building. Its interior was sorely outdated and mostly unused. Now vacant, the Applicant considered various options for the building. It's current layout and interior condition together with the softness in the demand for office space make the re-use of the building as office space not feasible. Consideration was given
to demolishing the building and merging the parcel with the neighboring parcel at 34 West Spring Street. However, further architectural due diligence revealed the potential for adaptation of the 26 West Spring Street building for conversion to multifamily which the Applicant has determined is the highest and best use.

The conversion of the existing $11,000+/-$ square foot building will produce eight (8) apartments; six (6) of which will be two-story, townhouse-style units with the remaining two (2) to be single-level units. The main entry of one of the single-level apartments will be located on West Spring Street. The entry for the other seven apartments would be from the existing parking lot which will be improved as part of the Project. The eight apartments will range in size from 1,200 to 1,450 square feet. A reduced-size copy of the Site Plan [C-100], Floor Plan [A-1.1] and Elevations [A-3] are provided as Exhibit "4" and a full-size copy of the Project Plans are also attached to this Variance Application.

In approaching the renovation of the exterior of the building at 26 West Spring Street, the Applicant is seeking to build upon the prairie-style design of the two-story addition which is typified by strong horizontal elements and a shallow-pitched roof. The proposed renovation accentuates these elements to enhance the visual appeal of the building and ease its transformation from commercial office to multi-family use. Particular attention has been paid to the north building elevation since the existing Glen Street driveway is intended as the primary entrance to the Project Site.

Although the proposed re-use of the 26 West Spring Street building would only require a modest amount of parking, the Site Plan provided with our submission incorporates the easterly properties located at 34 and 42 West Spring Street. The buildings at 26 and 34 West Spring Street have historically shared the existing parking lot located in between the buildings, together with the
driveways on Glen Avenue and Spring Street. While no improvements to the 34 West Spring Street building are proposed at this time, it makes sense to consider the three parcels together for purposes of planning for the appropriate site improvements (ingress, egress, parking and circulation). Obtaining approval and completing the proposed site improvements to the three-parcel assemblage will improve its collective appearance and be useful in connection with marketing of the 34 West Spring Street building to prospective tenants.

Site improvements will include repaving of the existing parking lot and its expansion which will include construction of a new cobble limestone-look retaining wall and an additional driveway onto Glen Ave. Site improvements will also include installation of sidewalks, site lighting, landscaping, drainage and a trash enclosure. .Parking spaces and sidewalks on the 42 Spring Street parcel (along Grove Street) depicted on the enclosed site plan would be constructed during a future phase.

## II. Description of Requested Area Variances:

The Applicant is seeking four (4) area variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals in connection with the proposed redevelopment project as follows.

1. Parking stall length is less than permitted per Section 112-16D(4)k of Village Code. [19 ft. required vs. 18' proposed].
2. Sidewalk width is less than permitted per Section 112-16B(5)a of Village Code. [5'-0" required vs. 4'-6" proposed].
3. Existing building setback from a main road (Spring Street) is greater than permitted per Section 112-16B(2)e of Village Code. [20' max required vs. 29.3' existing].

Note: The existing building footprint is not changing, this is an existing nonconforming building setback.
4. Building transparency for commercial buildings with frontage on public streets is less than required on first floors per Section 112-16F(3)c of Village Code. [ $70 \%$ minimum required vs. $12 \%$ provided].

Exhibit 3

## EXHIBIT 3

# JUSTIFICATION FOR REQUESTED AREA VARIANCES PURSUANT TO THE STATUTORY MANDATED BALANCING TEST AND FIVE CRITERIA CONTAINTED IN NYS VILLAGE LAW §7-112-b(3)b 

## I. Introduction:

Iskalo Development Corp., on behalf of Iskalo Spring Street LLC (the "Applicant") is seeking four (4) area variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals in connection with its proposed redevelopment project at 26, 34 and 42 West Spring Street (the "Project Site"). The four requested area variances are: (1) parking stall depth, (2) relief from minimum sidewalk width, (3) relief from main road maximum setback and (4) relief from minimum first floor transparency for commercial buildings.

## Justification for the Requested Area Variances:

NYS Village Law §7-112-b(3)b sets forth a statutorily mandated balancing test to be considered by a zoning board of appeals ("ZBA") in connection with its review of a request for area variances. The statutorily mandated balancing test required a zoning board of appeals to balance the benefits that will be realized against the resulting detriments to the health, safety and welfare of the community.

The granting of the requested area variances in furtherance of the redevelopment project will not result any detriments to the health, safety and welfare of the community. Rather, the granting of the requested area variances for the proposed redevelopment project will result in substantial benefits to the Applicant including: (1) successful re-purposing of a non-productive building asset at 26 West Spring Street, (2) bringing to market much-needed rental housing units in a desirable neighborhood, and (3) better positioning the locally-landmarked building at 34 W . Spring Street to attract tenants for its re-use.

In applying the statutorily mandated balancing test set forth above, NYS Village Law §7-712-b(3)(b) requires a ZBA to consider five criteria as described below:

1. Whether an undesirable change will be produced in the character of the neighborhood or a detriment to nearby properties will be created by the granting of the requested area variances?

The granting of the requested area variances by the ZBA will not create an undesirable change in the character of the neighborhood or any detriments to nearby properties. The proposed exterior renovation of the vacant former office building at 26 W . Spring Street along with the other proposed site improvements will enhance the appearance of the project site and the proposed conversion to multi-family use is consistent with neighboring properties to the west and north.

The granting of the area variances will enable the proposed redevelopment project to proceed as planned which will produce a desirable change to the character of the neighborhood by repurposing a non-productive building asset and improve the overall appearance of the Project Site.
2. Whether the benefits sought by the applicant can be achieved by some other method, feasible for the applicant to pursue, other than an area variance?

It would not be possible for the Applicant to receive the benefits that will be received if the requested area variances are granted without seeking the requested relief being sought from the Zoning Board of Appeals. The proposed redevelopment project has been carefully and thoughtfully prepared in order to minimize the area variances required to the maximum extent practicable. Thus, there are not any feasible alternatives to the requested relief that would eliminate the need for the requested area variances while still allowing the Applicant to receive the benefits that will be received if the requested area variances are granted.

## 3. Whether the requested area variances are substantial?

In each instance, the magnitude of the requested area variance is not substantial in the context of the existing development in the vicinity of the Project Site. The reason the magnitude of the variance is relevant is that, generally, the larger the difference the more likely it is that a negative effect would be generated. See Matter of Human Development Services of Port Chester v. Zoning Board of Appeals of the Village of Port Chester, 110 A.D.2d 135, aff'd, 67 N.Y.2d 702. However, in any particular case, the facts may demonstrate that while requested area variances may seem noteworthy on paper, no negative effects will be produced and, accordingly, the area variances being sought should be granted. For example, in Matter of Frank v. Scheyer, 227 A.D.2d 558, 642 N.Y.S.2d 956 (2d Dept. 1996), the parcel was 19,983 square feet. However, the zoning code required a minimum lot size of one acre or 43,560 square feet. The variance at issue was more than $54 \%$. Nevertheless, based the facts presented, no harm would result to the community and the Court directed the zoning board of appeals to grant the application. The Court took similar action in Matter of Shaughessy v. Roth, 204 A.D.2d 333, 611 N.Y.S.2d 281 (2d Dept. 1994), where the premises contained 50 feet of frontage and 5,000 square feet of area. The zoning code required 80 feet of frontage and a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet. Accordingly, the application concerned a $50 \%$ reduction in lot area coupled with a second area variance seeking a $62.5 \%$ reduction from the required frontage. Nevertheless, based on the facts in the record, the Court directed the respondents to issue the variances. Additionally, in Matter of Sasso v. Osgood, 86 N.Y.2d 374 (1995), the applicant sought area variances for a $60 \%$ reduction in lot area and a $50 \%$ reduction in lot width. Based on all of the facts presented, the Court of Appeals, our State's highest court, overturned the holding of the appellate court and directed that the requested area variances be granted.

Merely because requested area variances may seem noteworthy on paper does not mean that any "harm" would be generated on the surrounding community, and it is "harm" that is balanced against the interest of the applicant according to the NYS Village Law §7-712-b(3)(b) balancing test.

If the requested area variances that are being sought to accommodate the proposed redevelopment of the Project Site are properly viewed as required by the cases discussed above as well as appropriate consideration of the objectives of the redevelopment project and the existing character of the surrounding vicinity, it is clear the requested area variances are not substantial since they will not result in any harm to the community.

## 4. Whether the proposed variance will have an adverse effect or impact on the physical or environmental conditions in the neighborhood.

The granting of the requested area variances will not have any adverse effects or impacts on physical or environmental conditions in the neighborhood. A completed Short Environmental Assessment Form prepared pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA") is attached as Exhibit " 1 " of this Variance Application. The proposed site modifications will require Site Plan Approval from the Planning Board and this will ensure that all technical aspects of the overall redevelopment project are reviewed and approved.

## 5. Whether the alleged difficulty was self-created?

NYS Village Law §7-712-b(3)(b) expressly states that the issue of whether an alleged difficulty is self-created cannot be utilized as the sole criteria in determining whether to grant a requested area variance. It is our position that while the alleged difficulty can be viewed as being self-created, the overall balancing test and the other four statutory criteria provides strong justification for the granting of the requested area variances needed to successfully redevelop the Project Site in accordance the project layout depicted on the Site Plan.

## II. Conclusion:

The Applicant requests that the Zoning Board of Appeals grant the requested area variances in connection with the proposed redevelopment project. The granting of the requested area variances is justified since the benefits that will be received by the Applicant if the requested area variances are granted, clearly outweighs any resulting detriments to the health, safety and welfare of the community per the statutorily mandated balancing test and five criteria.

Exhibit 4






