



TOWN OF COLONIE

347 OLD NISKAYUNA ROAD

LATHAM, N.Y. 12110



Town of Colonie Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Minutes – July 16, 2015

Present: Don Allard, Mike Brennan, Ellen Rosano, Linda Whelton, Laura Weed and Chair Bob Ulrich.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

The meeting minutes for June 18, 2015 were approved.

Bob Ulrich suggested that we attend a DEC meeting of all of the area CACs in November that Ingrid Haecael is setting up. The group agreed.

Ellen Rosano reported on a visit to the Pine Bush for a presentation on the controlled burns that are done to keep the Pine Bush healthy. She reported that the recently burned areas are already green, and there were thousands of Karner Blue Butterflies on the site.

Plan Reviews:

Audi Langan Rt. 9 - Green Space is 42%, at present, but the developer says that it may drop below 35%, at which time the developer will pay mitigation fees. The developer requests a setback waiver to move the building further back and provide parking in front. The interior of the project will contain islands with trees. Landscaping will be added to a decorative wall in the front. The CAC would like to know if the existing trees in the rear of the property will stay and we would like to know the species of the proposed landscaping, and have them checked against the native and invasive species lists.

A discussion followed of the traffic problems on Rt. 7 for the New Sonic Burger. Bob mentioned that the new Walmart at Latham Circle is open. At the bottom of Rt 155 on the Watervliet boarder there have been several complaints about the smell of the composting production run by the town. Don Allard asked if citizens still have access to the compost from the composting facility. Ellen Rosano replied that she thinks the compost is still available.

Don led a discussion of GE's plans to stop dredging the Hudson River. Ellen pointed out that the state legislature and several local communities have protested GE's plans to stop dredging, because there are still pcbs in the river.

Planning Board Reports: Laura Weed gave the Planning board reports for June 23 and July 14, 2015

June 23rd Planning Board Report:

1. Albert Mixed Use Development 840-844 Troy Schenectady Road - Concept Extension Request was granted.
2. Public Hearing Demolition - 69 Homewood Avenue. This derelict property is owned by Mr. Peter Forman, who pays taxes but has not maintained the property. The building is falling down, and will be demolished at the owner's expense.
3. Aldi's Food Market, 1881 -1885 Central Avenue - Application for Concept Acceptance Approved.

This new grocery will replace a derelict hotel and the Dragon Buffett Restaurant. Concerns were raised about whether the foliage in the rear of the building will be retained. The developer agreed to let a neighbor mark trees to be left on the property. The neighbor currently has a 25' buffer between his property and the existing buildings, which he would like retained. The TDE raised issues about connectivity and flow of traffic on the site, and neighbors asked about dumpster noise. There is an existing traffic light on Central Ave which is owned by the development across the street. The developer will work with that property to make the traffic light work for both properties.

4. Retail Food Service Outlet, 109 Wolf Road - Sketch Plan Review

This redevelopment project involves demolishing the tri-state laundry located on Wolf Rd. The Wolf 111 restaurant is to the north and the 99 is restaurant to the south. The Developer promises 57% green space. The size of the eventual

building is flexible, depending on needs of retail food establishment which rents the building. 35% of the green space will be concentrated in the rear as a buffer for adjacent housing.

The TDE would like cross-access connections among the many restaurants. Because it is a former laundry concerns were raised about possible cleaning chemicals on the site. The TDE said that cleaning chemical issues have been resolved. Storm water questions were also raised. The developer said that he may do porous pavements, but has doubts because of the high volume of traffic. There were also some questions about the Wolf Rd pump station. Chair Stuto directed the developer to save the wooded area in the back. Sketch Plan Approved.

5. The Crossings Apartments PDD 32 & 40 Aviation Road - Application for Final Approval

The Town Planning Board is the lead agency for a SEQR ruling and PDD ruling on this project, which is 7.92 acres bisected by NGrid easement. Two buildings and perimeter garages, + maintenance building are planned. Apartments have an easement to the Ciocotti center. Sewer lines will be connected along Aviation Rd. A Sub-surface storm water management system is based on pervious soils. There will also be an entrance through Metro Park Drive. The developer is working with NGrid on easement rules. Landscaping includes courtyard areas with fire pits, gazebo, seating areas. Landscaping plan has been submitted, but not hardscaping. Board members are concerned that there is no detail in the landscaping. The developer Promises professional landscapings & bufferings. Walking paths to Ciocotti center are connected. A new sidewalk to Wolf Rd will be added. Elevations: brick first story, siding above, stonework in the entry way, balconies on each unit.

Public Comment: Green Meadows Association, Mr. Quinn: It has been five years since a public review of the master plan. Nature is disappearing. Nature produces peacefulness. It isn't a question mainly of aesthetics, but of "your brain on nature". Plant hormones increase the immune system, lowers stress. The google map reveals the three of the remaining six green areas will be removed. Building depletes an essential physiological resource, and further heats the air. Soils capacity will not be the same once the trees have been removed. A far more substantial buffer is needed.

TDE: This development is consistent with town Development plan.

Stuto: This project is too far along to curtail.

Dalton: Important observations. Costco should be rethought.

TDE: Public benefits: sidewalks, Pump station on Wolf Rd is near capacity. This project will take off some of the burden on the pump station.

Stuto: wants to see landscape plans. Developer will return in two weeks with a detailed planting plan. Approval granted contingent on compliance with the TDE report and submission of plantings and landscape plan.

6. RGR Properties, 2090 Central Avenue - Application for Waiver Request: setbacks and parking in the front.

This project is a merger of 32 existing properties: truck parts property Arrowhead equipment and other derelict buildings and debris. Arrowhead will add building space and parking lot spaces. Promised Green space is 78% paved, 14%. There is already sewer, water and stormwater treatment on the property.

Public comment: Mike Pedogrosso: lives next door. Encon put in a pond that is dead water and breeds mosquitos. He also objects to dumpsters on the site. Joe LaCivita suggests spruces or arborvitaes to screen the ugly parts. There is also a wetland that has to be protected. The developer suggests a buffer of graded land, sediments could be removed from the pond. Swail could be re-graded.

James Chrickian of the Reformed Church: The cemetery that is adjacent is ancient. Lia violates its planned green space, parking cars very close to graves. Lia offloads cars in the church parking space. Wants the space protected as green space. Some of the trees are a hazard, and the church would like them removed. The proposed development property has been a junk yard, so anything is an improvement. Lia just violates the wetland. The church and the graveyard are historical sites, and need more respect than Lia has shown. Developer: on the proposed site, there is a steep grade between the building and the cemetery.

TDE recommends waivers. Approved.

July 14th Planning Board Report:

1. **Albert Mixed Use Development, 840-844 Troy Schenectady Road** - Concept Extension Request Granted.
2. **Asian Market, Central Avenue - Request to Un-bank 16 Parking Spaces**
These potential parking spaces were previously approved in 2008. The owner proposes taking down a fence and paving 14 spaces. Resident of 12 McNutt likes the fence, but it is in a state of disrepair since a wind storm. Joe La Civita promised to look at the property. The applicant promises to fix the fence. The neighbor also requests the health of a large tree on the property be protected. The applicant says that the tree will not be affected. The neighbor also objects that debris from the dumpsters is blowing around the lot, which is also not mowed. Busses are also parked there. Joe LaCivita will follow up. Waiver granted.
3. **Summit Senior Living, 45 Forts Ferry Road - Sketch Plan Review**
Rezoning request to a PDD. Proposed condo community includes aqua aerobics, transportation, hiking, squash courts. The property will have 13 acres and one building, of three stories with two access points. There will be 170 parking spaces, including some garage spots. The developer promises 60% green space which includes a wetland under review by the Army Corp of Engineers and a buffer between this project and nearby commercial development. It is currently zoned commercial, and will change density from O/R to residential. 100ft. conservation overlay still applies.

TDE: No GEIS area. Non-jurisdictional wetland, that will play a major role in storm water management. Site plan lacks sidewalks, and should include them. Also suggests relocating the parking from the front to the rear of the building. SEQR needs to be done. TDE requests a test to see if the elevation of the building is a problem to the neighbors.

Stuto: Density OK, PPD should be open to the community and provide an integrated community access and internal use. Applicant looking at providing trails, but worrying about town conservation overlay. Stuto also wants more vegetation to screen the project from the road and neighbors. Also wants to know about traffic impact.
4. **Colonie Senior Service Center PDD, 11 Elks Lane - Application for Concept Acceptance, SEQR Determination and Recommendation to Town Board for Planned Development District Rezoning**

Joe LaCivita: The affordable housing for senior citizens project has been changed to include all of the Elk's parcel. The Developer cites Public Benefits to justify the PDD rezoning: improving Town Hall sidewalks and Beltrone center sidewalks, Vegetation will be cleared along Watervliet/shaker rd. and a new water main improvement project will be completed through the property, affecting the neighborhood. 6.7 acres of land will be retained as open space. The Elks club and the senior citizens will share some events. The building has been moved further from Avedar Lane, a berm and trees have been increased, and the elevation of the building has been reduced. The pavilion has been moved away from Avedar Lane. The emergency access drive with gate will be recesses from Watervliet Shaker Rd.

TDE Grasso: much improved project. TDE supports approval. The SEQR review has been thoroughly evaluated. This is an Unlisted action and the Planning board is lead agency.

Many Avedar Lane residents objected to potential noise on the property, potentially impoverished residents in the buildings, no benefit to Avedar Lane residents, water runoff into the nearby creek, traffic problems on Rt. 155, threats to property values, and incompatibility of a three story apartment building with a single family home neighborhood. The TDE responded that the public benefit applies to all of the people of the town of Colonie, a traffic study had been done, and sidewalks on 155 would require eminent domain over utilities, which the developer does not have.

Several people from the Colonie Senior Center defended the project as necessary for seniors living on social security. Both SEQR and rezoning requests were approved.