

1 PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY  
2 TOWN OF COLONIE

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5 SPOTTED ZEBRA LEARNING CENTER  
6 AND BIZZY BEEZ ACTIVITY CENTER  
7 11 KROSS KEYS DRIVE  
8 SKETCH PLAN REVIEW

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11 THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled  
12 matter BY NANCY STRANG-VANDEBOGART, a Shorthand  
13 Reporter, commencing on  
14 August 7, 2012 at 7:02 p.m. at the Public  
15 Operations Center 347 Old Niskayuna Road,  
16 Latham, New York 12110

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18 BOARD MEMBERS:

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20 PETER STUTO, CHAIRMAN  
21 MICHAEL SULLIVAN  
22 BRIAN AUSTIN  
23 KATHY DALTON  
24 LOU MION  
25 KAREN GOMEZ  
ELENA VAIDA, Esq., Attorney for the Planning Board

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27 Also present:

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29 Joe LaCivita, Director, Planning and Economic  
30 Development

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32 Brad Grant, PE, Barton and Loguidice

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34 Jim Norton

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36 Scott Townsend, 3T Architects

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1                   CHAIRMAN STUTO: Good evening everyone.  
2                   Sorry we're running a little bit late. We'll  
3                   try to get started right away and get this  
4                   going. We'll call the meeting to order. We  
5                   will call the items in the order as they  
6                   appear on the agenda.

7                   If you'd like to speak on an item, please  
8                   sign in at the table over there, to my right,  
9                   next to the door.

10                  The first project on the agenda is the  
11                  Spotted Zebra Learning Center and Bizzy Beez  
12                  Activity Center, 11 Kross Keys Drive, sketch  
13                  plan review.

14                  Joe, do you have an introduction on this?

15                  MR. LACIVITA: Sure. The Spotted Zebra  
16                  Learning Center and Bizzy Beez Activity Center  
17                  is a pre-existing business that's in the Town  
18                  of Colonie. They have a location currently at  
19                  2 Kross Keys. They're in the Norton Brothers'  
20                  building. They are the landowners there. Here  
21                  is an opportunity for them to move down the  
22                  street and own a parcel of their own and  
23                  expand their business a little bit and remain  
24                  as a business in the Town of Colonie. I'll  
25                  turn it over to Scott.

1                   MR. TOWNSEND: My name is Scott Townsend  
2 and I'm with 3T Architects. We're here in  
3 Albany.

4                   We are the redesigner and the architect  
5 for the projects. More importantly, as my wife  
6 reminds me, I'm actually a partner in this  
7 project also.

8                   My wife is Sherry Townsend and she is the  
9 Executive Director of the Spotted Zebra. We  
10 have been in business for about seven years  
11 now and we have been, as Joe was saying, at 2  
12 Kross Keys which is the existing building  
13 that's on the corner over by Beff's. We have  
14 been looking for property for quite awhile in  
15 the Town of Colonie, because we'd like to stay  
16 right here in the North Colonie School  
17 District and for our families.

18                   Just to give you a little background, the  
19 Spotted Zebra is an integrated learning  
20 center. We do have special needs kids, but  
21 it's integrated so we also have all sorts of  
22 kids. Right now, we're approximately 50. We're  
23 not looking to expand the capacity of the  
24 classrooms that much; just slightly.

25                   The Bizzy Beez Activity Center that is

1 part of this is for special needs kids and  
2 it's going to be affiliated and overlapping  
3 with what the Spotted Zebra does but it's also  
4 going to have some after hours and weekend  
5 hours catering to families that have special  
6 needs kids and other kids also. It will mostly  
7 be for that.

8 I want to do a sketch plan presentation.

9 Just for your information, we did do a  
10 submission today to Mike Lyons in the Planning  
11 Department with the intent of hopefully being  
12 on the September 11<sup>th</sup> agenda. We have to  
13 confirm that we would be placed on that.

14 What you're seeing here is again, this  
15 land was subdivided quite awhile ago and there  
16 is a bunch of parcels along this area here.  
17 This is the traffic circle down at the end  
18 (Indicating). I'm pointing all this out  
19 because nobody goes down that road. Then, what  
20 we wanted to do is we actually wanted to stay  
21 in the area, like we said, for the families,  
22 but we took the parcel in the far back. The  
23 reason is that Spotted Zebra and Bizzy Beez is  
24 definitely a destination. You go there and you  
25 don't whimsically stop by. The other thing is

1 that we want to keep the kids away from all  
2 the traffic and we thought that it would be  
3 nice because we're kind of tucked in by a  
4 buffer zone - by Corporate Woods along here  
5 (Indicating). We can be playful and make like  
6 a fort for the kids, and we develop the design  
7 for the building and create some nice play  
8 areas in the woods.

9 So, very briefly, what we have is this is  
10 a key hole lot. This would be the driveway  
11 coming in (Indicating). We created a parking  
12 area here. This is showing 31 parking spots.  
13 The application just means that we can change  
14 it slightly and it's 32. The entry will be  
15 here (Indicating). There are between the  
16 Spotted Zebra and the Bizzy Beez - there are  
17 some overlapping spaces; therapy spaces,  
18 conference rooms and break rooms. Basically,  
19 what you're seeing is that Spotted Zebra,  
20 which has normal school hours, is on this side  
21 (Indicating), the Bizzy Beez is here and for  
22 the most part, Bizzy Beez will always be open  
23 when Spotted Zebra is open. There will be  
24 times when Bizzy Beez is open and Zebra is  
25 not; such as weekends and maybe some evenings.

1                   What we've done is on this application  
2                   that we submitted is we show some overflow  
3                   parking spots. Just to point out, we are well  
4                   above the requirements for the Town of  
5                   Colonie. With this amount of parking, we only  
6                   require 24 and we're asking for a little bit  
7                   more because we have some intensive therapy  
8                   and we want to make sure that we can  
9                   accommodate those kids.

10                   Once or twice a year there might be a  
11                   kindergarten graduation. Just so you know,  
12                   it's preschoolers and one kindergarten  
13                   classroom. There are four classrooms and we  
14                   have graduations and of course the aunts and  
15                   grandparents go. So, we have that once or  
16                   twice a year. Then what we have done is put  
17                   the playground to the back so that it's safe  
18                   and it keeps all the kids away. The way that  
19                   it's laid out is that actually the classrooms  
20                   have direct access to the playgrounds so kids  
21                   during the day can go right outside and come  
22                   back in the classroom. That's the layout that  
23                   we generally have for the site for our  
24                   program.

25                   With the site that we have there is some

1 wooded area to the back. Just so you know,  
2 this is the south side of the lot. This is  
3 where Executive Woods is. This is a big buffer  
4 zone on this side. I believe that this is 80  
5 feet here. We do have quite a bit of contours  
6 that we're going to have to grade and we  
7 figured it out. So, I just wanted to point  
8 that out.

9 Also, we are working with the Nortons who  
10 own the rest of the subdivision and own  
11 property currently and ABD Engineers, who  
12 designed the stormwater detention pond - we're  
13 working with them so that our site works in  
14 harmony with that.

15 MR. MION: When you come off the circle  
16 and go back there, there is like a hole. Is  
17 that the pond?

18 MR. TOWNSEND: That's the pond. We're  
19 avoiding that. The pond is about here  
20 (Indicating) and we've adjusted this since the  
21 submission. We just put in an application  
22 today. Subsequent to this we have moved the  
23 building slightly toward Executive Woods, but  
24 we're no where near the pond.

25 We'll be obviously coming back in front

1 of you as a Board and we're going to come with  
2 the details and we'll be working with the Town  
3 and the Planning Department, the Engineering  
4 Department and the TDE. So, we're going to  
5 work out all the stormwater. This is just a  
6 raw concept and what our goal is to be as  
7 reasonably natural as possible. We've got soil  
8 reports and recommendations. We're going to be  
9 using pervious pavement. We're using the  
10 concepts of creating a filtration and rain  
11 gardens and doing it as much as we can so we  
12 can perk as much as we can down into the  
13 ground. We have reports and it's all been  
14 submitted. We'll go through that as we move  
15 on.

16 What you're seeing here is just our  
17 initial concept elevation. Like I was saying,  
18 this is for kids. So, we as designers and  
19 owners put on our kid hat and are trying to be  
20 playful here. What you're actually seeing is  
21 that these are a reflection of the classrooms  
22 beyond -- these are all facing south. We are  
23 actually now in discussions with solar  
24 companies to see if we can put solar on. We  
25 can, we just have to see what the



1           affordability is and if the business plan  
2           works with that. On the north side we are sort  
3           of letting it fill up with as much natural  
4           light as we can. We want to create some nice  
5           space that's for the kids and for the staff  
6           too. So, this is the Zebra side and this is  
7           the common entry and this is the Bizzy Beez  
8           side (Indicating).

9                       Having said that, I'd like to turn back  
10           over to the questions.

11                      MS. DALTON: Is there not road frontage  
12           for this property? It looks narrow.

13                      CHAIRMAN STUTO: Do you know your road  
14           frontage?

15                      MR. TOWNSEND: I'd have to double check.  
16           I believe that it's 100 feet.

17                      MS. DALTON: Okay, I think that the Town  
18           is 80. It was hard to tell.

19                      MR. TOWNSEND: We were not involved in  
20           the original subdivision when the Nortons  
21           bought this, though.

22                      MS. DALTON: I know that it's very early  
23           but with regard to the pond - did you have  
24           plans to put up a fence or a gate? You are  
25           going to have little kids there and

1 periodically they break free. There is a plan  
2 for that?

3 MR. TOWNSEND: Yes, we have a plan. Of  
4 course, our kids never break free. The  
5 playground area itself that I was showing you  
6 on the back of the building - that will  
7 totally be closed, but we are going to be  
8 doing a combination of fencing and landscaping  
9 so that there will be no kids going down  
10 there.

11 MS. DALTON: I think that this looks like  
12 a great building. I'm very excited about the  
13 possibility of it being solar. It just looks  
14 like you did some nice things with the space  
15 there.

16 MR. MION: The handicapped parking - I  
17 noticed on the illustration that all that  
18 parking is away from the building. It looks  
19 like you're going to be using that along side  
20 of the building as a drop off.

21 MR. TOWNSEND: Yes.

22 MR. MION: Is that correct?

23 MR. TOWNSEND: We're going to cheat and  
24 show you what we just submitted today with a  
25 little revision. We have the handicapped right

1 here and we have the parking going this way  
2 (Indicating). The drop off that you're  
3 commenting on here -- just be clear that these  
4 are not full busses. I forgot to mention that.  
5 Then we have a handicap to the center and the  
6 direct access right to the curb cut.

7 MR. MION: Would it be more appropriate  
8 to get it up next to the building? Is there a  
9 way of putting it next to the handicapped  
10 parking next to the building so that they  
11 don't have to cross the roadway?

12 MR. TOWNSEND: To answer your question  
13 the best that I can - we have some challenges  
14 with the overall width and our setbacks that  
15 we're trying to do. We're at the setback level  
16 here for paving. So, we want to make sure that  
17 we have enough for some rain gardens and to  
18 accommodate that. We can take a look at that.  
19 I understand what you're saying. I can say  
20 that this is going to be a very low trafficked  
21 parking lot. The reality is that the people  
22 parking there for the full day are staff. So,  
23 it's a pretty stagnant.

24 MR. MION: Personally, I hate to see  
25 handicapped cross traffic, whether it be dense

1 or not.

2 MR. TOWNSEND: I'll take a look at that  
3 and see.

4 MS. DALTON: Is that a road that goes  
5 along next to the building on the far side?

6 MR. TOWNSEND: On this illustration that  
7 we have here -- just to clarify the evolution,  
8 because we have obviously met with DCC.  
9 Originally, we had an overflow and we were  
10 going to do grass pavers and filtration. As we  
11 discussed it and we were talking to the Fire  
12 Department, we need to accommodate a fire  
13 truck to get on that side of the building. So,  
14 we made it the correct width and that's what  
15 you're seeing. It's not parking.

16 MS. DALTON: If you let that out a little  
17 bit, you could do parking along side of that  
18 building side.

19 MR. TOWNSEND: I wish that I could say  
20 yes. I'm going to say no for a very simple  
21 technical reason. We have a lot of grading  
22 here. So, we have to grade it to the  
23 appropriate slope. That's how far down it  
24 goes. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate  
25 that.

1           MR. AUSTIN: I think that the overall  
2 design of the building is very nice. Being an  
3 educator myself, I think that it's a very  
4 modern looking and very appropriate for a  
5 school environment. I think that it will be  
6 very nice for the students. You said that it's  
7 mostly for the special needs students. What's  
8 the ratio between the two?

9           MR. TOWNSEND: It's about half and half.

10          MR. AUSTIN: It's really nice design  
11 work. I think that you've done a lot of your  
12 homework already and I think that's going with  
13 move this project forward.

14          MR. SULLIVAN: I have just one question  
15 and it may not involve your project. In our  
16 packet it was mentioned that there are plans  
17 to have cross connects from this cul-de-sac  
18 and the one to the south and also next to  
19 Corporate Woods. Have there been any other  
20 discussions? I know that this may not allow a  
21 formal connection, but can there be an  
22 emergency only type connection?

23          MR. TOWNSEND: Just to step back - where  
24 that came from is the original subdivision  
25 that was done - we actually did this in

1           Photoshop. This is an overlay of the potential  
2           future and that's all that was done.

3           CHAIRMAN STUTO: Do you know if that is a  
4           paper street right now, or what the status of  
5           that is?

6           MR. TOWNSEND: I can't speak for the  
7           Nortons. We're not representing them. I do  
8           know that it's not a paper street. They are  
9           actually amending their subdivision plan to  
10          take it off. So, they're amending their  
11          subdivision as we speak to take off those  
12          implied future road accesses.

13          To answer your question about Executive  
14          Woods - off of our property, we really can't  
15          because there is such a steep grade. From a  
16          road standpoint, we couldn't accommodate that  
17          connection with vehicles.

18          CHAIRMAN STUTO: Karen, do you have any  
19          questions?

20          MS. GOMEZ: I don't. I just want to say  
21          that it looks great. I can say that as a mom,  
22          35 years ago trying to find child care was  
23          challenging.

24          CHAIRMAN STUTO: I think that it looks  
25          great and it's a great use for there. I have

1 no problem with that.

2 Can I get a definitive answer for the  
3 Board? I was shown some things when you were  
4 talking about the roads. The map shows a  
5 future Palisades connection and then it shows  
6 another jutting future ROW road which looks  
7 like it's going to Corporate Woods.

8 Are you one of the Nortons?

9 MR. NORTON: Yes.

10 CHAIRMAN STUTO: If you want to speak to  
11 it, that's fine with me; whoever has the most  
12 knowledge of it.

13 Can you state your name for the steno?

14 MR. NORTON: I'm Jim Norton. It was  
15 brought in when we had the subdivision. They  
16 thought that they might want to get into  
17 Corporate Woods with a proposed road there.

18 CHAIRMAN STUTO: It was never voted on  
19 and approved as such?

20 MR. NORTON: For a road? No. They got an  
21 80 foot buffer zone.

22 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I see that. I'm not a  
23 traffic engineer, but with respect to the  
24 buffer, it looks better if it doesn't connect.

25 What about the Palisades connection?

1 MR. NORTON: The same thing.

2 CHAIRMAN STUTO: So, it's just an idea in  
3 somebody's mind?

4 MR. NORTON: It's on Abele's property.  
5 There is a little bit that connects to the  
6 cul-de-sac. The rest of it is Abele's.

7 CHAIRMAN STUTO: But it's not on any  
8 approved plans of the Town as being a future  
9 connection?

10 MR. NORTON: It's a future connection,  
11 but I really don't know -

12 CHAIRMAN STUTO: You don't know the legal  
13 status of it.

14 MR. NORTON: I don't know the legal  
15 status of it.

16 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Maybe you can find out  
17 by the time you come back.

18 MR. TOWNSEND: Yes, we'll talk to the  
19 Planning Department.

20 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Does our TDE have any  
21 comments at this stage?

22 MR. GRANT: Yes, just a few. Some of  
23 these have already been covered, but it  
24 includes discussion on the adjacent buffer  
25 area on the Corporate Woods side. It's not as



1 much as an environmental buffer as it is  
2 separation between Corporate Woods and what  
3 was coming in further on this site.

4 On the narrative, there was a section on  
5 the site lighting and the light's impacts. The  
6 use of pervious pavement with regards to the  
7 stormwater planners seem to be a part of an  
8 environmentally sound plan which require  
9 careful soil permeability testing. We just ask  
10 that you include the Town staff in your  
11 investigations.

12 MR. TOWNSEND: We just submitted those  
13 today.

14 MR. GRANT: Show all existing easements  
15 on an adjacent property including a 12-inch  
16 water main on the south side. We're aware that  
17 the Fire Department access will have the  
18 12-inch water main there.

19 Careful grading for the play area and  
20 other areas accessible to children should be  
21 noted on the plans and creative areas where  
22 handicapped children will play.

23 What type of enclosure for the play areas  
24 will be proposed? I think that you said a  
25 chain link fence.

1 MR. TOWNSEND: No. Someone else said it.  
2 We answered back and forth, but we haven't  
3 decided yet.

4 MR. GRANT: Will sensory activities for  
5 children include unique landscaping or  
6 Birdhouses? Children's garden as a teaching  
7 forum?

8 Those are just throwing out some ideas.

9 Stormwater management - at this time,  
10 there was the original plans described at the  
11 existing basin. There was a dry detention  
12 basin that was a Town of Colonie facility.  
13 needs to be confirmed by consulting existing  
14 SWMP's for that facility and new hydrologic  
15 modeling. Those should be discussed with the  
16 Town's Stormwater Department. There may be  
17 some condition issues.

18 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I also want to  
19 complement the package that you put together  
20 at this stage of the project. It made the  
21 project very understandable. We appreciate  
22 that.

23 Anything else from the Board members?

24 ***(There was no response.)***

25 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, thank you. We'll

1 look forward to seeing you again.

2

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*(Whereas the above entitled proceeding*

4

*was concluded at 7:29 p.m.)*

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**CERTIFICATION**

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3  
4            *I, NANCY STRANG-VANDEBOGART, Short hand*  
5            *reporter and Notary Public in and for the*  
6            *State of New York, hereby CERTIFY that the*  
7            *record taken by me at the time and place*  
8            *noted in the heading hereof is a true and*  
9            *accurate transcript of same, to the best of*  
10           *my ability and belief.*

11  
12  
13  
14            \_\_\_\_\_  
                  **NANCY STRANG-VANDEBOGART**

15  
16  
17            ***Dated August 16, 2012***

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25  
  
**Legal Transcription**

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