

1 PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY

2 TOWN OF COLONIE

3 *****

4 HOME 2 HOME SUITES

5 10 METRO PARK ROAD

6 SKETCH PLAN REVIEW

7 *****

8 THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above

9 entitled matter by NANCY STRANG-VANDEBOGART, a

10 Shorthand Reporter, commencing on May 21, 2013 at

11 7:15 p.m. at The Public Operations Center, 347 Old

12 Niskayuna Road, Latham, New York

13

14 BOARD MEMBERS:

15 PETER STUTO, CHAIRMAN

16 LOU MION

17 KAREN GOMEZ

18 BRIAN AUSTIN

19 TIMOTHY LANE

20 SUSAN MILSTEIN

21 KATHY DALTON

22

23 ALSO PRESENT:

24 Elena Vaida, Esq., Counsel to the Planning Board

25 Joe LaCivita, Director, Planning and Economic Development

Pat Mitchell, Creighton Manning Engineering

1 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Next on our agenda is Home 2 Home
2 Suites Hotel, 10 Metro Park Road, sketch plan review,
3 four-story 91-room hotel.

4 Joe, would you like to give us an
5 introduction on this?

6 MR. LACIVITA: Sure. We'll turn this right over
7 to the development team after this.

8 This is in a COR zone. It's zoned
9 appropriately, but they were here for the
10 Development Coordination committee meeting on
11 April 24th. There are a few waivers of the design
12 standards that will be discussed during the course
13 of today's sketch plan review. As I said, this is
14 zoned appropriately. It is for a hotel off of
15 Metro Park Road and I will turn it over to Pat.

16 MR. MITCHELL: I'm Pat Mitchell from Creighton
17 Manning Engineering. I'm here with the development
18 team.

19 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I'd like to invite your team to
20 sit right next to you. You can communicate if you need
21 to, and we can see what you're talking about.

22 MR. MITCHELL: We are here to present for sketch
23 plan approval a Hilton Home 2 Home Suites Hotel. As
24 Joe had stated, it is in the proper zone. We had
25 actually been in front of the Zoning Board in March and

1 we did get a couple of variances. One was for density.
2 We exceeded the density with a vertical building.

3 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Let me just ask the Board: Does
4 everybody know where this is located?

5 (All the Board members confirmed that they
6 did.)

7 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, sorry to interrupt you.

8 MR. MITCHELL: We also had a variance that was
9 actually a use variance required on this one. There
10 was an issue with kitchenettes being larger than 60
11 square feet, which deemed an apartment in this Town.
12 Also, we had a variance for a billboard to be located
13 out in the same sign area at the entrance from the
14 intersection of Wolf Road onto Metro Park Road. We
15 want to pout another sign in there.

16 CHAIRMAN STUTO: How big is that sign?

17 MR. MITCHELL: It's 24 square feet per side. So,
18 we did get a variance and that's been approved already.

19 MR. LANE: So, the variance is because the sign is
20 not actually -

21 MR. MITCHELL: Yes, it's considered a billboard
22 because it's an off-site sign.

23 The developer had a market analysis done
24 showing a need for a hotel. As Joe stated, it's a
25 91 unit hotel with associated parking, stormwater

1 management, utilities and in this case a
2 billboard.

3 I'm sure that the Board Members had a chance
4 to take a look at the plans, so I'll try to keep
5 this brief.

6 What I wanted to bring up was a couple of the
7 items in the DCC comment review.

8 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Can you put up an elevation? I
9 think that would be helpful.

10 MR. LANE: We didn't get that with our packet, by
11 the way. Is that final?

12 MR. MITCHELL: It is not final at this point.

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Does the other side show what
14 it's going to look like?

15 MR. MITCHELL: Yes, although it's a little bit
16 smaller, it's more of a rendering.

17 So, we are requesting two waivers here. One
18 of them is to have the building set back farther
19 than 20 feet. This is a COR zone. The other one
20 is to have parking in the front yard. Those two
21 are very interrelated. Being a hotel use, we
22 really need perimeter access.

23 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I'm going to ask you to stop for
24 one second.

25 Elena, can you make a note -- we grant so

1 many waivers for that and we need to address that
2 with the Town Board. Can you take charge of that
3 and make sure that we look at that really closely?

4 MS. VAIDA: Yes.

5 MR. MITCHELL: Again, it's very much in keeping
6 with the Metro Park corridor. All of the businesses -
7 and when I say all of them I don't mean nine percent;
8 I mean all of them. Between Metro Park and our site
9 all have parking in the front yard. They all have
10 building set back more than 20 feet from the property
11 line. So, it's very much in keeping with the current
12 neighborhood out there.

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I'll speculate that you're not
14 going to have trouble with those waivers.

15 MR. LANE: What happens if you don't get the
16 waivers?

17 MR. MITCHELL: We did take a look at a couple
18 different scenarios here. Mike Lyons had asked us to
19 put more of the parking behind the building. If we
20 were to follow his direction, it actually requires that
21 we get other waivers and we would no longer be able to
22 meet greenspace. The project is so tight right now, we
23 had to be extremely efficient in the parking. Any time
24 that we have a drive aisle that's only single loaded
25 with parking, it puts us over our greenspace limit

1 here. So, we did look at these items.

2 MR. LANE: To get the waiver, you have to show
3 that there are no other reasonable alternatives. So,
4 when you come back, that's the kind of information that
5 we look at. we're not going to act on this tonight.
6 We look at all these different ways.

7 MR. MITCHELL: We're not just actually telling you
8 this, we laid out plans trying to do what Mike Lyons
9 was looking for to show why it doesn't work. If we
10 could do what he was asking for, it either means that
11 we have to reduce the number of parking spaces and get
12 a waiver for that or we have to encroach into the
13 parking setback area. So, some of the things that
14 we're asking for would require other waivers. They
15 would be different waivers, but other waivers.

16 CHAIRMAN STUTO: You're surrounded by commercial
17 on all sides?

18 MR. MITCHELL: We are.

19 At this point, I just want to ask the Board
20 if they have any questions.

21 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Can you bring that closer to us
22 so that we could pass it down?

23 MR. MITCHELL: Sure. These colors aren't final.
24 There is actually a connecting section on the north of
25 what they call a support and it's artificial stone.

1 MR. LANE: We usually like a little more color and
2 more eye catching things in the equipment design.

3 CHAIRMAN STUTO: We care about the architectural
4 detail and how it looks.

5 MR. MITCHELL: And I think that the biggest change
6 that we're willing to make is where you see the dark
7 brown areas. It is the artificial stone. That color
8 is going to be changed. I think that you're going to
9 see a significant change in the appearance.

10 CHAIRMAN STUTO: We'll be looking for that -
11 something that looks good.

12 Joe Grasso, do you have some comments on
13 this?

14 MR. GRASSO: We don't have a comment letter. I'm
15 going to pass out copies of an air photo that we looked
16 at for the Cap Com project. It shows the roadway
17 improvements. I'm just going to highlight which site
18 we're talking about to kind of put it in context. The
19 site that we're looking at is this one right here
20 (Indicating). It's the corner of Metro Park Road and
21 Winners Circle, or Aviation Road.

22 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Is that surrounded by three
23 roads, or two roads and a driveway?

24 MR. GRASSO: It will be surrounded by three roads
25 and a parking lot; two sides are private. The two

1 public roads are Metro Park Road and Winners Circle.
2 Along the project site is Aviation Road, which then
3 will extend through Winner Circle and extend down to
4 Albany Shaker Road. Mike Lyons had said during the DCC
5 meeting that he would consider recommending mirroring
6 the building, such that the porte-cochere, which is now
7 located on the west side of the building, or towards
8 the Wolf Road side - if you mirrored that building,
9 that porte-cochere would be on Aviation Road.

10 CHAIRMAN STUTO: In other words, you're saying to
11 flip it?

12 MR. GRASSO: It would be flipped. The front of
13 the building would still face Metro Park, but the side
14 of the building with the porte-cochere, which is also
15 has a main entry look to the building, would be facing
16 Aviation Road.

17 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Do you have two main entrances?
18 Is that what you're showing?

19 MR. MITCHELL: We do not. We have one main
20 entrance here and at DCC they asked for a secondary
21 entrance.

22 CHAIRMAN STUTO: On the diagram there it looks
23 like you have something on Metro Park Road, too.

24 MR. MITCHELL: This facility actually has a little
25 park area outside over here. So, the porte-cochere is

1 here and there is a little outdoor seating area here
2 with landscaping (Indicating). But it looks like an
3 entranceway on Metro Park. There is access on all four
4 sides of this building. We have secure buildings on
5 all these sides.

6 CHAIRMAN STUTO: The elevation that's below. It
7 looks like there is a major entrance, but you're
8 telling me --

9 MR. MITCHELL: It's not. There is an entry over
10 here (Indicating). This is not a major entrance. This
11 is like a little park like area out door seating and
12 tables.

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I'm not talking about that. I'm
14 talking about the doorway.

15 MS. DALTON: This is essentially what we were
16 talking to you about down here (Indicating), because
17 what you see first depends upon which direction you're
18 coming from. All of the sides should really have
19 something that looks like a front entrance. You're
20 planning on having entrances on each side anyway. So,
21 they should just be spiffed up a little bit so that
22 they look like nice entrances. Essentially, that's
23 what Lou and I were talking about.

24 MR. MITCHELL: I think that to some extent, that's
25 correct. When I see entrances over here, I'm talking

1 entrances when you check into your hotel, you get a key
2 card. We don't want people that haven't checked in
3 coming through these entrances. We're not trying to
4 attract people to those entrances. We want to get them
5 directed to the proper entrance until they check in and
6 get a key card. Then, they can access those entrances.
7 We really don't want that to be looking like a main
8 entrance to the building. You have to get through the
9 lobby first.

10 CHAIRMAN STUTO: What I'm trying to say is that we
11 don't want it to look like the back end of the building
12 with nothing to it.

13 MR. MITCHELL: I'm sure that's something that we
14 can certainly work through. I know that already Kevin
15 had mentioned that typically this Home 2 sign gets
16 placed up on this other feature. In this case, because
17 of this facing Aviation Road, we already started to
18 look at making this look like more of an entrance to
19 the building, kind of what you're asking for. I think
20 that we would look at that.

21 MS. DALTON: Even if it's not like your main
22 entrance and you're only having people who have already
23 have keys going in and out of there, the bottom line is
24 that it's considered an extended stay hotel, so you're
25 going to want something, whether it's shelter from the

1 rain or some kind of overhand, I would think.

2 MR. MITCHELL: It will be facing Aviation Road.
3 Again, we don't want it to look like the back of a
4 building.

5 MR. MION: Just to get it on the record, what we
6 discussed about the handicapped parking at the two
7 entrances - I would like to see at least a couple of
8 spaces at each one of your entrances. Not all
9 handicapped people need elevators, but you need parking
10 spaces.

11 MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

12 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Joe, did you want to continue?

13 MR. GRASSO: Yes, I'd just like to get some
14 clarification regarding the building orientation. Is
15 the Planning Board generally comfortable with the
16 layout of the parking and the porte-cochere being on
17 the left hand side?

18 CHAIRMAN STUTO: You mean facing Wolf Road?

19 MR. GRASSO: Yes, facing Wolf Road.

20 MS. DALTON: As long as its designed so that it
21 will look nice.

22 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I would like to hear your
23 opinion.

24 MR. GRASSO: We're comfortable with that. I will
25 say that although there will be a substantial increase

1 in Aviation Road/Winners Circle. You'll probably start
2 to see a few thousands vehicles a day. We're never
3 going to see anything nearly that we get on Wolf Road.
4 I think that the predominant access to this site is
5 always going to be from Wolf Road and Metro Park Road.
6 That said, because there is going to be such a change
7 in the dynamics of Aviation Road regarding the traffic
8 volume, I think that the Planning Board is spot on to
9 say that additional treatments to that side of the
10 building are very important.

11 In terms of the access points, because there
12 are two full access curb cuts shown, although we
13 support two access points to a facility like this
14 - one primarily for emergency access and one for
15 primary access, we've got some concerns with the
16 primary access shown on Metro Park because it's so
17 close to the offset intersection. The building is
18 one of the main entrances to the 3 Winners Circle
19 office building that sees a lot of traffic. The
20 one across the street is the one that goes to the
21 Shopper's World shopping complex. We would like
22 to see that main entrance shifted more down Metro
23 Park Road so that it's equal distance between the
24 west side of the property and the east side of the
25 property. That hasn't changed. We would like to

1 see that in the future.

2 CHAIRMAN STUTO: And that would be to avoid
3 conflicts with the intersection?

4 MR. GRASSO: Yes, exactly. Then the intersection
5 on Aviation Road east - we would prefer that there be
6 no curb cuts located along that road frontage at all,
7 and that secondary entrance be either tied into that
8 driveway to the back which is an access drive and it
9 serves the Winners Circle office building or actually
10 to the private access road to the westside. Obviously,
11 the landownership issues and the right of this property
12 owner to those adjacent properties need to be resolved.

13 MR. MITCHELL: There are a couple of issues with
14 getting access to the parking lot over here and also to
15 this road (Indicating). One of them is this piece of
16 property right here. It's already being used as
17 greenspace for 3 Winners Circle. So, to put a drive
18 across it - now we're taking greenspace from another
19 project and it is privately owned, as well as this
20 (Indicating). The other issue that's over to the
21 parking lot is there are some significant drainage
22 issues and anything that we do to constrain that is
23 certainly a negative. I know that Joe's office is
24 right there and I know that there are some historical
25 flooding issues with this drainage way today and

1 anything that we do to restrict that is going to make
2 it worse.

3 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Do you have any rebuttal?

4 MR. GRASSO: Understanding those constraints, I
5 still think that we need to approach it from a balance
6 of where is the greatest need being met. Regarding the
7 greenspace, obviously whether or not you build an
8 access connection on one side of the building or the
9 other, you're still using the same amount of
10 greenspace, approximately.

11 CHAIRMAN STUTO: You can make it up -

12 MR. GRASSO: It's got to be mitigated. We do have
13 serious concerns regarding the access. We think that's
14 something that would need to be addressed in future
15 plans.

16 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Can you take a closer look at
17 that with Joe?

18 MR. MITCHELL: Yes.

19 MR. GRASSO: There has been some landscaping and
20 lighting improvements recently along Metro Park Drive
21 done by the owner of this property; Belltrone Group.
22 We think that there is credence to continuing that
23 landscaping theme down through the frontage of the
24 site. They should be able to accommodate that as their
25 plans advance.

1 They've done a good job identifying some
2 needed pedestrian connections along the frontage
3 of both aviation road and Metro Park Road, which
4 are desirable features of the plan. We'd like to
5 see those evolve as the plan advances as well.

6 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Thank you. We appreciate it.

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8 (Whereas the above proceeding was concluded
9 at 7:34 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATION

I, NANCY STRANG-VANDEBOGART, Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of New York, hereby CERTIFY that the record taken by me at the time and place noted in the heading hereof is a true and accurate transcript of same, to the best of my ability and belief.

NANCY STRANG-VANDEBOGART

Dated May 30, 2013

