

1 PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY

2 TOWN OF COLONIE

3 *****
4 RIVERHILL CENTER BUILDING 1207
5 1201 TROY SCHENECTADY ROAD
6 ARCHITECTURAL ELEVATION REVIEW
7 *****

8 THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled
9 matter by NANCY STRANG-VANDEBOGART, a Shorthand
10 Reporter, commencing on July 15, 2014 at 7:03 p.m.
11 at The Public Operations Center, 347 Old Niskayuna
12 Road, Latham, New York

13 BOARD MEMBERS:
14 PETER STUTO, CHAIRMAN
15 LOU MION
16 TIMOTHY LANE
17 TINA GOODWIN SEGAL
18 SUSAN MILSTEIN
19 TIMOTHY LANE
20 KATHY DALTON

21 ALSO PRESENT:
22 Kathleen Marinelli, Esq., Counsel to the Planning Board
23 Joe LaCivita, Director, Planning and Economic Development
24 Chris Bette, First Columbia

25

1 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Before we go through the agenda
2 items, Joe LaCivita, do you have any clean up or
3 business matters you'd like to discuss?

4 MR. LACIVITA: No. I'd like to hand out for the
5 Board tonight -- this is a Resolution that we're going to
6 be looking to act on or adopt at our next Planning
7 Board. It's really a recommendation to the Town Board.

8 As you know when we do projects, we have
9 several mitigation areas or GEIS'. They are the Vly
10 Road, the Airport and the Boght Road districts.
11 They particularly do enhancements or improvements
12 for traffic and water and other improvements that
13 they do, based on the overall project that they
14 have.

15 What we are finding is that some of the larger
16 projects that have developed in these three areas,
17 again, the Vly, the Albany Airport and the Boght -
18 some of those impact fees are millions of dollars.
19 Those typical fees are paid in one-third, one-third
20 and one-third. So, it's one-third at approval and
21 there is one-third at construction and one-third at
22 permitting and CO. Developers are finding some of
23 these mitigation fees collectively to be hard to do
24 after having put in the infrastructure as well.

25 Take for example, Canterbury Crossings. All

1 that infrastructure going from Route 9 over to Boght
2 Road -- all the infrastructure water, sewer, roadway
3 systems prior to is about a \$1.8 million dollar
4 mitigation fee. So, the Town Board - and Paul can
5 speak to that if he wanted to - looked at spreading
6 out these mitigation fees in sections or phases. If
7 you come for a permit for one to 15 houses, you're
8 going to pay "X". For the next 15 you might pay
9 "X", and the next you'd pay "X". It softens the
10 burden for development and therefore we start to see
11 development continue through. This is one of the
12 things that we are going to be looking at. We'll
13 talk a little bit about it on the 29th.

14 I wanted to give it to you in advance to say
15 that we will be making a recommendation to the Town
16 Board. They are the ones that can actually,
17 financially burden the Town. We, at the Planning
18 Board, can't. We look at the mitigation fees
19 through the process albeit we talk about it, but
20 this gives the Town Board the ability to say that
21 the Planning Board has looked at it and we favor
22 splitting out the fees for the developers.

23 MR. LANE: Will they set the actual schedule or
24 just a change in the existing schedule? It's not an
25 alternative. What is the fee schedule?

1 MR. LACIVITA: That's a great question. In each
2 mitigation component - and Chris Bette has been through
3 this as well - when you do development in different
4 areas the impact is all based on transportation cost
5 which is calculated by the Capital District
6 Transportation Committee. So, you come up with a dollar
7 amount on the project as to what the mitigation is. So
8 each fee schedule would be different.

9 MR. LANE: So, they can determine on a project by
10 project basis?

11 MR. LACIVITA: When they look at it, they say, what
12 is the cost of residential housing for it and then they
13 split that out. Commercials will be one-third,
14 one-third and one-third because they're not as bearing
15 as the residential are. But when you're looking at 300
16 houses, you can spread that out a little bit better.

17 MR. LANE: As the houses are built.

18 MR. LACIVITA: That's correct. So, we'll be
19 looking at that at the next meeting.

20 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Think about it, talk about and
21 call Joe, in the meantime.

22 MR. LACIVITA: Yes, if you have a question.

23 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Thank you.

24 We'll call up the first item on the agenda.

25 Riverhill Center Building 1207, 1201 Troy

1 Schenectady Road. This is an architectural
2 elevation review. The applicant has been in and I
3 think that we have seen this project a couple of
4 times. We've asked some questions about what the
5 buildings are going to look like and I think that's
6 what he is here tonight to discuss.

7 You want to turn it right over to the
8 applicant?

9 MR. LACIVITA: Yes.

10 MR. BETTE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 For the record, my name is Chris Bette I'm with
12 First Columbia.

13 As the Chairman said, we were here back in
14 April for concept acceptance for this 12,000 foot
15 retail office building that we are proposing in the
16 parking lot of our office park on Route 7 down by
17 the intersection of Vly Road and Route 7.

18 At the time that we were here in April we
19 discussed a lot of things. We also discussed the
20 elevation which is part of the process in the COR
21 zone. At the time that we were here in April, we
22 proposed a more modern looking retail plaza. As I
23 said back then, we tasked an architect to design
24 something that complemented our existing office
25 buildings and yet would attract the types of users

1 that we are looking to attract. Based on the
2 feedback from the Board and the TDE, we all thought
3 that we could do better and frankly, I thought that
4 we could as well. So, tonight I'm here.

5 We generated a new building look. It's the
6 same size building; 200 feet long roughly and 60
7 feet wide, approximately. We've added some ins and
8 outs to break up the elevation and some ups and
9 downs to break up the elevations, changes in
10 materials, changes in colors, added some awnings and
11 added a couple above the roof features on the
12 corner. I think that we heard what you said. I
13 think that we've come up with something that is more
14 consistent to what we are seeing throughout the
15 Town, but still complementary to what we have behind
16 this building in our office park. I'm here tonight
17 to see if the Board is agreeable with our look. We
18 are progressing our review for final approval.

19 One of the things that we talked about in April
20 was to come back in the interim to at least get this
21 architectural issue off our list and we'll just
22 focus on the engineering issues and site plan issues
23 for final.

24 That's why we are here tonight and I'm happy to
25 hear any comments that you have.

1 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Joe Grasso, have you looked at
2 this?

3 MR. GRASSO: We did review it. We didn't issue a
4 letter on it because we thought that it was best to come
5 here and discuss it openly and discuss it with the
6 Planning Board. In general, it's a substantial change
7 from the elevation that we looked at previously. Chris
8 presents both the previous proposed elevation as well as
9 the new elevation, so you can easily see substantial
10 differences. The new design is much more conforming
11 with the design standards within the Town Zoning Code
12 and in reviewing the minutes from the last meeting it
13 seems like he has made a strong attempt to address the
14 specific concerns that were brought up by the Planning
15 Board.

16 That said, with respect to architectural
17 design, as we often say, beauty is in the eye of the
18 beholder. Although we feel like it's much more
19 aesthetically pleasing and seems to address the
20 concerns previously raised, it's really something
21 that we should get reviewed by the Planning Board.

22 CHAIRMAN STUTO: So, you don't have any specific
23 comments?

24 MR. GRASSO: No, we don't. I'll just say that
25 we're in between concept and final. The applicant has

1 made a complete preliminary plan submission to us so
2 we're doing that detailed engineering review. We can
3 review that the next time that he's back before the
4 Planning Board for clarification or additional
5 information or refinements. Tonight is a great
6 opportunity for him to hear any feedback.

7 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I'll just open it up to the Board.

8 MS. MILSTEIN: I have a question. I can't tell
9 from the drawing. Where are the awnings?

10 MR. BETTE: The awnings are these black heavy lines
11 (Indicating).

12 MS. MILSTEIN: What are they made out of?

13 MR. BETTE: They will probably be consistent with
14 what you're seeing throughout the Town; some sort of
15 fabric or material.

16 MS. MILSTEIN: But not metal.

17 MR. BETTE: No, I think that it will be something
18 other than that.

19 MS. DALTON: It looks a lot better; thank you.

20 MR. LANE: It does. I'll agree.

21 MR. BETTE: The intent was to give you a little bit
22 more wow factor. Last time there was no wow factor.

23 MS. DALTON: I was a little un-wowed.

24 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I have a general question. It
25 doesn't necessarily pertain to this. Looking at this

1 reminds me of it.

2 I've run into a couple of people in social
3 settings and they say -- this may come out of the
4 blue for everybody -- why are all the new buildings
5 beige in Colonie? I don't know how to respond to
6 that because I'm not an architect or a color person
7 or designer. Since more than one person has said it
8 to me, I'm wondering if the professionals or anybody
9 can say --

10 MR. GRASSO: We like to refer to them as earth
11 tones.

12 CHAIRMAN STUTO: You're a landscape architect.

13 MR. GRASSO: I am. You understand that design and
14 color pallets change over time and what's in style today
15 is going to be out of style 50 years from now. Right
16 now a very common architectural color pallet is to use
17 earth tones and introducing natural materials into
18 architectural design. That's something that you see
19 here and you see common in many of the buildings, as
20 opposed to the cooler colors; grays, silvers, the cooler
21 browns. These are more warm earth tone colors. That's
22 what you're going to see until people's taste change.

23 CHAIRMAN STUTO: So, I say don't you know that
24 earth tones are in?

25 MR. GRASSO: Primary colors are out and cool colors

1 are out.

2 MR. LACIVITA: And the materials are?

3 MR. BETTE: The materials are going to be kind of
4 an Efus - that stucco material and some probably
5 cultured stone.

6 MS. MILSTEIN: I'll make a comment. I love the end
7 buildings. I think that they look great. The middle
8 ones look good. The mail and the dry cleaner are a
9 little boring for me.

10 MR. BETTE: It's 200 feet long which seems long,
11 but it's really not that long compared to other retail
12 buildings that you see. So, you try to break things up
13 and I think that you're going get what you don't get in
14 the picture - but in real life you'll get a little depth
15 because these tan areas will be set back a little bit so
16 you'll get ins and outs and you'll get some shadowing
17 and things like that. You can do some different scoring
18 and whatnot and different designs in that to kind of
19 bring things out as well.

20 MR. LANE: Are those just potential vendors?

21 MR. BETTE: Yes, just ideas and marketing.

22 MR. LANE: You don't know at this point who you
23 have coming in there?

24 MS. DALTON: Well, you still have the dentist,
25 right?

1 MR. BETTE: We still have the dentist. The dentist
2 is currently in the building behind. He is still
3 expressing desire to be in the front corner of this
4 building.

5 MR. AUSTIN: That was a time line issue for you
6 also, right?

7 MR. BETTE: Yes. He was going to do some certain
8 things - stay in part of the existing space or come to
9 the new space. He's still working through some things.
10 We bought a little time, but I have to get a decision
11 soon, I'm sure.

12 MR. AUSTIN: With the bank there will be a
13 drive-thru as well?

14 MR. BETTE: The bank has a drive-thru opportunity
15 on the end.

16 MR. AUSTIN: I think that your earth tones are very
17 nice.

18 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I don't think that we need a
19 formal vote here, do we?

20 MR. LACIVITA: No.

21 MR. BETTE: Thank you, very much. We'll see you
22 hopefully in a short period of time for final approval.

23 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Thank you.

24 (Whereas the above entitled proceeding was
25 concluded at 7:13 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 July 31, 2014

