

1 PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY

2 TOWN OF COLONIE

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4 AUTO ZONE
886 LOUDON ROAD
5 SKETCH PLAN

6 *****

7 THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled
8 matter by NANCY STRANG-VANDEBOGART, a Shorthand
9 Reporter, commencing on November 18, 2014 at 7:05
p.m. at The Public Operations Center, 347 Old
Niskayuna Road, Latham, New York

10 BOARD MEMBERS:
11 PETER STUTO, CHAIRMAN
12 LOU MION
13 TIMOTHY LANE
14 SUSAN MILSTEIN
15 CRAIG SHAMLIAN

16 ALSO PRESENT:
17 Kathleen Marinelli, Esq., Counsel to the Planning Board
18 Michael Tengeler, Planning and Economic Development
19 Nathan Kirchner, Langan Engineering
20 Joe Grasso, PE, CHA

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1 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Good evening and welcome to the
2 Town of Colonie Planning Board. I'm sorry for the late
3 start. We have four members here tonight.

4 Mike Tengeler, are you ready to talk to us
5 about preliminary matters?

6 MR. TENGELER: Absolutely, yes. We have just a
7 little bit of administrative business.

8 I passed out the calendars for the 2015
9 calendar year for the Planning Board. So, study
10 those, frame those and keep them on-hand.

11 A quick discussion with the core members that
12 we have here - the Board. There is a major project
13 on 4232 Albany Street which was a Crisafulli parking
14 lot expansion. There has been a proposal to our
15 department to where the applicant, Nina Crisafulli
16 who is sitting here tonight, would like to scale the
17 project down from a 243 spot parking lot to a 75
18 space parking lot which would keep the total
19 disturbance under 10,000 square feet. This would
20 turn the project into a minor project which would
21 get processed administratively through staff review.
22 If there are no objections to that through the
23 Planning Board, what we would like to do is take it
24 through a preliminary final submission to our
25 departments and get it all reviewed and then bring

1 it back to the Planning Board if there are waivers
2 to be acted on; and if not, just for a general Board
3 update and discussion point for the public.

4 CHAIRMAN STUTO: As long as the public is still
5 involved, I'm okay with that. They had a lot of good
6 comments. I think that a lot of them can be addressed.
7 I don't want them to feel cut out of the process.

8 MR. LANE: If it should change down the road -

9 MR. TENGELER: Absolutely. Whether it's a month or
10 a year down the road -- if this turns into a major
11 project, this would come back before the Planning Board
12 so you still have the opportunity to review it. It
13 cannot go to a 243 spot lot without Planning Board
14 action and approval.

15 MS. MILSTEIN: Do you really need our approval or
16 is it because it's a minor project, is it automatically
17 gets -

18 MR. TENGELER: Yes, the Board does have the
19 discretion to hear it again if it is a minor project.
20 The Board has the right to hear any project the Board
21 wishes.

22 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I think that the way that it's
23 worded. The Department has the right to refer it.

24 MR. TENGELER: Correct, Peter.

25 MS. MILSTEIN: So, it will be referred back.

1 MR. LANE: That's not how I heard it. If it goes
2 beyond the 75 at some point -

3 MR. TENGELER: This disturbance would have been
4 10,000 square feet. Is a cumulative disturbance so we
5 need to have the service added onto the 10,000 square
6 feet.

7 CHAIRMAN STUTO: And the people will still have an
8 opportunity to speak.

9 MR. TENGELER: Absolutely. It would be placarded
10 and the public can come out and see the results; yes.

11 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Any other questions?

12 (There was no response.)

13 Okay, we seem to have a consensus.

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

15 Auto Zone, 886 Loudon Road. This is a sketch
16 plan review, raze existing building and construct a
17 new 7,381 square foot retail store.

18 Again, Mike, do you have any introductory
19 remarks?

20 MR. TENGELER: Not much. This is a sketch plan
21 review as a first phase and review for the Planning
22 Board. It hasn't been placarded yet and there is no
23 requirements to placard at sketch plan. It's basically
24 here just to make a presentation to the Board and kind
25 of let us know what we are in for.

1 I'll turn it over to the applicant's
2 representative.

3 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Thank you.

4 MR. KIRCHNER: Nathan Kirchner with Langan
5 Engineering Environmental Surveying and Landscape
6 Architecture.

7 Again, this is a real informal presentation
8 tonight. We met with DCC on October 22nd and we
9 received all their comments with respect to process
10 and some detailed comments and concerns with respect
11 to the layout.

12 The current layout has a very basic color
13 scheme. The orange is the building itself and the
14 gray is the pavement area and the green is
15 landscaped area.

16 A quick orientation is this is the Blockbuster
17 site and approximately in the same building location
18 (Indicating). Loudon Road is on the bottom of the
19 page, which is east. To the west is the existing
20 Hannaford Grocery store. Dunkin Donuts is north and
21 I believe it's a Citizen's Bank which is to the
22 south of the property.

23 This is the layout that was presented to DCC.
24 Their major concern with this -- under the current
25 conditions there are kind of circuitous cross access

1 easement from Loudon Road to the rear of the
2 Hannaford Grocery store. One of the comments that
3 DCC made was they weren't really sure - they didn't
4 offer a definitive opinion on whether they proposed
5 direct cut-through, if you will. They were
6 suggesting that we get comments on that layout.

7 The other two major items that they discussed
8 with us with respect to the layout was the location
9 of the curb cut. This curb cut is on that taper
10 which poses some traffic circulation challenges.
11 It's been done in the past and it can be
12 accommodated.

13 The final comment was that several of the
14 members of DCC suggested actually putting the
15 building with the rear of the store on the south
16 side of the property. The suggestion was that we
17 bring several alternative layouts and present them
18 to the Board this evening and receive any feedback
19 that you may have. Again, this is the original
20 layout that was proposed (Indicating). There are a
21 couple of options and in no real preferred order.
22 One was simply to address the direct cut-through
23 from Loudon Road to the property - keep the building
24 in its presupposed location and relocated the curb
25 cut so it's no longer on the taper. It provides a

1 more prototypical retail site access and parking lot
2 layout. It kind of minimalizes the cut-through.

3 One important note is that there is a deed
4 requirement that the customer has maintained with
5 respect to site access on the property that we
6 cannot do away with. It's pretty elusive with
7 respect to how that access was provided and from a
8 site constraint standpoint I don't know how familiar
9 the Board is with the site. There is an existing
10 hill, essentially, in this area (Indicating). We
11 had a discussion with the Town that has led to
12 require a significant work to get rid of. We're
13 trying to stay out of that area and provide the
14 access that's required with the deed restriction and
15 find a site plan that's amenable to the Board.

16 This is a little less of a cut-through and
17 provides the necessary access and addresses the
18 concerns that the Board and DCC had with respect to
19 the curb cut location. We discussed this with DCC
20 and spoke candidly on the whole topic. They still
21 had concerns similar to this one.

22 The big concern of the cut-through was the race
23 track effect of people screaming through here with
24 cars parked here and backing out in that main drive
25 aisle.

1 This layout - DCC still had concerns about
2 people coming into the site and the traffic on both
3 sides. It's a pretty typical detailed layout, but
4 it is something that they did voice some concerns
5 about so again, we wanted to make sure that the
6 Board was aware of this.

7 The next layout - again, in terms of location,
8 we reconfigured some of the parking and maintained
9 the main cut through. Again, Auto Zone doesn't have
10 a preference on -- it's at the discretion of the
11 Board based on the DCC's comments and this is
12 something that was a concern.

13 Finally at the request of DCC we did flip the
14 property. This is with the curb cut all the way to
15 the north which gets it as far from the existing
16 traffic signal as possible. It does allow for a
17 little more freedom on Loudon Road for queuing and
18 things of that nature. It does put the back of the
19 building really towards the developed retail area.
20 This is one of the things that our client wasn't
21 necessarily thrilled with, however. The Town viewed
22 it as better to put the building's front door
23 oriented as everything else in here.

24 Again, this takes away that whole cut-through
25 race track, as it was described to me.

1 All of the layouts do have similar parking.
2 The Zoning Code requires 37 spaces. For a building
3 this size it's approximately a 7,400 square foot
4 building. Two of them have 43 spaces and the other
5 two have 40 spaces, so they're all within the close
6 proximity to the requirements. It's a retail use in
7 the HCOR zoning district.

8 That's all I have.

9 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, we're going to hear from our
10 Town Designated Engineer, Joe Grasso from CHA.

11 I don't know if you've seen all the alternative
12 plans. Could you give us some of your comments?

13 MR. GRASSO: Yes, this is just in for sketch so
14 there is no formal review letter that we issued on this
15 yet.

16 It's important to understand that this is a
17 redevelopment project, so we commend the applicant
18 for looking at the site for redevelopment. It's
19 something that allows us to look a little bit
20 differently than the greenfield sites.

21 Nate did a great job taking the comments that
22 were raised during DCC and coming up with what I
23 consider a well-thought out alternative. It's not
24 something that we typically see when we're seeing an
25 application for the first time at sketch plan.

1 Looking at it quickly, though, Nate tried to
2 address the primary comment that was brought up by
3 DCC and that was the potential for that road to be a
4 cut-through to Latham Farms. Not so much the cars
5 going in that would want to cut-through the site and
6 go into the back of the Hannaford Plaza, but we
7 don't want vehicles leaving Latham Farms and
8 circumventing the traffic signal and trying to make
9 a left turn at this location. That's the movement
10 that we really want to discourage with whatever
11 layout the Planning Board starts to desire to move
12 forward with.

13 In terms of our review I would say that this is
14 probably the most desirable layout because it
15 accomplishes two goals. One would be that it
16 eliminates that straight shot with the road through
17 Latham Farms. The other thing that it does is it
18 totally flips the building around, and that was one
19 of the concerns that we had with the original
20 layout. As you're coming southbound on Route 9
21 you're going to be looking square at the back of the
22 building. Whereas this one (Indicating), you're
23 coming south on Route 9 and you're looking towards
24 the front of the building in your view. Obviously,
25 if you're on the other side of Route 9 you're still

1 going to see the back of the building as you
2 approach it as you're northbound, but it's on the
3 other side of a road that's probably 80 feet curb to
4 curb so it's not going to be as dominate visually.
5 So, that's a big difference between this one and the
6 layout that Nate showed just before this one.
7 That's the something that the Planning Board may
8 wish to comment on.

9 With this layout, another option that we would
10 consider would be to integrate the curb cut into the
11 site - into the middle of the site where it comes
12 right in the main drive aisle. I don't know how
13 advantageous it is to push it more towards the north
14 and have it fully separated. It just looks like it
15 may be a little bit better if it's integrated and
16 maybe save on some greenspace and further eliminate
17 the chance that cars are going to cut through the
18 site. We basically want them to cut through a
19 parking lot if they were trying to get over to
20 Latham Farms. That's what we think is going to
21 discourage cut-through traffic as much as its
22 orientation through the site.

23 There are some other minor things that we can
24 address as we move forward.

25 There is the architectural design standards

1 because it's an HCOR district and there are design
2 standards. Obviously the preferred would be to
3 orient the building out toward Route 9, but
4 obviously that doesn't fit a lot of the retailer
5 requirements and it doesn't fit where we're going to
6 see parking on the site - something that kind of
7 makes the building facade face Route 9 more and look
8 like the front of the building. I think that they
9 have a canopy over the front door and that's
10 something that we often see wrapped around the front
11 side of the building and it helps that. Obviously
12 the architectural treatment at the back of the
13 building is going to be important.

14 There is going to be a small waiver required at
15 least in the original plan and that was presented
16 because of the building exceeding the maximum front
17 yard setback by a few feet.

18 There was a comment regarding building a
19 pedestrian connection out to Route 9. Obviously
20 there is a strong sidewalk system out on Route nine
21 so a connection would be required there.

22 There is an 80 percent street frontage build
23 out which we think could be pretty easily
24 incorporated into any of these site plans through
25 some fencing and landscaping. One thing that DOT

1 had brought up in their comments is that they are
2 looking to see a traffic assessment to support the
3 application. We don't think that it's going to be a
4 major issue, but it is something that they had
5 requested be prepared.

6 With that, I'll turn it back over to the
7 Planning Board.

8 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, excellent comments.

9 Any Planning Board Members want to see the
10 maps?

11 MR. KIRCHNER: I do have the 11 by 17's if it's
12 easier.

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: To me it's obvious that we don't
14 want the straight cut-through.

15 Does everybody agree to that?

16 (All Planning Board Members agreed.)

17 Can you show us the one that doesn't have that?
18 I think that we can eliminate that right off the
19 bat.

20 MR. LANE: Joe, you were thinking that if the drive
21 aisle was moved to the front of the building that it is
22 going to more discourage the cut-through?

23 MR. GRASSO: Yes, people are forced to cut through
24 between parking spaces.

25 MR. LANE: Why would it be less advantageous than

1 this to do that?

2 MR. GRASSO: Once you start to set up a road that's
3 dedicated just for access and not a parking aisle, it
4 changes the context of that. So, you're still going o
5 have the same number of right turns basically to get
6 through the site which we like, but we think to further
7 that and change the context of the drive aisle it would
8 be better to take it through a parking area and not have
9 it be a dedicated separate access. There are some
10 spaces in the back, but those are probably not going to
11 be used.

12 MR. SHAMLIAN: How does that change it by doing
13 that? You're taking the entrance and you're shifting it
14 closer to the signal?

15 MR. GRASSO: Not that much because obviously like
16 Nate mentioned you can see on that map where the right
17 turn lane starts to form.

18 MR. KIRCHNER: The main driveway here would
19 eliminate this whole impervious area (Indicating). We
20 have an idea in terms of the current curb cut location -
21 we're showing this gray patch would be the patch with
22 the sidewalk that would be installed to close off that
23 existing curb cut.

24 MR. LANE: And you would keep that curb cut.

25 MR. KIRCHNER: Essentially it would be the same

1 curb cut location. I don't know how effective
2 Blockbuster was with it or sequencing when the Hannaford
3 went in and the plaza was developed. In theory,
4 Blockbuster operated fine with the development in place
5 and the curb cut at that location. There should be no
6 issue here. Video rental stores have a tremendous
7 higher traffic generation rate than an Auto Zone. This
8 would have extremely low trips per day. If it supported
9 the Blockbuster, I would think that it would
10 successfully support the Auto Zone at that same
11 location.

12 With respect to distance, it's about 70 feet.

13 MR. GRASSO: How would trucks circumvent to get
14 into that area?

15 MR. KIRCHNER: That was a concern that I was going
16 to raise. I don't know if they can make that turn.
17 They may be able to make this turn here (Indicating).
18 Obviously with the current layout they can come in here
19 (Indicating). I don't know if they would be able to
20 back up or if they would be able to just pull in.

21 MR. GRASSO: That's why I thought that if you moved
22 the curb cut down to the south, they can come through
23 the site and take a right turn and then back up.

24 MR. KIRCHNER: Actually truck orientation isn't a
25 concern. I'm sure that it would work whether they take

1 a right in off of Loudon or the come in through
2 Hannaford.

3 MR. SHAMLIAN: Is that orientation on the south
4 side of the building to dress it up?

5 MR. KIRCHNER: I know that there was a comment made
6 with respect to the back of the building architecture.
7 I think that you can see off-site there is an existing
8 treeline as well as the proposed new treeline here
9 (Indicating). I don't remember how dense it is, but
10 three quarters of the building will be screened by
11 landscaping. More than likely depending on how dense
12 that is, that would be screened.

13 The other thing is that there is a grade change
14 from this property to the next. We are lower. If
15 we fence on our property, the fence would probably
16 be lost in the grade change and it probably wouldn't
17 provide any advantages. Any additional tree
18 screenings would potentially help. With that front
19 corner here, to be honest with you, I don't know
20 what the expectations are for signage. Typically
21 there is a sign along the canopy here (Indicating).
22 It's speculation here based on past experience, but
23 they'll put a sign here at minimum and either a
24 monument or pylon sign by the curb.

25 MS. MILSTEIN: Why can't you flip the building the

1 other way 90 degrees?

2 MR. KIRCHNER: To be honest with you, their
3 operational needs and the service that they provide -
4 typically they like having the building easily visible
5 and from a customer standpoint they want the building at
6 a location that vehicles can pull right in right up to
7 the door. Putting it back and putting a big parking
8 field there has a big psychological effect - this is
9 what they tell me - it prevent customers from coming in
10 and getting their windshield wipers changed. They don't
11 do repairs, but they do front door services such as
12 window wiper installation and battery installation.
13 They do computer diagnostics and by having the store
14 right there at the front, it's psychologically a short
15 cut to get to the door to get to the building. If you
16 put it like a grocery store that looks far back in the
17 parking lot, it has a negative impact.

18 MS. MILSTEIN: So, it can be done but it's not the
19 preferred way.

20 MR. KIRCHNER: I can't think of an instance where
21 they would do it. There is a maximum building set back
22 as well.

23 CHAIRMAN STUTO: We routinely grant waivers for
24 that.

25 MR. LANE: As long as your clients have no problem

1 with you moving that driving area to have the access
2 there -

3 MR. KIRCHNER: I would agree as long as that south
4 front corner is not just a block. That's going to be
5 very high.

6 MR. GRASSO: Is there a reason why it's shifted
7 more to the south? It looks like the whole building
8 could be shifted five or ten feet more towards the
9 north.

10 MR. KIRCHNER: With the elimination of the drive
11 aisle, we could potentially do that.

12 MR. GRASSO: Is that something that the Planning
13 Board would be in favor of?

14 MR. LANE: Sure.

15 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Yes.

16 MR. KIRCHNER: From the DCC meeting, the discussion
17 was a raingarden helped the stormwater management. This
18 screens the water quality. Shifting the building would
19 increase the impervious area.

20 MR. LANE: There would be snow storage area in the
21 back?

22 MR. KIRCHNER: This part here is all a hill. To be
23 honest with you, we haven't gone so far as to start
24 thinking snow storage.

25 MR. LANE: How steep is it?

1 MR. KIRCHNER: It's two to one. It's all heavy
2 shale and rock back there. Originally the discussion
3 was putting a pond back here. Once we got the
4 geotechnical report done, had borings done throughout
5 the site -- anything can be done, but it's not
6 reasonable.

7 We will make sure that when we come back to the
8 Board we have that identified.

9 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, anything else from the
10 Board?

11 (There was no response.)

12 You can work with Joe Grasso and his staff and
13 I'm sure that you'll come up with a acceptable
14 layout. Thank you. We appreciate your time.

15 MR. KIRCHNER: Thank you very much.

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17 (Whereas the above entitled proceeding was
18 concluded at 7:44 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 November 29, 2014

