

1 PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY

2 TOWN OF COLONIE

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4 FIRST COLUMBIA OFFICE/HOTEL
227 WOLF ROAD/652 ALBANY SHAKER ROAD
5 BOARD UPDATE

6 THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled
7 matter by NANCY STRANG-VANDEBOGART, a Shorthand
8 Reporter, commencing on April 14, 2015 at 7:20 p.m.
at The Public Operations Center, 347 Old Niskayuna
Road, Latham, New York

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10 BOARD MEMBERS:
11 PETER STUTO, CHAIRMAN
12 LOU MION
13 BRIAN AUSTIN
14 SUSAN MILSTEIN
15 TIMOTHY LANE
16 KATHY DALTON
17 CRAIG SHAMLIAN

18 ALSO PRESENT:

19

20 Joseph LaCivita, Director, Planning and Economic
21 Development

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23 Kevin Bette, First Columbia

24 Christopher Bette, First Columbia

25 Chuck Voss, PE, Barton & Loguidice

Afrim Nezaj, Afrim's Sports Park

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1 CHAIRMAN STUTO: First Columbia Office Hotel, 227
2 Wolf Road and 652 Albany Shaker Road. This is a Board
3 update. This is a four-story 60,000 square foot office
4 and six-story, 200 room, smaller square foot overall.
5 This is presented by First Columbia.

6 Joe LaCivita, do you have any introduction?

7 MR. LACIVITA: We are here for a Board update.
8 This Board will remember when you granted concept on it.
9 We asked the applicants, First Columbia Development, to
10 come back when you have some renderings and you also
11 have the potential for tenancy. We are here tonight
12 because we have both. We have new renderings and it's a
13 significant change to the site. We do have a new look,
14 elevations and a potential for two tenants in these
15 parcels.

16 MR. KEVIN BETTE: My brother Chris and I are here
17 tonight to update you, as Joe said, on our progress on
18 this site.

19 If you remember the last time, those of you
20 that were here in December, we got concept approval
21 on this plan and we agreed to consolidate our access
22 to the east with Afrims property next door. We also
23 told you that we would work with you to try to
24 identify tenants and to work on the architecture of
25 the building. These were the renderings that we

1 submitted originally. This is the original plan
2 that received concept approval. It's not much
3 different. The hotel is a little smaller footprint.
4 It's a little bit different model. The larger
5 footprint had meeting space and the food service
6 inside was more of a larger scale hotel. This is
7 more of a limited service type of project that
8 wouldn't have any outside meeting space other than
9 small rooms in it.

10 This is the same location of the office
11 building and this is a much improved rendering of
12 the office building that we'd like to build, and
13 this is the improved rendering of the hotel. We
14 have identified tenants for both of the properties.
15 I'm not at liberty to disclose their names and for
16 legal reasons until they finish up some of the
17 actual work.

18 MS. DALTON: Mine says Courtyard.

19 MR. KEVIN BETTE: We're working with different
20 flags to finish up the contracts with the hotels. The
21 hotel will look something like this (Indicating). This
22 has been submitted to their corporate office as far as
23 concept, which they seem fine with as far as the looks.
24 We wanted it to be in keeping with what we are trying to
25 do with this mixed-use site here and make sure that it's

1 something that's green and sustainable. We're trying to
2 develop the site with those regards.

3 Technically, if you look at the differences
4 between the two submissions - we can give you a
5 little comparison sheet - originally the gross
6 building area of the hotel is 153,000 feet. That's
7 now 127,000. The office building was three-stories
8 45,000. What we'd like to do in the office building
9 is add a floor to that. The tenant for the office
10 building is a financial services company and they'd
11 like to have a drive-thru. So, when you look at the
12 site plan, we now have the combined access drive
13 with Afrims and we have an off-shoot on the east
14 side of the building, so the building comes up one
15 story. We wanted to put a coffee shop here
16 (Indicating). We have a tenant identified for that
17 and a real estate brokerage office on the floor.

18 As far as the tenancies go that are retail as
19 far as the code goes, we're not looking to do any
20 kind of restaurants or anything. We'd be willing to
21 have restrictions on the type of retail, because
22 that gets into our parking calculations. If you
23 look at the parking calculations, we were doing the
24 mixed-use project and sharing some of the parking
25 and the original proposal had banked 99 spaces.

1 We've done an extensive dynamic parking analysis
2 with times of the day and mixed-uses. When you run
3 into mixed-use projects, the whole value of that is
4 different types of occupants use the parking at
5 different times of the day. The combination of an
6 office building and a hotel is very good. As the
7 office building empties out, the hotel starts
8 filling up. So, we've done all these calculations
9 and reviewed them with Planning.

10 We wanted to come in and give the Board an
11 update on these changes so there wouldn't be any
12 surprises. We just felt like we'd come in and give
13 you a quick update. These are not the final plans.
14 We're going to engineer this plan and submit it in
15 the final submission to you. It's just an interim
16 step to update you on our progress. Really, what I
17 wanted to show you was that we did put a lot of
18 effort into the design of the buildings. This is a
19 high-profile site and we think that it's going to be
20 very important to do it properly. We're trying to
21 utilize the wetland that's on an area, get the
22 entrance to be very beautiful as well as functional,
23 and we put in public plaza space.

24 As we read the Code for your mixed-use, you
25 want to have pedestrian friendly public spaces so

1 outside the office building adjacent to the
2 sidewalks - maybe you can walk down the sidewalk and
3 come over and this is a little raised pool area with
4 seating around it and landscaping. We're trying to
5 use natural types of native landscaping and our goal
6 is to make the building sustainable, whether we go
7 through the process of LEAD itself or not, we
8 haven't decided, but we are committed to building
9 energy efficient sustainable buildings.

10 If anybody has any questions, we'd be happy to
11 answer them.

12 MS. DALTON: I do have a question. Is this area
13 conducive to porous pavement?

14 MR. KEVIN BETTE: It can be. Mr. Hershberg here is
15 the king.

16 MS. DALTON: I know. That's what made me think of
17 it.

18 MR. CHRISTOPHER BETTE: No, not for this site.
19 Wolf Road is traditionally sand, but this particular
20 corner is not sand. There really is no benefit for the
21 porous pavement.

22 MR. LANE: Isn't it kind of swampy back there?

23 MR. CHRISTOPHER BETTE: We don't like the term
24 swampy.

25 MR. KEVIN BETTE: It's a wet area that come across

1 the drainage of Albany Shaker Road. It does have more
2 clay in it than the rest of Wolf Road.

3 MR. SHAMLIAN: Will the office building incorporate
4 the drive-thru, Kevin?

5 MR. KEVIN BETTE: Yes.

6 MR. SHAMLIAN: Is that stacking off of Albany
7 Shaker, or it is coming from the internal property?

8 MR. KEVIN BETTE: Drive access is currently Afrims
9 parking lot. So, he'll be removing the parking along
10 the sides here (Indicating) and we're going to add that
11 into the back area. So, this will be a free
12 egress/ingress. That's actually the major entrance
13 here. So, it's an off-shoot off of that. We looked at
14 the Code and we have plenty of stacking per the Code for
15 the dual lanes.

16 MR. LANE: There is a letter here from Mike [SIC]
17 Francini from CDTC and it states that the driveway
18 configurations at the site is less than adequate. It
19 doesn't say what it's talking about. How would you
20 address that? Have you seen this letter?

21 MR. KEVIN BETTE: I haven't.

22 MR. CHRISTOPHER BETTE: I think that's old, Tim.

23 MR. LANE: You're right.

24 MR. CHRISTOPHER BETTE: We've been to the Board
25 four times talking about the ingress/egress.

1 MR. LANE: I saw April 7th, but I didn't see the
2 year.

3 MR. CHRISTOPHER BETTE: Sadly, we have been before
4 the Board that long.

5 MR. SHAMLIAN: Personally, the one that you were
6 just talking about, Kevin, I still want to see that as a
7 restricted egress. In my opinion that needs to be right
8 out only.

9 MR. KEVIN BETTE: Correct and I think that at the
10 last meeting we agreed with that. We're going to try to
11 sign it and encourage people.

12 The same with Afrim. I talked to Afrim and
13 even his other entrance over here (Indicating) - he
14 needs to tell people to just go around the
15 roundabout. It's an education.

16 MR. AUSTIN: I guess potentially Afrim is moving
17 out. I'm assuming that they are going to put that new
18 building on the new property.

19 MR. TENGELER: No, he's staying.

20 MR. AUSTIN: The rights-in and rights-out - can
21 there be more than just signage? Can there be curbing
22 for that? Is that a possibility? I go to Afrims
23 frequently. It's dangerous. It really is. No matter
24 even if you're going rights-out, it's still potentially
25 taking a lot of time.

1 MR. SHAMLIAN: We wouldn't let anyone take a left
2 into the library, so why would we want people to come
3 out from there and make a left across the opposite of
4 traffic there?

5 MR. KEVIN BETTE: That's really up to Afrim. He
6 was nice enough to allow us to share the driveway. If
7 you remember, we had driveways next to each other, which
8 is a conflict and we agreed. We're kind of imposing on
9 him a lot. When we had chatted about it, we both wanted
10 everyone exiting the site to be aware of the roundabout
11 and use that, if we put the infamous pork chop in there
12 -- we talked about that last time and that would be
13 fine, but if people run over it and it ends up being
14 somewhat of a hazard. We're flexible on that. I'd have
15 to talk to Afrim.

16 Are you okay with that?

17 MR. NEZAJ: Yes.

18 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Do we want to hear from the TDE?
19 He's reviewed this.

20 You have a review letter, Chuck?

21 MR. VOSS: Well, as Kevin said the project was
22 really in the process of its formal first preliminary
23 technical review when they came in and they identified
24 the new site plan. We're still in the process of kind
25 of going back and forth with the applicant and waiting

1 for the response in our first letter of April 8th, our
2 technical letter. There is not a whole lot to report
3 from a technical standpoint. This was really just an
4 update for the Board on how they are slightly changing
5 the project.

6 From a technical standpoint, the stormwater
7 management systems are going to stay basically the
8 same. The new configurations don't really modify
9 the system at all, based on our discussion with the
10 applicant, the access issues are just the same as
11 they were. The only real difference is that the
12 hotel is getting a little smaller, so there is a
13 little more parking in the back. The office
14 building is also going up one story. The footprint
15 is really not changing. So, from a technical
16 standpoint, we're going to wait, as Kevin said, the
17 revised engineering reports for this and I imagine
18 that we'll have this on your next submission.

19 Chris, I know you guys are working on that.

20 CHAIRMAN STUTO: You're not proposing changing any
21 of the right-in/right-out that we talked about last
22 time; is that right?

23 MR. KEVIN BETTE: No, not at all.

24 MR. VOSS: Everything is the same.

25 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I have a couple of comments and I

1 don't know whether you are addressing them or not and
2 that's pedestrian access to the retail store. It
3 doesn't show yet, so I want to talk about that. Over at
4 Wolf Road, near your Wolf Road exit and I think that we
5 have sidewalks on Albany Shaker Road, don't we?

6 MR. VOSS: Yes.

7 CHAIRMAN STUTO: And pedestrian access over there.

8 MR. KEVIN BETTE: On the final drawings we're going
9 to do that. There is a part of the drainage course that
10 comes down through here (Indicating). We had wanted to
11 make a connection right here, but we have to check that
12 out with the final survey when we do the final drawings.
13 We got a copy from CDTA to make sure that there were
14 pedestrian connections and we responded that we would.

15 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I don't know if Craig was talking
16 about it because I was looking at the drawing when he
17 was talking, but the shared driveway with Afrims and
18 where Albany Shaker Road is, I'm not sure if the
19 striping on Albany Shaker is going to accommodate what
20 you are proposing. Could the traffic engineers just
21 look at that?

22 MR. KEVIN BETTE: If there are no lefts, then they
23 can't use it. They would probably turn into a left-turn
24 slot when we do the final traffic drawings. There would
25 still be lefts-in here (Indicating).

1 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I guess the height has changed so
2 that's changed the scale to some extent. The number of
3 stories have changed, right?

4 MR. KEVIN BETTE: For the office. The hotel is
5 still much higher.

6 MR. CHRISTOPHER BETTE: The hotel is still the
7 same.

8 CHAIRMAN STUTO: And the office is still right up
9 on the corner. I can understand why they want it there.

10 MR. KEVIN BETTE: That's per your Code.

11 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Can i just go back to this? This
12 says that the hotel went up to six stories from five
13 stories, in the comments that I have from the PEDD. On
14 page 2 of the PEDD -

15 MR. CHRISTOPHER BETTE: Actually, it was a
16 seven-story building - 75 feet in the last plans and
17 six-story - 75 feet in the current plan.

18 MR. LACIVITA: So, we erred on the number of
19 floors.

20 MR. KEVIN BETTE: On the proof plan it says seven
21 story hotel.

22 CHAIRMAN STUTO: What were you proposing?

23 MR. KEVIN BETTE: The same height.

24 MS. DALTON: I just wanted to weigh in on the
25 shared parking that was brought up earlier. Several of

1 us were in a training where they talked about that being
2 the practice, so that's to reduce the amount of pavement
3 that you got and increase your greenspace and all that
4 kind of stuff. I would like to go on record by saying
5 that's a good plan, given the way that they have it laid
6 out. While some of the busy areas where people are
7 coming in might be a little hairy, but I ultimately I
8 think that's probably a good thing.

9 MR. AUSTIN: Speaking of shared parking -- back to
10 having Afrims as a neighbor. That's an awesome thing.
11 Having the amount of traffic that facility generates is
12 a lot of traffic. Coming in and out at rush hour time,
13 many times there are games, practices, ect. Also, a lot
14 of times I know for a fact that I have gone for
15 tournaments or multiple games going on and I have not
16 found a spot. Maybe I found a snow bank or something
17 like that, but not a spot. The parking is limited so if
18 I see parking spots over in the hotel area, I might jump
19 over there. Is that something that you guys are
20 amenable to, or have you discussed that with Afrim?

21 MR. KEVIN BETTE: Yes, I have. Fortunately, I have
22 four kids so I have been there a lot. Like I said last
23 time, I think that encouraging cross cuts among parcels
24 is a smart thing for the Town to require. We have
25 always cooperated with that. In asking Afrim to share

1 his driveway, what I said to him was I know that when you
2 have tournaments on weekends, you have a lot of people
3 coming into Town. This will help you because we have
4 plenty of spaces on the weekends. Even in the evenings
5 -- kind of the way that we have connected this here
6 (Indicating) -- if you don't find a spot where the
7 office building will empty out, our peak traffic hour is
8 4:00 when we ran the numbers and we start declining
9 certainly from an office building standpoint as the
10 hotel fills up. We think that it will be a good
11 neighbor to Afirms because it will alleviate some of his
12 overcrowding at those times. Mostly, it's on a weekend
13 when he has tournaments. He is allowed to come and use
14 our spaces as part of our agreement.

15 MR. AUSTIN: Will that be something that might be
16 signed appropriately?

17 MR. KEVIN BETTE: Yes, we're going to do cross
18 easements and then we'll give a copy to Planning.

19 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Anything else form the Board
20 Members?

21 (There was no response.)

22 Anything else from the department or the Town
23 Designated Engineer?

24 (There was no response.)

25 Okay, thank you.

1 (Whereas the above referenced proceeding was
2 concluded at 7:35 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 8, 2015

