

1 PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY

2 TOWN OF COLONIE

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4 SUPERVISORS UPDATE
5 REGARDING TRAFFIC STUDIES WITHIN THE TOWN
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7 THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled
8 matter by NANCY STRANG, a Shorthand Reporter,
9 commencing on August 11, 2015 at 7:01 p.m. at The
Public Operations Center, 347 Old Niskayuna Road,
Latham, New York

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

18 ALSO PRESENT:
19 Kathleen Marinelli, Esq., Counsel to the Planning Board
20 Paula A. Mahan, Supervisor
21 Joseph LaCivita, Director, Planning and Economic
22 Development
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24
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1 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Welcome to the Town of Colonie
2 Planning Board meeting. The clock says 7:01, so we're
3 on time here. We have a number of items on the agenda
4 and a number of members from the public.

5 For the members of the public on the voting
6 items, please sign in on that sign-in sheet if you
7 want to speak on the items. It just helps us keep
8 order. It helps us be fair to let everybody speak
9 in turn and it helps keep it that way. Please list
10 what project as well.

11 Before we start, I think that we're going to
12 get an update on the Ad Hoc Traffic Committee which
13 is studying Albany Shaker Road. Our Supervisor
14 Paula Mahan is here and she is going to tell us a
15 little bit about it.

16 Paula, we have a microphone there.

17 SUPERVISOR MAHAN: Good evening, everybody. I
18 wanted to take this opportunity tonight to update you on
19 the Ad Hoc Committee, which has been assigned to study
20 the Albany Shaker/Maxwell Road corridor. It's the
21 entire area which would take into account also under the
22 Exit 4 bridge that they are building currently - I
23 should say rebuilding - and all the way over toward the
24 Engel Farm. I had a chance to go over it at Town Board,
25 but a lot of people weren't there from the area.

1 Tonight I know that there were lots of different notices
2 and things going on, so I thought that this would be a
3 good time to update you.

4 What we have done because of the number of the
5 projects in that particular area - we have some
6 projects that are further ahead. We have some that
7 are still not at the concept or final level and we
8 are getting others coming forward. So, what we
9 wanted to do is take a broader look at the entire
10 area.

11 The Ad Hoc Committee is compose of the
12 different municipalities because of the fact that we
13 have Albany Shaker Road as a county road, we have
14 Town roads involved and we have the state DOT and
15 the bridge area. Eventually, hopefully with the
16 reconfiguration of Exit 4, that will help to
17 alleviate some traffic.

18 This particular area - traffic is an area of
19 concern for some people and the other is the
20 character of the neighborhoods. You have different
21 areas. You have Maxwell Road which is primarily
22 residential. You have Albany Shaker and that is
23 primarily residential - down toward the
24 Osborne/Albany Shaker corridor you do have
25 commercial there, but mainly all of the side roads

1 are residential. As you go under the bridge, past
2 Wolf Road you have commercial and then under the
3 bridge you have heading towards Engel's Farm and
4 then it becomes airport/commercial and all of that.

5 As far as the reconfiguration of the Exit 4, I
6 have been working with CEO John O'Donnell from the
7 airport and also Mark Egan from the Chamber and the
8 County Executive McCoy from the county. We have, for
9 the past two or three years, been working with the
10 state to try to keep that Exit 4 reconfiguration
11 alive. So far, they are still looking at it and
12 they've taken some steps but we are waiting for the
13 state to get funding. That's the critical point.
14 They had identified the Exit 4 bridge as the number
15 one priority which they hope to finish at the end of
16 October.

17 So, the Ad Hoc Committee is made up of New York
18 State DOT representative and the Capital Region
19 Transportation Committee - which I am a member of
20 that. We dialogue with them continually on traffic.
21 Then we have Albany County Department of Public
22 Works represented because Albany Shaker Road is a
23 county road. We have two Town Designated Engineers
24 working on this. Typically we have one. We have
25 two and one of them specializes in traffic. Also,

1 we have our Public Works Commissioner, our Planning
2 Department, Joe LaCivita, and also our Building
3 Department Manager because those are the departments
4 that are involved when projects come forward. It
5 goes before DCC and all of those particular
6 departments take a look at things and give us back
7 their comments.

8 Basically, what this Committee was charged to
9 do is to take, as I said, a broader look at the
10 entire corridor. They will take into account, as I
11 said earlier, traffic, character of neighborhoods
12 and those types of things. They have had one
13 meeting.

14 A draft a draft traffic study has come in. The
15 draft traffic studies are internal tools that we can
16 work with until we can get a final study. Then at
17 that point in time when this Committee has their
18 findings, we want to get together again and put out
19 a public information session or sessions. However
20 many we need -- and it will be in the Albany Shaker
21 area so it's convenient for residents. We will have
22 an opportunity for the Ad Hoc Committee to go over
23 their findings with us. We are hoping that won't be
24 too far off. What our goal is that there are a lot
25 of different people involved. There are a lot of

1 people that have residences in the area and
2 businesses in the area.

3 As a Town, we are very invested, along with the
4 other agencies. So, this will give us an
5 opportunity to have a totally independent look by
6 experts in the field that work with this all the
7 time. For the first meeting, they had the draft
8 study and actually ended up sending that back to the
9 engineers that did the traffic study because there
10 were four or five major flaws. So, it was not
11 acceptable at that point.

12 If I just step back a second and Joe, if you
13 could just go over those four or five areas?

14 MR. LACIVITA: Yes, I think that three out of those
15 five are the major concerns of the Committee in its
16 initial review. The typical traffic impacts are looked
17 at between a Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 5:00. The
18 traffic study dismissed Saturday that was identified by
19 our Town Designated Engineers because it relates to the
20 second item which is the identification of the use.

21 The smaller component of the retail site that
22 they are talking about is actually being
23 specifically marketed to an outdoor sporting venue.
24 So, that changes that retail to potentially a
25 regional or more of a recreational use which thereby

1 means that by the International ITE standard, more
2 traffic will come to that specific venue. So, we
3 are looking at a larger picture as to where traffic
4 will come into this central location.

5 The third most significant one is the
6 improvements needed to get traffic into that area
7 via the Serviceberry entrance and getting there
8 through the Maxwell Road area. There is actually a
9 conservation overlay, so the traffic study actually
10 said improvements by widening the lane -- but the
11 constraints on Maxwell Road because of conservation
12 easements don't make those improvements doable.

13 So, those were the three most significant
14 failure components or flaws in the study that we
15 have seen thus far.

16 SUPERVISOR MAHAN: So, the draft is valuable and it
17 helps us to pin point exactly what needs another look or
18 we can go beyond that. We can request another study on
19 behalf of the Town, which the developer would have to
20 pay for. We've had several areas in Town where there
21 has been a lot more involved than just one particular
22 development. It's a combination of different things.
23 We've had areas like this where we have had to take a
24 more comprehensive look so that we can see the impacts
25 all the way around the whole entire area. We have done

1 it with the Route 5 Corridor Study. We have done in the
2 western end of Town where some rezoning was done years
3 back and there were some obstacles there that occurred
4 from that. We've done it for other issues. We've done
5 it down in west Albany with the west Albany residents.
6 We've held the sessions and we've worked with them and
7 got a good handle on some improvements on the flooding
8 and that whole area there. This is one of those that
9 really requires a broader look - a more comprehensive
10 look at the entire area. You can't look at one impact
11 without looking at the other.

12 There is another component of this which goes
13 way back. What you see now back by the library -
14 that is a result of the Maxwell Road Extension that
15 the county did. That's the roundabout that the
16 county put in. I know that there are some concerns
17 about the way it was designed. Some people speed
18 through the Albany Shaker route. They fly right
19 through there. I don't know if it's because of the
20 way that it's curved, but it doesn't seem to operate
21 like the one over by Colonie Center. That one slows
22 it down but it keeps it moving. That's what the
23 roundabout is supposed to do; keep the traffic
24 flowing but in a safe manner. So, that's one
25 concern that we have in that particular area.

1 Going along with that Maxwell Road Extension -
2 that was actually talked about back in the mid-80's.
3 When I came on in 2008, they didn't even start it
4 yet. When they did start it and I was talking to
5 them, they said that it went way back to the
6 mid-80's and that was Phase I. Phase II was
7 projected which was to get some of the traffic off
8 of Wolf Road.

9 What happens is that people that need to get on
10 Wolf Road they have to go through Wolf to get to the
11 back. They can't get all the way over. So, that's
12 something that has been on the books for a long
13 time.

14 Again, it had to do with lack of funding on the
15 county's part way back when. So, they projected
16 that it would be a while for Phase II.

17 There is another area there that is created
18 difficulties. That is the Crossings. When they
19 developed the Crossings, they developed it with only
20 one ingress and egress. So, when you have big
21 events, there is only one way to get in and out. We
22 recently moved the walkway because it was almost on
23 top of the entrance so if people came across walking
24 with their bikes, it was a dangerous situation. We
25 moved that down, which seems to have improved that

1 and also, you can't park from the beginning of that
2 entrance to the end of the first little parking lot
3 on the right. That gives good vision all the way
4 through.

5 The actual entrance -- we've talked to the
6 county for turning lanes and turning signals. The
7 conversations still go on. We asked about an actual
8 turning lane. I guess there is more property in one
9 area that would have to be purchased and that would
10 be from the resident. So, there are a number of
11 things in that particular spot that they are looking
12 at. The real problem is that it was built with one
13 way in and out. It's just huge. You get a big run
14 there or you get the farmer's market or something
15 like that, and they are lined up. The police help
16 us as much as they can and move it in and out, but
17 at some point there has to be a better way for that
18 particular spot because the traffic backs up there.
19 So, those are all the additional obstacles that are
20 presented in that area.

21 Due to development that was already there. In
22 the case of the park, it was already developed and
23 the roundabout at Albany Shaker. So, what we are
24 looking for is for this Ad Hoc Committee to take a
25 look at the entire corridor from all of the

1 different agencies so that they can provide input as
2 to what they think would be appropriate. It will
3 give us, again, a comprehensive look and hopefully
4 they will work on this so that we can get the
5 results as quickly as possible because we would like
6 to get a public session going and the dialogue going
7 so that we can move forward.

8 That's pretty much the overview on what this Ad
9 Hoc Committee has been tasked with. I don't know if
10 anybody from the Board has any questions about it.

11 (There was no response.)

12 It's pretty straight forward. We just have to
13 keep these guys moving, Joe.

14 I just wanted to give you an overview of that.
15 Does anyone have any questions on the purpose of the
16 Committee?

17 (There was no response.)

18 Thank you. It was nice to be able to give you
19 that overview and it's great that so many of you are
20 here so that you can hear it. In the event that you
21 have any questions, you can always just give us a
22 call.

23 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Thank you, Paula. I saw the
24 article in the Times Union about it and I've heard a lot
25 of things about it. It's good to get that clarified so

1 that we know what the Committee is about and where it's
2 headed. Thank you.

3 Do you have any other administrative matters,
4 Joe, before we move on with the agenda?

5 MR. LACIVITA: Nothing.

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8 (Whereas the above entitled proceeding was
9 concluded at 7:13 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATION

I, NANCY STRANG, 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

Dated September 19, 2015

