

1 PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY

2 TOWN OF COLONIE

3 \*\*\*\*\*

4 MIDWAY FIRE DISTRICT  
5 1956 CENTRAL AVENUE  
6 APPLICATION FOR CONCEPT ACCEPTANCE

7 \*\*\*\*\*

8 THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled  
9 matter by NANCY STRANG, a Shorthand Reporter,  
10 commencing on September 15, 2015 at 8:40 p.m. at The  
11 Public Operations Center, 347 Old Niskayuna Road,  
12 Latham, New York

10

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

15

16 ALSO PRESENT:

17 Kathleen Marinelli, Esq., Counsel to the Planning Board  
18 Michael Tengeler, Planning and Economic Development  
19 Milan Jackson, Lamont Engineers  
20 Peter Signorelli, PE, Mitchell and Associates  
21 Charles Rappazzo, Midway Fire District  
22 Theresa Moran, Midway Fire District  
23 Joseph Grasso, PE, CHA  
24 Bob Mitchell

21

22

23

24

25

1           CHAIRMAN STUTO: Next on the agenda is Midway Fire  
2 District, 1956 Central Avenue. This is an application  
3 for concept acceptance. This is to raze the existing  
4 firehouse and construct a new 1.5 story 13,617 square  
5 foot firehouse.

6           Mike Tengeler, do you have any introductory  
7 remarks on this?

8           MR. TENGELER: Not much. It's an existing  
9 firehouse at 1956 Central Avenue. They are here for  
10 concept and for the sake of time let's just turn it over  
11 and see the presentation.

12          CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, sounds good.

13          MR. JACKSON: Hello. I'm Milan Jackson with Lamont  
14 Engineers. This is the concept plan. We have tried to  
15 address all the Town's comments from the first  
16 submission.

17                 This is the drawing and this is the new fire  
18 station. Taft Furniture is over here on your right  
19 (Indicating). Central Avenue is south and there are  
20 apartment buildings over here (Indicating). We only  
21 show a very small portion of the site. The site is  
22 about 18.5 or 19 acres. It goes way in the back.  
23 Most of the rest of this parcel is New York State  
24 regulated wetlands.

25                 We are showing a detention pond in the back.

1 It's not a detention pond, actually, it's a flood  
2 storage pond. The site does experience flooding  
3 during heavy rain events.

4 I'll just address the comments of the Town.  
5 The first one was to eliminate the parking in the  
6 front yard, which we did remove two or three spaces  
7 up front. We moved the parking back out of the  
8 front yard.

9 They asked for the inclusion of a bench and a  
10 bike rack. We extended the sidewalk down to Central  
11 Avenue.

12 We are looking for two waivers from the Town.  
13 One is for the front setback; a 20 foot maximum. We  
14 are asking for about 60 feet. The primary reason  
15 for that extended setback is the ladder truck;  
16 that's 47 feet. Sometimes the Fire Department likes  
17 to park the truck in the front driveway. So, it  
18 requires a greater setback than 20 feet.

19 The other waiver that they're asking for is the  
20 front build out of the 80% required. We are  
21 proposing a 52% build out. I'll let Pete address  
22 that one.

23 MR. SIGNORELLI: I'm Pete Signorelli from Mitchell  
24 and Associates.

25 Those two issues kind of go hand in hand. The

1 fact that this is a civic public building, we feel  
2 that it should blend in with the neighborhood. They  
3 should be set apart. So, setting it back from the  
4 street as well as not building that 80% build-out  
5 makes it a unique building for it to sit by itself  
6 and really give it the kind of focus that we think  
7 that it should have.

8 MR. JACKSON: Just to review, the building size has  
9 gone up about 5,000 square feet, but we have reduced the  
10 impervious surface of the site by about 4,000 square  
11 feet mostly by reducing the parking area. We have laid  
12 out the parking area to increase the parking by about 20  
13 parking spots. I guess that's the majority of the  
14 changes since the last time we were here.

15 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Any members of the public  
16 interested in speaking on this project?

17 MR. RAPPAZZO: I'm Charles Rappazzo and I'm the  
18 Commissioner of the Fire District and I've been a member  
19 for over 41 years.

20 Just on the setback that you requested that  
21 we're looking at getting an additional setback - our  
22 ladder trucks have to pull out and stop, even though  
23 we have a traffic light. One of the reasons we have  
24 to have them on the apron is people driving by can  
25 see all the lights and theoretically they're going

1 to stop when they see all the lights flashing. We  
2 have a problem pulling out of side streets and such  
3 where we have to stop and inch our way out so they  
4 can see the lights on the vehicles. It's a safety  
5 issue. If we can pull out on the apron and stop  
6 long enough for them to see us, that's why we need  
7 that extra space. We have lights all the way down  
8 the whole side of the truck for that reason and we  
9 want them to see it. It gives us a little bit of a  
10 safety issue. That's all. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Thank you.

12 Anybody else form the public?

13 You want to say anything else?

14 MR. JACKSON: With this concept submission we also  
15 submitted the development building alternate. The  
16 building alternate is simply a bump-out of this one room  
17 on the side here (Indicating). I just wanted to make  
18 everyone was aware of that.

19 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Joe Grasso, our Town Designated  
20 Engineer with CHA, do you want to give us your comments?

21 Is there someone else who would like to make a  
22 comment?

23 MS. MORAN: My name is Theresa Moran and I'm the  
24 Chairman for the Board of the Fire District. We have  
25 asked with numerous people throughout the Town if we

1 would be able to submit additional submissions when we  
2 are ready and when we have everything together. We're  
3 just asking that the Planning Board grant us that so  
4 that we can move this process for us along in a quicker  
5 manner because we are looking at going into winter  
6 conditions at this point which would increase the amount  
7 of money that we are going to have to -

8 CHAIRMAN STUTO: You're asking us to move fast? Is  
9 that your request?

10 MS. MORAN: Not necessarily. At this point we are  
11 just at the second submission. We have the materials  
12 and everything moving forward as quick as possible. We  
13 would like to be able to come to you the next time that  
14 you meet, if we have everything ready to go.

15 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Mike is with the department and he  
16 works with Joe and he sets the agenda.

17 MR. TENGELER: There is a pretty structured  
18 process. We will accommodate you anyway that we can,  
19 but we still have to take everything through the normal  
20 course of review, working with Joe Grasso and working  
21 with the Town Departments. As soon as everything is  
22 deemed ready by the TDE and by the departments, we'll  
23 get you on. There won't be any delay. We'll get you on  
24 that first agenda as soon as everyone is on board.

25 MS. MORAN: The information that we received from

1 Mike Lyons was that we wouldn't be able to see you again  
2 until October 20th. We would just like to be able to,  
3 if possible, if everybody's ready -

4 MR. GRASSO: You won't be on before then and I can  
5 tell you why. You will make a final plan submission and  
6 before it gets to the Planning Board, because that's the  
7 final submission that you're going to be going for  
8 because you get concept acceptance tonight. Our  
9 comments and that from the Town Departments need to be  
10 addressed and reflected in those plans before it comes  
11 back to the Planning Board. What we try to avoid is  
12 having to have you come back before the Planning Board  
13 multiple times. They need to be able to be acting on  
14 the final plans just like you saw the other applicant  
15 do. If we get you back too early and there are still  
16 other comments out there that are going to change the  
17 plans, you're going to have to go through that process  
18 again and just because of the Planning Board scheduling,  
19 it's going to eat up a lot of time.

20 So, like Mike said, we have a pretty efficient  
21 system. We don't want to see piece meal  
22 submissions. Do a real good quality submission. Be  
23 really responsive to the comments that you see from  
24 us and from the Town Departments and then the  
25 Planning Department will try to get you in front of

1 the Planning Board as soon as possible. They will  
2 do their job, but you have to do your job in order  
3 to get to that.

4 MS. MORAN: I understand. Thank you.

5 MR. GRASSO: And just a tag on that, they've done a  
6 really good job in every submission that we have had  
7 before us. They are really more advanced than where  
8 they are in the process. I commend them for that. They  
9 also have been very responsive to the comments. The  
10 plan is relatively consistent with the plan that we saw  
11 at sketch plan. We didn't have significant comments and  
12 we thought that it was a really well laid out, well  
13 designed project and this is a nice reflection of the  
14 advancement in what I would consider a preliminary  
15 design stage. So, our comments are relatively minor.  
16 We don't have a problem with the waiver that is being  
17 requested regarding the front yard set back. We can  
18 prepare those findings based on what is in the record  
19 and when it's up for final. We also don't have a  
20 problem with the relief from the frontage build-out.

21 In terms of the architectural design, are you  
22 planning on screening all the mechanical equipment  
23 from view?

24 MR. SIGNORELLI: We would like to talk to you about  
25 that.

1 MR. GRASSO: Okay, can you talk about it?

2 MR. SIGNORELLI: Sure. This building was  
3 originally designed, as you can see, from the rendering  
4 here and the plans pretty much stick right to that  
5 design. We weren't aware of this requirement when the  
6 building was designed. We could raise the parapets at  
7 some significant cost to the department, which they  
8 hadn't planned on. They're on a pretty tight budget, as  
9 you can imagine, being a volunteer department and all  
10 this went through a public referendum. So, the money  
11 just wasn't allocated for that kind of thing - for that  
12 kind of additional funding. So, we would like to ask  
13 that we get a waiver from that particular requirement.

14 MR. GRASSO: You provided some elevations with the  
15 application materials. Could you show on that where  
16 they would be visible or on the building? It's not a  
17 zoning requirement. It's something that we typically  
18 bring up during the review of commercial site plan  
19 applications when there is a great concern where it may  
20 be visible where otherwise they would be screened.

21 MR. SIGNORELLI: You can see the front of the  
22 building is here. One of the funny things about  
23 building elevation is that they are really a lie. You  
24 never see a building this way. You see a building  
25 perspective. When you're on the ground, if you're right

1 in front of the building, you'll never see them because  
2 they're up over the roof.

3 The question becomes how far away does it  
4 become an issue that you can see these mechanical  
5 units? I'm going up and down.

6 I did a Google street view. Coming from the  
7 Taft side, the building is pretty prominent with  
8 whatever is happening on the roof. That would be  
9 this side of the building. Most of those mechanical  
10 units are back from that edge, so they're not really  
11 as visible as the elevation shows. Coming from the  
12 other direction there are a lot of trees on that  
13 side of the street, so you can barely even see the  
14 building, let alone what is on the roof.

15 MR. LANE: Joe, isn't another part of the -- the  
16 intent is to screen, but it also has to do with the  
17 noise and prevents that. These things really make a lot  
18 of sound when they're on. Doesn't it also kind of  
19 prevent that from emanating around the area or is that  
20 not a factor?

21 MR. GRASSO: Based on today's standard rooftop  
22 units - the RTUs is what we call them - it's normally  
23 not a factor. We have more concern about a stand-by  
24 generator unit.

25 MR. SIGMORELLI: We also have that.

1           MR. GRASSO: If it was a highly developed area, it  
2           could be more relevant. It's really more about the  
3           visibility of them from the public corridor.

4           CHAIRMAN STUTO: What is your response to what he  
5           just said?

6           MR. GRASSO: I like the fact that he went through  
7           the thought process of where would they be visible from  
8           and how impactful are they going to be. It sounds like  
9           the most prominent viewshed is from the west, from the  
10          Taft side, and it looks like the rooftop units or  
11          mechanicals are toward the east side of the building so  
12          that should help screen that view. It's something that  
13          when you're working through the final design, if you can  
14          just look to see if there is any other things --  
15          painting the things to match the siding of the building,  
16          putting up a screen - a partial privacy screen on part  
17          of the roof along that side are just things to consider  
18          when you come back to final.

19          MR. LANE: How much actual cost would they be  
20          talking?

21          MR. SIGNORELLI: About \$25,000.00.

22          MR. GRASSO: That would be excessive. I would have  
23          to look at the rooftop plans, but normally that's an  
24          excessive response to raising all the parapets up to  
25          completely screen it. Like you said, you have to look

1 at your line of sight from a street view and stuff.  
2 Normally, you don't have to go that high. Sometimes  
3 you'll see buildings and they'll do a separate screen  
4 wall in from the side.

5 MR. LANE: And what would that be?

6 MR. GRASSO: I think 10 or 15 grand, I would say,  
7 tops.

8 MR. LANE: It's still not -

9 MR. GRASSO: It's not chump change. Everything  
10 that the Planning Board asks for and we ask for costs  
11 money.

12 MR. SHAMLIAN: I'm never one to spend anyone else's  
13 money, but we're talking about a multi-million dollar  
14 project. From the westbound lanes, how much of the  
15 rooftop would a person see if they were traveling  
16 westbound? I was thinking that westbound is furthest  
17 away from the building. Right in front of the building,  
18 if you looked to your left, you want the building to be  
19 prominent from what you said, so people are going to  
20 look that way.

21 MR. SIGNORELLI: It's less of an issue right in  
22 front of the building because you are so close to the  
23 building. There is nothing at that front edge as far as  
24 mechanical goes. It's all towards the back. It's  
25 actually less of an issue when you're in front of the

1 building than from down the street.

2 MR. SHAMLIAN: That being said, you could be 150  
3 feet from the front of the building.

4 MR. SIGNORELLI: Right.

5 MR. GRASSO: I can follow up on the concerns. As  
6 part of your preliminary plan submission, if you can  
7 provide some cross sections - simple, but focusing on  
8 what mechanical equipment may be viewable based on a  
9 certain distance from the building so we can look at it  
10 and see if there is something more to do. Normally, you  
11 don't include building plans with your preliminary  
12 submission, but a simple roof plan that shows your  
13 mechanical equipment and a couple of quick cross  
14 sections and we'll inform the Board when you come back  
15 for final.

16 MS. MORAN: I just want to address the point that  
17 you just said about this being a multi-million dollar  
18 project. You are correct. It is a multi-million dollar  
19 project, but every cent that we are using is accounted  
20 for. This is public money. We have been working for  
21 two and a half years on this project with volunteers on  
22 this committee. We are ready to go out to bid. That's  
23 how advanced we are and ready to move forward with this.  
24 We are just waiting for your comments so that we can  
25 move forward. It is a multi-million dollar project, but

1           it's an emergency services building. We aren't talking  
2           about how pretty it is. If we made it as pretty as we  
3           wanted it to be, then we would be back to a \$6 million  
4           dollar project. We're at a \$4 million dollar project  
5           because we were voted down the first time. I really  
6           hope that you are taking that into consideration that  
7           we're an emergency services. We are looking to use  
8           every dime that we have towards emergency services and  
9           not toward making this look like the most beautiful  
10          building.

11                 MR. SHAMLIAN: As I said, I'm not trying to spend  
12           any more money - yours or any applicant's money, but we  
13           also have a responsibility to make sure that it meets  
14           with everything else that we're trying to accomplish in  
15           planning throughout the Town, keeping it mind that it is  
16           a community building and that's the balance that we have  
17           to make. Those elevations show an awful lot of rooftop  
18           units that may be visible.

19                 MS. MORAN: How many units do we have actually on  
20           the roof? There isn't a lot.

21                 MR. GRASSO: We're looking at the elevation right  
22           there. That's what was submitted that we had picked up  
23           on.

24                 MR. SIGNORELLI: You talked about us submitting a  
25           roof plan and some sections that may be helpful.

1           Actually, I had done a series of perspectives from up  
2           and down the street, as if you're driving one way or the  
3           other. In this particular set, we didn't put trees in.  
4           You can really see what is visible. I can give this to  
5           you, if you like. We'll certainly have it in our next  
6           submission. That's if you'd like to look at it. You  
7           can see that once we put trees in -

8           MS. MORAN: Do you have more of those that you can  
9           give to the Board Members?

10          MR. SIGNORELLI: Not at this point.

11          If you look, this plan doesn't really show it,  
12          but this lot over here is almost completely treed.  
13          There are a couple of existing trees here on our  
14          property. If you look at the Google street view,  
15          you barely see this building until you're almost  
16          right on top of it. So, not only can't you see the  
17          rooftop, you can barely see the building. Like I  
18          said, this side is a little more because the parking  
19          lot is pretty much empty. This side - the roof is a  
20          little more visible from there.

21          CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, what else?

22          MR. GRASSO: We would request additional foundation  
23          plantings because the landscaping package seemed minimal  
24          and not consistent with what we would see from these  
25          types of facilities.

1           The other things are pretty minor technical  
2           comments that they should be able to address as they  
3           advance through the final design process.

4           In terms of SEQRA, the Town Attorney's office  
5           classified it as an unlisted action. The applicant  
6           did provide a full EAF that more than adequately  
7           describes the environmental setting of the site and  
8           we do not think that there will be any significant  
9           environmental impacts.

10          I do want to bring to the Board's attention the  
11          Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission did provide a  
12          comment letter which is in your packet. They do not  
13          see any significant impacts with the project, but  
14          they are requesting native landscaping and outdoor  
15          lighting to be either sodium vapor or LED because  
16          they have less impact within the Albany Pine Bush  
17          study area habitats.

18          That's really all we have.

19          CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, any other comments or  
20          questions from the Board?

21          (There was no response.)

22          We want to follow up on this and we just want  
23          to take a closer look at the rooftop issue.

24          MR. GRASSO: Yes, I think that we can take a closer  
25          look, assuming that Craig's comments speak for the

1 Board. It's something that we will be sensitive to when  
2 we look at the final plans and those sections. If there  
3 is something that we obvious think should be done or  
4 should be changed on the plans, we'll bring it to the  
5 applicant's attention. Obviously, we're at a  
6 disagreement and we'll bring it to the Board for a  
7 decision and it's not something that we want to drive on  
8 the whole project schedule. Maybe it might be something  
9 where you had me come before the Board at the next  
10 meeting and say, hey, here is an issue that I just want  
11 to bring it to your attention so that they can take it  
12 into consideration as they work on the final plans.

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, I think that we have a  
14 consensus on that.

15 Do we have a motion for concept acceptance.

16 MR. SHAMLIAN: I'll make that motion.

17 MS. DALTON: Second.

18 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Any discussion?

19 (There was no response.)

20 All those in favor, say aye.

21 (Ayes were recited.)

22 All those opposed say nay.

23 (There were none opposed.)

24 The ayes have it.

25 MR. MITCHELL: May I ask a question? I'm Bob

1 Mitchell.

2 Our understanding is then that we're are  
3 complete with this cycle by October 20th. The  
4 district needs to get in the ground. They are  
5 demolishing the existing building. They need to get  
6 the new building up and completed so that they can  
7 provide safety protection for the community. By  
8 October 20th, we are at the edge of what we can do  
9 in terms of winter construction. Can we have some  
10 idea from the Board here if we will be able to be  
11 out of here at the October 20th meeting and break  
12 ground? Is that a fair question?

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: These gentlemen handle the  
14 application and look at the final site plans. Whether  
15 you get it in on time --

16 MR. TENGELER: It really depends on the quality of  
17 the submission and the comments. If all comments are  
18 addressed, we will move it through the process at the  
19 quickest speed we can go through the process and get it  
20 back. If five weeks away, the 23rd of October is the  
21 earliest deadline and the project meets all the criteria  
22 that it needs to meet, then we should make every effort  
23 to get it on that meeting.

24 MR. GRASSO: Are the full plans done and the full  
25 SWPPP is done?

1 MS. MORAN: Yes.

2 MR. GRASSO: I don't understand why if you've been  
3 working on it for two years - the Town has a pretty easy  
4 process to follow and it's been since you have been your  
5 first submission -- it's been lightening quick through  
6 the Town. We could have taken a few month longer to get  
7 you -- if you already had your final plans done, I could  
8 have acted on final tonight if you had just started the  
9 process a little earlier -- if your plans are done and  
10 your SWPPP is done, submit it tomorrow and we'll start  
11 the review.

12 MS. MORAN: Our next submission is ready to go and  
13 it's going to you tomorrow.

14 MR. GRASSO: Great, we'll review it as soon as  
15 possible.

16 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I don't see any major issues.

17 MR. GRASSO: It's going to come down to the design  
18 details and if you have them all done, it should be  
19 quick.

20 MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, very much.

21 (Whereas the above entitled proceeding was  
22 concluded at 9:05 p.m.)  
23  
24  
25

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

CERTIFICATION

I, NANCY L. 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 L. STRANG

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

