

1 PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY

2 TOWN OF COLONIE

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GORDON APARTMENTS

4 945 & 957 WATERVLIET SHAKER ROAD

BOARD UPDATE

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6 THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled  
7 matter by NANCY L. STRANG, a Shorthand Reporter,  
8 commencing on February 9, 2016 at 9:35 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 BRIAN AUSTIN  
13 TIMOTHY LANE  
14 LOU MION  
15 CRAIG SHAMLIAN

16 ALSO PRESENT:

17 Kathleen Marinelli, Esq. Counsel to the Planning Board

18 Michael Tengeler, Planning and Economic Development

19 Joseph LaCivita, Director, Planning and Economic  
20 Development

21 Charles Voss, PE, Barton and Loguidice

22 Jonathan Lapper, Esq., Bartlett Pontiff Stewart & Rhodes

23 Michael Tucker, VHB Engineering

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1                   CHAIRMAN STUTO: Final project is Gordon  
2 Apartments, 945 and 957 Watervliet Shaker Road. This  
3 is a Board update.

4                   Mr. LaCivita?

5                   MR. LACIVITA: That's exactly what we are here  
6 for.

7                   MR. LAPPER: Thank you. For the record, I'm  
8 Jon Lapper, the project attorney with Mike Tucker who  
9 is the project engineer, Jeff Gordon and Jerry Gordon  
10 of Gordon Development.

11                   We were last here in November. The Chairman  
12 sent us off with some homework at that time to make  
13 some pretty significant changes to what we proposed.  
14 We hope what we are showing you tonight is responsive.  
15 We think that it is.

16                   The main complaints that we heard at the last  
17 meeting were that the greenspace was not in large  
18 enough blocks. It was cut up. It was too dense and  
19 there were too many buildings and that the garages  
20 were too prominent and that at that time we didn't  
21 have an elevation. We're here to address all of those  
22 issues. We've also had a number of meetings with the  
23 adjacent property owner of the Afrim's site to  
24 coordinate sewer, water and shared driveway to make  
25 both projects work together and Chuck and Joe are both

1           aware of that.

2                   Mike will go through the details, but I just  
3           want to show you that we put this up with the Afrim's  
4           superimposed so that you can see how it lays out  
5           together. We are trying to create a buffer with some  
6           landscaping, but in general we're right in their  
7           shadow and we wanted to maintain up front the unit  
8           that we had with the Shaker Historical Society to keep  
9           the front so that there would be a viewshed from the  
10          road to the existing Shaker structures to build the  
11          front in somewhat of a grid pattern is what the Shaker  
12          had asked us to do, but then to change the back the  
13          way that this Board had asked us to address the  
14          density.

15                   On the wall is what we showed up with in  
16          November that had a lot more buildings which were more  
17          buildings that cut up the site a lot more and cut up  
18          the greenspace, obviously. So, we consolidated into a  
19          fewer number from 17 buildings to 11 that are now  
20          12-plexes with three garages on the side so that the  
21          garages are now facing the center, facing each other  
22          here so that when you're looking from the road, you  
23          won't see any garages. The same is up here where they  
24          are facing center to minimize the view of the garages  
25          and consequently that allowed us to separate the

1 buildings more and more greenspace in between. You  
2 still maintain the area up front for a community  
3 garden which we talked to Shaker Historical Society  
4 about. We think that this is a much more advanced for  
5 a sketch plan that last time based upon your comments  
6 and we do have a rendering at this point of what the  
7 building will look like, again, with the garages  
8 facing each other.

9 MR. LACIVITA: Can you walk them through where  
10 the garages are so that they can see that out there,  
11 Jon?

12 MR. LAPPER: I'll have Mike go through the  
13 details with you. He can do a better job than what I  
14 can do.

15 MR. TUCKER: I'm Mike Tucker from VHB. We're  
16 the civil engineers on the project.

17 In answer to Joe's question, these are 12-unit  
18 buildings. There are 12 garages on them. There are a  
19 group of three on either end of the building, which  
20 shows up in this elevation. That's on both ends of  
21 the building and then there are six garages across the  
22 front. Each of the units has its own garage. By  
23 splitting them up and putting them on three sides of  
24 the building, we think that it really helps break up  
25 the concern that we had on the older plan by driving

1 down that straight road and kind of seeing the wall of  
2 garages on those garages that are parallel to the  
3 property line.

4 Also, just to give you some scale, this  
5 undisturbed area in the back is roughly three and a  
6 half acres and this greenspace on the backside of each  
7 building is about a half of acre of usable greenspace.  
8 By going to fewer yet a little bit larger buildings,  
9 we have really been able to open up that greenspace  
10 and make it much more usable for the tenants there.

11 In this area, we are proposing some community  
12 gardens. This area is about an acre (Indicating). We  
13 think that we've really accomplished the goals that we  
14 set out to after the last meeting.

15 Again, as Jon said, Afrim's is just really  
16 shown to kind of give you a scale of what the project  
17 is like to really show that interconnect that we will  
18 be working with them on and the Town to provide some  
19 emergency access there. Again, our main entrance will  
20 come in off of what will probably be a Town road up to  
21 this point (Indicating) and that is one of those  
22 details that we'll be working on.

23 We've also been working with Brian Sipperly who  
24 is the engineer on Afrim's and Pure Waters to come up  
25 with a solution on the sewer service that will help

1 kind of provide the best that we can for expanding  
2 that service area on this side of Watervliet Shaker  
3 Road. So, the plan now is that there is an existing  
4 sewer on the backside of that church further down Sand  
5 Creek a little bit. We're going to come straight  
6 across Albany Shaker into our site and then over to  
7 the driveway for Afirm's to provide them and sewer  
8 service for us. Again, that will be the minimum slope  
9 from that manhole that's there to get it as deep as we  
10 possibly can on this site and theirs to help open up  
11 this area for some future development. Chreit was  
12 happy with that solution and thought that it provided  
13 the best opportunity to get some sewer service there.

14 Also, there will be an interconnect between  
15 both water systems, along with a future easement to  
16 provide water service to the east on Watervliet Shaker  
17 Road.

18 Other than that, I think that Jon said pretty  
19 much all there is to say. He summed up two months of  
20 work.

21 MR. LANE: What is the distance between the two  
22 entranceways on Watervliet Shaker?

23 MR. TUCKER: We're about 200 feet apart now.  
24 Again, we still have to pursue this with the county -  
25 this configuration. I know that this will be at a

1           signalized intersection. Right now it's just shown as  
2           a right-in and right-out on our plan.

3           MR. SHAMLIAN: The highlands between the  
4           parking areas and in between buildings - what  
5           approximately is the width of those?

6           MR. TUCKER: They're about 10 or 12 feet wide.  
7           The thought was not necessarily to berm them up much,  
8           but to provide some pretty decent plantings there to  
9           help break up that parking a little bit and screen the  
10          garages from each other. The way that garages are  
11          staggered in the building within the unit, we can  
12          spruce that up quite a bit also.

13          MR. SHAMLIAN: I was just thinking that if  
14          those were eliminated, the buildings could come a  
15          little closer together and you'd get a bigger expanse  
16          of greenspace in between. You'd be able to cut down,  
17          in addition to eliminating that, you'd also be cutting  
18          down on the travel lane that has to exist essentially  
19          on both side of that island.

20          MR. TUCKER: We did look at that option and to  
21          get the movements in and out, it seemed like it was a  
22          lot of pavement there.

23          MR. SHAMLIAN: Could you bring the elevations  
24          closer to us?

25          MR. VOSS: Joe and I were just talking and

1           those kind of green landscaped islands between the two  
2           12-unit buildings would almost be a nice element if  
3           you could put some low level street trees in there -  
4           some deciduous trees which would kind of soften that  
5           look and almost give you a boulevard effect between  
6           those buildings. Even though they are 12 units, there  
7           is one massive building on each side.

8                   CHAIRMAN STUTO: Do we want to make more  
9           comments or hear from the TDE? I will have some  
10          comments, but we'll hear from you, Chuck. I know you  
11          haven't done a detailed review.

12                   MR. VOSS: Not particularly but we did get  
13          involved but it was obviously this project and we're  
14          certainly reviewing the Afirm's project. Just from a  
15          coordination standpoint, we're vertically to see the  
16          two projects working actually very well together. The  
17          two design engineers are working extremely well and  
18          trying to solve kind of the mutual issues that the two  
19          sides have. We certainly like the interconnect with  
20          the Afirm's at the back of the site that we're seeing  
21          now. Whether it's in that specific location or it's  
22          moved a little bit, it can still be dependent between  
23          the topography issues on the Afrim's side and you and  
24          Brian can certainly work that out.

25                   The one thing that Mike didn't touch on quickly

1 was the water mains. Latham Water would like to loop  
2 a main through both sides. So, in other words, it  
3 would come through the Afirms's site, potentially stub  
4 out at the top and work its way down into the Gordon  
5 site and then back down to Watervliet Shaker Road,  
6 which we certainly think is a positive for both  
7 projects. We have municipal water now and it's being  
8 looped through.

9 As Mike said, we have been very involved with  
10 Chreit and Pure Waters looking at sewer issues for  
11 both projects. What Chreit also asked the applicant  
12 to do was look at the broader sewer issues and  
13 potential growth issues of this general area, a little  
14 bit further to the east and to the north. So, Brian  
15 and Mike did a study to come look at that and that  
16 really necessitated the deepness, if you will, for the  
17 proposed sewer that Mike was just alluding to. I  
18 think that will work very well, as they come in from  
19 the Watervliet Shaker Road site.

20 Other than that, we're very pleased to see the  
21 reconfiguration. I think that the density concerns,  
22 certainly that the Board had with the first version, I  
23 think, are much better addressed by this new  
24 configuration. The aesthetics and those kinds of  
25 things that are proposed - I think that you have those

1 pictures in your packets. Those are certainly the  
2 Board's preferences in looking at the Shaker design  
3 and the Shaker elements might be something that needs  
4 a little more work but other than that, the project is  
5 looking like it's going to work pretty well.

6 MR. LACIVITA: From an elevation standpoint,  
7 the rooflines that you see are somewhat in line of  
8 what is being proposed with Afirm's entry point to his  
9 building. I met with him last week and talked a  
10 little bit about it and he really wowed me with what  
11 he's presenting there from an elevation standpoint.  
12 So, you're starting to really see the projects really  
13 blend together well in this area.

14 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I have a couple of questions  
15 or comments. I think that it's an improved design to  
16 the extent that it allows to have more greenspace, but  
17 I still have questions about that. The only amenity  
18 that is here and maybe this could be developed  
19 further, are potential community gardens. That  
20 appeals to some people, but not necessarily everybody.  
21 I think that you need to access -- you do have better  
22 greenspace. You said that it's approximately one-half  
23 acre behind all the buildings, but that's really  
24 divided among 24 households. I don't know if that's  
25 enough greenspace and enough places to do something.

1           Maybe it is. I don't know if you could propose  
2           specific amenities and develop that a little bit more.  
3           Then, what if you have children? What are they going  
4           to be doing?

5                     Pedestrian is something that - you haven't  
6           developed the plan well enough to address that. If  
7           you could speak to that, that would be good.

8                     Also, you are creating a fairly long driveway  
9           particularly at the back end and if somebody is in the  
10          back building and they're looking to go to work in the  
11          morning, some of the parking spots are separated from  
12          the building. If the traffic ends up going too fast  
13          -- for instance, look at the six-unit building. If  
14          somebody is parked across the way and there is quick  
15          traffic going by, I don't know if that's the most  
16          ideal design standard. I do think that this is  
17          improved. I like the connections. I think that more  
18          amenities and more pedestrian - what are the kids  
19          going to do? Is the greenspace that is accessed is  
20          enough? Those are my comments.

21                    I don't know if you have anything to say about  
22          that now.

23                    MR. LAPPER: We have room for amenities;  
24          walking trails. There is a clubhouse that is proposed  
25          in one of the Shaker buildings. So, we'll take those

1           comments to heart and the next time that we see you,  
2           we'll address those.

3           CHAIRMAN STUTO:  If you could wow us a little.  
4           It looks like a nice architecture with the building.

5           MR. LAPPER:  We think that we got the site plan  
6           a lot closer to where you wanted it and certainly the  
7           building is a higher end building than where we  
8           started.  We'll address your issues for the kids and  
9           some pedestrian activities.

10          MR. LACIVITA:  Jon, one of the still  
11          outstanding - and I don't want to call it outstanding  
12          but I think that one of the things that we really want  
13          to look at is that barn area up in front.  That has  
14          become a highlight now of the Shaker Heritage  
15          Community - something about the preservation of that.  
16          We talked a little bit about possibly working in --  
17          perhaps a kiosk or whatever.

18          MR. LAPPER:  There are structural integrity  
19          issues with that facility, but those boards should be  
20          used, no matter what, at a minimum and that certainly  
21          is part of this.  Whether that happens on-site or not,  
22          we're willing to talk about all that stuff.

23          MR. LACIVITA:  Good.  Because I know that's one  
24          of their concerns that is an area that they have an  
25          interest in.

1                   MR. LAPPER: We even talked about when the  
2 Shaker Historical Society wanted that -- I'm not sure  
3 that they do, but we can discuss that.

4                   MR. LACIVITA: Okay.

5                   CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, thank you.

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8                   (Whereas the above entitled proceeding was  
9 concluded at 9:45 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATION

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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 \_\_\_\_\_

