

1 PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY

2 TOWN OF COLONIE

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4 SUNRISE DEVELOPMENT MIXED USE  
836-844 TROY SCHENECTADY ROAD  
5 SKETCH PLAN REVIEW

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6 THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled  
7 Public Hearing by NANCY L. STRANG, a Shorthand  
8 Reporter, commencing on July 12, 2016 at 8:30 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 TIMOTHY LANE  
14 SUSAN MILSTEIN  
15 CRAIG SHAMLIAN  
16 BRIAN AUSTIN

14

15 ALSO PRESENT:

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17 Kathleen Marinelli, Esq. Counsel to the Planning Board  
18 Joseph LaCivita, Planning and Economic Development  
Department  
19 Joseph Bianchini, PE, ABD Engineering  
Joseph Grasso, PE, CHA

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1                   CHAIRMAN STUTO: Joe LaCivita, do you have any  
2 introductory comments on this project?

3                   MR. LACIVITA: You might remember this project  
4 as the Top Tile people. They had a single lot. Part  
5 of that group that was here, Jessie Holland from  
6 Sunrise Development - they actually acquired the  
7 additional lot next door. That was the DeWalt service  
8 store. This project has worked into a little bit  
9 larger of a project but a much better project.

10                  Jessie had heard the concerns at the time. He  
11 worked with the abutting property owner. Now we're  
12 back tonight to see this new life that's been blown  
13 into this project and Joe Bianchini is here on behalf  
14 of Jessie. Jessie is out of the country today on  
15 vacation.

16                  MR. BIANCHINI: Thanks, Joe.

17                  As Joe indicated, previously this was basically  
18 two lots that contained single family houses; 840 and  
19 844 Troy Schenectady. Jessie has acquired options on  
20 those and the adjoining retail building that is here  
21 now; the DeWalt and the chairlift company in there.  
22 There are three lots that will be combined into one  
23 4.5 acre parcel of land. The two existing single  
24 family homes would be removed. As I said, the  
25 existing retail building would stay.

1           What Jessie would like to do, as part of this  
2           Sunrise Management, is to have an office building here  
3           fronting on Troy Schenectady Road. Half of that  
4           second floor would become the Sunrise Management  
5           offices. The first floor would be leased to tenants.  
6           We would have parking behind that. Further back there  
7           would be another parking lot and then a nine-unit  
8           apartment building at this location here (Indicating)  
9           with the parking here and then the road would continue  
10          on and there would be a 12-unit apartment building in  
11          the back.

12                 These are all oriented in kind of a  
13                 northeast/southwest direction because of solar. All  
14                 of them will be solar designed. Not total solar but  
15                 they want to take the maximum advantage of the solar  
16                 in all of these units. That's why it's oriented in  
17                 that direction.

18                 Again, the office building would be two story  
19                 and 90,000 square feet. It's oriented in this  
20                 direction but in order to make it appear to have a  
21                 front towards Route 7 - Troy Schenectady Road - there  
22                 will be a larger patio that will be fenced in and more  
23                 decorative to give it an appearance of an entrance  
24                 there. The actual entrance will be around the back.  
25                 It will have a sidewalk connecting to the sidewalk

1 along Troy Schenectady Road and to the back parking  
2 lot and actually to the back of the apartment  
3 building.

4 The site doesn't have wetlands but they are in  
5 the 100 foot adjacent area to New York State DEC  
6 wetlands. That's this area in the back which we're  
7 leaving undisturbed.

8 Previously this project was presented for  
9 concept approval and there was concerns from the  
10 neighbors on Laura Drive. As I'm showing the closest  
11 point to the building (Indicating) to that building is  
12 510 feet. So, it's a considerable distance and it's  
13 all wetland. It's not going to be developed.

14 This is just a larger view of it (Indicating).

15 We would be trying to feature a stormwater  
16 management area here that has standing water and then  
17 a grassed area around that so that there would be  
18 patios on the back of these apartments.

19 This building over here would have patios also,  
20 but that would face out towards the woods. This  
21 leaves us an area for picnic tables or whatever  
22 outdoor activities might be in back of that.

23 We also have featured an exercise trail around  
24 the perimeter of the property all the way around to  
25 Route 7. That would have exercise stations and

1           whatever they want to put there.

2                   Other than that, we have had a DCC meeting. We  
3           have the comments and we are going through the  
4           comments to address them. There is water and sewer  
5           obviously, available here. We will be bringing those  
6           services into the site. We will be managing our  
7           stormwater with a drain infrastructure type stormwater  
8           management area that will feature a pond and we will  
9           have landscaping.

10                   I believe that we do have to slide this  
11           building over about 10 feet because we have to be 25  
12           feet. This is an adjacent residence. We'll be doing  
13           that. The dumpsters will be here. Those will be  
14           changes that will come in with the concept submission.

15                   I'm happy to answer questions.

16                   CHAIRMAN STUTO: Does the Board want to comment  
17           or do we want to hear from Joe Grasso first?

18                   MS. MILSTEIN: Joe.

19                   CHAIRMAN STUTO: Joe Grasso, I know that you  
20           are reviewing this as a TDE on behalf of CHA and I  
21           know that you haven't conducted a complete review, but  
22           do you have any comments at this time?

23                   MR. GRASSO: Yes, we do even though it's a  
24           sketch. We do, obviously, have a long history of  
25           this. We had reviewed the previous Top Tile project

1 and looking back there, one of the things that the  
2 Planning Board had always wished for was that project  
3 would look to be developed along with this commercial  
4 site and you may recall at the time that the owner of  
5 this commercial site actually came before the Planning  
6 Board and suggested a possible plan that looked at  
7 development on both lots together.

8 Also previously when the Planning Board  
9 reviewed the Top Tile project, it was a relatively  
10 small commercial building up front and then one single  
11 apartment building in the back. There was no sense of  
12 community and that was a concern of the Planning Board  
13 as to how successful over long-term that apartment was  
14 going to be being because it was isolated and it was  
15 only going to serve a small resident population.

16 Now what we are looking at is obviously a much  
17 more different scale apartment complex. There is a  
18 theme that I think is good, being applied to the whole  
19 project in terms of the solar initiatives and the  
20 design of a stormwater management feature that could  
21 be a centralized feature that can serve the overall  
22 development.

23 In terms of the site plan, we think that it's a  
24 really good plan that provides some identity to the  
25 residential uses, but also looks to improve how the

1 existing commercial site operates.

2 We like the new access point being provided on  
3 Route 7.

4 We do question the need for the one-way in  
5 access drive. Obviously, our overall goal is always  
6 to apply access management principals, especially  
7 along the Town's busy corridors and Route 7 is one.  
8 We would look for justification there and a possible  
9 elimination of that as the plan develops.

10 I think that the project is showing a walking  
11 trail along the perimeter and I apologize if I didn't  
12 hear that in the presentation. I think that is a very  
13 desirable feature. One of the concerns that we have  
14 is the location of the walking trail as it relates to  
15 the existing adjacent residential neighborhoods. It  
16 looks to be in close proximity to the property lines.  
17 It could result in some clearing of any vegetation  
18 that exists there that currently serves as a buffer.  
19 I know that when you're looking on the west property  
20 line there is a proposed retaining wall that ranges up  
21 to six feet high along its length. It's right along  
22 an existing residential property line. Obviously,  
23 there is a concern there for protection and a privacy  
24 concern.

25 Other than that, we think that it's a good

1 plan.

2 There is a waiver requested of the parking  
3 because they are a little bit short of the Town Code.  
4 That's a waiver that's already been recommended for  
5 approval by the Planning Department and we agree with  
6 that. It's based on the actual intended use of the  
7 apartments and the actual parking demands.

8 I'm just going through some of the comments  
9 from the Planning Department, which I think are  
10 relevant.

11 Consideration should be given to any covered  
12 parking. Right now the parking is proposed all  
13 surface parking. They did recommend a consolidated  
14 mail kiosk location, which I think is an appropriate  
15 comment. It's something that should be addressed as  
16 the plan evolves.

17 Then a consolidation of the refuse area. Right  
18 now they are looking at dumpsters off the end of every  
19 parking lot and there could be some consolidation into  
20 one centralized area that is accessible to all the  
21 units.

22 All the departments have reviewed the project  
23 and saw no significant issues with the plan, as  
24 proposed. That's all I've got at this time.

25 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Those are excellent comments.

1 I'm also going to have comments on that.

2 MR. BIANCHINI: When I indicated that this  
3 building is going to be pulled back, these parking  
4 lots are going to be pulled back. We will pull back  
5 the walking path, too. So, that's a little further  
6 away from the property line and we would eliminate  
7 most of that retaining wall.

8 MR. SHAMLIAN: Can you talk a little bit about  
9 the apartments; one-bedroom, two-bedroom, one story -

10 MR. BIANCHINI: They will be three story  
11 buildings. There will be a combination of one and two  
12 bedroom. Typically the one bedroom is what is most in  
13 demand now adays. Obviously, with the two bedrooms  
14 you could generate children and have some school-aged  
15 children. Most of them will probably be one bedroom  
16 with a den or an office or something like that. It  
17 will be three-story buildings.

18 MR. SHAMLIAN: The building that's going to  
19 remain out front - what is the plan -

20 MR. BIANCHINI: I don't know exactly yet. The  
21 architect is working on all of this.

22 MR. SHAMLIAN: But there is a plan to -

23 MR. BIANCHINI: Yes, to harmonize with the rest  
24 of them. It needs a little bit of improvement.

25 MR. SHAMLIAN: I agree that I would love to see

1 the one curb cut.

2 MR. BIANCHINI: They like this because the  
3 existing tenants here are used to this curb cut here  
4 which would be shortened considerably from what is  
5 there. We are eliminating the two driveway curb cuts.  
6 This one lines up - not quite opposite, but pretty  
7 close to opposite.

8 MR. SHAMLIAN: Would it be a benefit to just a  
9 right-out?

10 MR. BIANCHINI: This is just an in.

11 MR. SHAMLIAN: The other is the more dangerous  
12 move.

13 MR. BIANCHINI: Right-in is easy.

14 MR. SHAMLIAN: The left-in is the tough one,  
15 but there is a center lane there for left-in to stack.

16 MR. LACIVITA: I had asked that question during  
17 the DCC meeting and the applicant was there at the  
18 time. What he said was that his existing tenants that  
19 he had talked with feel that they can get the people  
20 coming from the easterly direction to come into the  
21 site because they have the access point up there.  
22 It's the fear of those westerly people that are  
23 traveling towards the Schenectady area that would not  
24 know to go in there because that's been a  
25 long-standing business. DOT is looking to have it

1 closed as well. That's one of the recommendations.  
2 So, I know the applicant has to work with his tenants.

3 MR. GRASSO: The site does have the benefit of  
4 the two-way left turn lane out in front and just to  
5 add a little bit more color to the conversation, the  
6 concern with the one-way is that a vehicle that wants  
7 to take a left turn and stops at that curb cut waiting  
8 to take that left. That basically blocks the ability  
9 of a car that's looking to come into the apartment  
10 complex because their deceleration and storage is  
11 basically taken away by that car that's already queued  
12 up. That's something that is based on the line up on  
13 Route 7 -- that's a condition that we are going to be  
14 facing.

15 The other thing regarding the access point -  
16 DOT has recommended that the access point line up is  
17 exactly across from that, instead of the slight  
18 off-set. I should have brought that up in our earlier  
19 comments.

20 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Anyone have any comments?

21 MR. LANE: I would like to see the access  
22 change. I think that everything else is fine.

23 MR. MION: I have a question. You're going up  
24 three stories. Are you going to have elevators in  
25 there?

1 MR. BIANCHINI: No.

2 MR. MION: Especially if you have somebody  
3 that's disabled.

4 MR. BIANCHINI: The ground floor is disabled.  
5 No, there are no elevators at this point.

6 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I have a couple of comments.  
7 To me, it's the whole NCOR issue of putting apartments  
8 on this corridors and sort of a mixed-use way and  
9 whether that works or not.

10 You're going to talk to us about this at one  
11 point.

12 MR. LACIVITA: We will put something together;  
13 yes.

14 CHAIRMAN STUTO: We did already approve this  
15 for the last project. This is an improvement.

16 Some of it's positive like the stormwater pond.  
17 That's not going to be fenced, I take it, right?

18 MR. BIANCHINI: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN STUTO: And the walking path. You  
20 already re-commented on that about being too close but  
21 you said you were going to move it. We'll see how  
22 that looks.

23 I still don't think that there are enough  
24 amenities. I don't know what else there could be. I  
25 don't know if there are kids' amenities or any

1 swingsets - I guess a more consolidated picnic-type  
2 area, a pavilion or something like that. I leave it  
3 to your creativity and maybe Joe's suggestions.

4 The other thing is, the apartment building  
5 that's on the left lower corner, which would be sort  
6 of southeast -- is there any reason why that couldn't  
7 be switched with the parking lot to get it closer to  
8 the pond area and put the parking behind it?

9 That dovetails into another comment.

10 My observation which may be totally wrong but a  
11 lot of the upscale apartments have the garages built  
12 in and they seem to do quite well and demand a good  
13 rent. Is there a reason not to do that? I think that  
14 garages pay for themselves.

15 MR. BIANCHINI: They probably do. The space  
16 that we have available and to get the parking in, even  
17 with garages -- garages take up more space because you  
18 need more room and width. The client didn't want to  
19 do garages.

20 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Think about it. Even detached  
21 but I prefer attached so that they can drive right in  
22 the building. What do I know? It's a question that I  
23 ask.

24 I agree with all the comments on the curb cuts.  
25 I hope that you'll take a look at that.

1 MR. LACIVITA: I don't know if it was missed in  
2 conversations but in the second building, the garage  
3 mentioned there is a maintenance garage. There is a  
4 recreational room, as well.

5 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Which building?

6 MR. LACIVITA: It's in the second building,  
7 Peter. There is a rec room that's being proposed  
8 there as one of the amenities because it was brought  
9 up during the DCC.

10 CHAIRMAN STUTO: How big is it and what is the  
11 function going to be there?

12 MR. BIANCHINI: It's basically an exercise  
13 room.

14 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay.

15 MR. LACIVITA: And that played more to the  
16 one-bedroom apartment mix. They were going for -- I  
17 don't want to say the childless apartments, but it's  
18 more towards the single professionals.

19 CHAIRMAN STUTO: They might want to mingle  
20 around the stormwater management area.

21 MR. SHAMLIAN: The only other question I have  
22 is what in the way of significant trees are there on  
23 the backside?

24 MR. BIANCHINI: There are significant trees in  
25 the two single family homes area. There are some nice

1 large spruce trees and pine trees in through there.  
2 In the back, this is all heavily wooded back here  
3 (Indicating). Again, at this point we haven't  
4 identified any trees but we will have to go back out  
5 and identify some of those.

6 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Anything else?

7 (There was no response.)

8 Okay, I hope that you've heard our comments and  
9 thank you.

10 MR. BIANCHINI: Thank you.

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12 (Whereas the above entitled proceeding was  
13 concluded at 8:50 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 \_\_\_\_\_

