

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

PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY

TOWN OF COLONIE

\*\*\*\*\*

FIRST COLUMBIA OFFICE/HOTEL  
227 WOLF ROAD

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF HOTEL ELEVATIONS

\*\*\*\*\*

THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled matter by NANCY L. STRANG, a Shorthand Reporter, commencing on May 9, 2017 at 7:05 p.m. at The Public Operations Center, 347 Old Niskayuna Road, Latham, New York

BOARD MEMBERS:  
PETER STUTO, CHAIRMAN  
LOU MION  
KATHY DALTON  
BRIAN AUSTIN  
CRAIG SHAMLIAN  
SUSAN MILSTEIN

ALSO PRESENT:  
Joseph LaCivita, Director, Planning and Economic Development  
Michael Tengeler, Planning and Economic Development  
Chris Bette, First Columbia Development  
Chuck Voss, PE, Barton and Loguidice  
Wendy Allen  
Kathy Ordway

1           CHAIRMAN STUTO: We have several items on the  
2 agenda. Welcome to the Town of Colonie Planning board.

3           Brian Austin is a Conductor for North Colonie.

4           You will have to be leaving at some point?

5           MR. AUSTIN: Yes.

6           CHAIRMAN STUTO: Joe, before we call the agenda, do  
7 you have any matters of business to discuss?

8           MR. LACIVITA: Nothing administratively at this  
9 point, Peter.

10          CHAIRMAN STUTO: First item on the agenda is first  
11 Columbia office/hotel, 227 Wolf Road, application for  
12 approval of hotel elevations.

13          Any introductory remarks to this?

14          MR. LACIVITA: For the record, you will remember  
15 this project. It was before us several times during the  
16 course of sketch and went to the SEQR review and SEQR  
17 acceptance in order for the applicant to get in front of  
18 our SEAMAB Board. It later got acceptance of concept.

19          It came back for Board updates. We gave it  
20 final approval on 6/9/15 where we currently see the  
21 Pioneer Bank that was erected and actually fully  
22 tenanted at this point. We approved a hotel on the  
23 site, but the Board asked conditions upon when a  
24 flag was identified and an elevation was more firm.

25          In your packets you will remember what you saw

1 back at that time.

2 Now we have a flag which is the Marriott. We  
3 have a design and we have Mr. Bette here tonight to  
4 take into the design and get that finally approved.

5 MR. BETTE: My name is Chris Bette and I'm with the  
6 First Columbia.

7 As Mr. LaCivita pointed out, back in June 2015  
8 we were in front of this Board for final approval  
9 for the entire development proposed at the corner of  
10 Wolf Road and Albany Shaker Road. As Joe pointed  
11 out, the Pioneer office - Pioneer headquarters  
12 building has been constructed and all the site  
13 improvements have been constructed in accordance  
14 with those approved plans.

15 Back in June 2015 we made note to the board  
16 that we did not have a brand selected for the hotel.  
17 The brand - we were in discussions with several  
18 different brands.

19 Since that time we have been able to come to an  
20 agreement with Marriott. Marriott has approved the  
21 site for what they are calling their dual brand  
22 hotel which will incorporate Residence Inn rooms as  
23 well as Courtyard rooms. So, the rendering that I  
24 have given you today or I submitted in March that  
25 you have in front of you basically is our approved

1 plan with the Marriott for this dual brand. I think  
2 you will find it complements the Pioneer  
3 headquarters building as well as being complimentary  
4 to what we had submitted back in June.

5 One thing that we, First Columbia, has asked  
6 our designers to contemplate -- I have just handed  
7 Mr. LaCivita some of these drawings. We were a  
8 little concerned that the building that we provided  
9 facing the Northway did not have some windows. We  
10 wanted to ask the Board to allow this end of the  
11 building to be considered as part of the approval,  
12 pending us getting Marriott to approve that.

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Can you point to the windows that  
14 you are talking about?

15 MR. LACIVITA: Actually, they are in front of you.

16 CHAIRMAN STUTO: But just point them out there?

17 MR. BETTE: These windows down at the end of the  
18 building -- those face the Northway. We thought that  
19 would be a better solution. That requires some changes  
20 to the room layouts which we have to get approved by  
21 Marriott. They may or may not. We think that they will  
22 because I think that they will agree with us that visual  
23 from Old Wolf Road and the Northway would be a much  
24 nicer visual. We are favorable that they will do it,  
25 but, again, Marriott has their standards and the way

1           they think sometimes may not be the way that we think.

2           MR. LACIVITA: You are also bringing in the  
3           elevator bank, right?

4           MR. BETTE: The stair tower on the end, in addition  
5           to adding the windows, we are going to incorporate the  
6           stair inside the building so that it is not a projection  
7           on the outside. That is where we are headed.

8           I am asking the Board for approval on what  
9           Marriott has already allowed us to show you. We want  
10          to go to Marriott to say that we would like to do  
11          this and in lieu of the end that we are showing you  
12          and if Marriott allows, we would like the Planning  
13          Board to allow as well.

14          CHAIRMAN STUTO: What is approved now? I see things  
15          that have Planning Board stamps on them. It looks like  
16          more than just the windows will be changing.

17          MS. DALTON: And the bump out.

18          CHAIRMAN STUTO: There were three drawings.

19          MR. BETTE: You will see in February 2016 that this  
20          rendering was stamped (Indicating). That was the one  
21          that we had supplied throughout the 18 months of our  
22          approvals. Again, that was the one that we recognized  
23          was going to change once we had a brand selected.

24          CHAIRMAN STUTO: And then you submitted a Courtyard  
25          Marriott, but it doesn't have the windows. You

1 submitted it in the packet.

2 MR. BETTE: In the package we stayed in spirit of  
3 what we supplied the first time with the blank end. We  
4 are now suggesting that Marriott should allow us to do  
5 that, but we need Marriott's approval to put windows  
6 facing the Northway side. Again, that requires changing  
7 orientations of the guest rooms inside the hotel. It is  
8 a little different. It is a few steps with those folks.

9 CHAIRMAN STUTO: We will take commentary from our  
10 Town Designated Engineer. In a sense, it is a sense of  
11 anesthetics.

12 Chuck?

13 MR. VOSS: Thank you, Peter.

14 We looked at this resubmission and update of  
15 the building design. Based on our prior review of  
16 the project back in 2015 in the final review -- we  
17 really looked at this more from an infrastructure  
18 type of standpoint. I think that it is important to  
19 note that based on the current set of plans that we  
20 got, nothing changes physically on the site. The  
21 hotel itself is still in the same exact position  
22 that it was earlier.

23 CHAIRMAN STUTO: So, we're talking architectural  
24 statistics?

25 MR. VOSS: Yes, it's really just architectural

1 look. If you're asking for my opinion, I certainly like  
2 the newest rendering, I think, a lot better than what I  
3 am seeing in the prior renderings.

4 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Because why?

5 MR. VOSS: I think it provides a little bit more  
6 sleek and modern look. I think it's certainly  
7 complements the bank building that is already there. I  
8 also like the additional glazing on what we might want  
9 to call the west side of the building versus a stair  
10 tower that kind of sticks out to nowhere or blank wall  
11 that we saw early on. Aesthetically, I think it is a  
12 much nicer looking building.

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: What other materials?

14 MR. BETTE: It is going to be a combination of  
15 metal panel and efus -

16 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Could you repeat that word?

17 MR. BETTE: Efus is the standard stucco that a lot  
18 of the retail buildings are and a lot of the hotels are.

19 CHAIRMAN STUTO: You're talking about for the upper  
20 four or five floors.

21 MR. BETTE: Yes, the upper floors. The lower floors  
22 would all be a hard surface.

23 CHAIRMAN STUTO: So, the upper floors would be a  
24 combination of efus and -

25 MR. BETTE: And a metal panel, similar to what the

1 Pioneer headquarters is.

2 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Which would be the metal panels;  
3 the light, or the darker?

4 MR. BETTE: The dark panels - the accent panels.

5 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Before we finish, a comment on  
6 signs. We have received a lot of commentary on the sign  
7 on Pioneer Bank. Not all of it has been positive. We  
8 didn't approve that sign on this Board. I believe it was  
9 the purview of the Sign Review Committee. However, we  
10 are going to make comments on signs and recommendations  
11 to the Sign Review Board from this point forward. So,  
12 could you tell us what you have in mind for signs?

13 Chuck, we need to have that as part of the  
14 review.

15 MR. BETTE: I think that what you see on this  
16 latest rendering - the bigger one is where we are going  
17 to look. So, we're going to be looking for signage where  
18 you can see it. The Northway elevation - we'd like a  
19 sign here (Indicating). You also have the Albany Shaker  
20 Road side, but you also see this sign from northbound on  
21 Wolf Road. So, this end here, we are showing the  
22 Courtyard sign and then we're showing the Residence Inn  
23 sign both facing the Northway and then facing Albany  
24 Shaker Road.

25 MS. DALTON: You're not lighting it up though,

1 right?

2 MR. BETTE: They are not going to be the LED sign  
3 that you see on Pioneer. It's just going to be a  
4 standard match to whatever Marriott's standards are.

5 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Does the Board agree that we don't  
6 want an LED sign?

7 (All Board Members agreed.)

8 Chuck, can you make a note of that in our  
9 recommendation?

10 Are there members of the public that want to  
11 speak on this?

12 MS. ALLEN: I'm Wendy Allen from Loudonville.

13 My question is not really specific to this  
14 project, but I have no idea what he has been  
15 pointing at and what he has been talking about  
16 because we can't see anything out here. We all take  
17 time to come here because we care and not only is  
18 there not a large elevation or anything to look at,  
19 but for the Comprehensive Plan meeting, this thing  
20 drops down (Indicting) and Joe has things scanned  
21 and everybody can see them on the screen. Is there  
22 some reason that can't be done for these projects as  
23 well?

24 MR. LACIVITA: I know that we put everything on our  
25 website and the elevations are on our website.

1 MS. ALLEN: Was this diagram on your website?

2 MR. LACIVITA: Yes.

3 MS. ALLEN: When did that get put on?

4 MR. LACIVITA: It was probably Tuesday or  
5 Wednesday.

6 MS. ALLEN: This one?

7 MR. LACIVITA: Not this one. We just handed this  
8 just this evening. If we're handed this just this  
9 evening, we did not have that.

10 MS. ALLEN: It just makes it very difficult to  
11 participate in any kind of Planning Board activity.

12 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I understand that. Normally at a  
13 minimum, the applicant has something that they put up  
14 for the public to see.

15 Anybody else from the public want to speak on  
16 this one?

17 MS. ORDWAY: I'm Kathy Ordway from the Green  
18 Meadows development.

19 I think that the problem with the Pioneer sign  
20 is that it's really a message board and not a sign.  
21 I think that we are at that place with technology  
22 where we have to say a sign is a sign and a message  
23 board is a message board.

24 I'm glad to hear Chris say that it will not be  
25 a message board with rotating messages or anything.

1 It will just be a standard sign for the hotel.

2 CHAIRMAN STUTO: As a citizen and as a Planning  
3 Board Member, I agree with you.

4 Questions or comments from the Board?

5 (There was no response.)

6 Okay, do we have a motion to approve the new  
7 rendition with the comments that were made?

8 MR. SHAMLIAN: Can you give us an idea of how many  
9 square feet we're talking about in total on the signs,  
10 Chris?

11 MR. BETTE: I do not have that. We will be adhering  
12 to Marriott's standards as well as the Sign Code.

13 MS. MILSTEIN: How will we know what the Marriott  
14 standards are? How do we know that you're not exceeding  
15 the minimum? What would be the minimum?

16 MR. BETTE: I think that your Sign Code is going to  
17 drive what we can and can't do. Basically the Sign  
18 Review Board - we'll have to get approval for all the  
19 signs.

20 CHAIRMAN STUTO: You're not asking for any variance  
21 from them?

22 MR. BETTE: No.

23 MS. MILSTEIN: I just want to say that I don't care  
24 for this design at all. To me, it's very institutional.  
25 I think that I like the original one that was presented.

1           It's practically a bait and switch. It was a really nice  
2           product and I don't care for this one. I don't care for  
3           it.

4           MR. AUSTIN: I would respectfully disagree.

5           There is a Marriott just a hop, skip and jump  
6           down the road there. Is that going to be an issue?

7           MR. BETTE: Correct. There is a Marriott Courtyard  
8           across the street that will be rebranded as another  
9           Marriott product. There is a full service Marriott on  
10          the other end. As part of Marriott's due diligence  
11          themselves, they go around and canvass all the other  
12          Marriott products in the area and they talk to them  
13          about what our proposal is.

14          MS. DALTON: I used to travel all the time for work  
15          and I stayed at the Marriott. It's really typical of  
16          Marriott to cluster their products because each product  
17          is targeted to a market. You're talking about a five  
18          mile radius and they're going to have four, five or six  
19          different products.

20          MR. BETTE: You see the same thing on Wolf Road.

21          CHAIRMAN STUTO: Any other comments?

22          (There was no response.)

23          Do we have a motion on the new elevation with  
24          all the comments that we made?

25          Chuck, I hope that you're understanding that

1 clearly for the next Board meeting.

2 Is there any other discussion?

3 (There was no response.)

4 All those in favor say aye.

5 MS. DALTON: Aye.

6 MR. MION: Aye.

7 MR. AUSTIN: Aye.

8 MR. SHAMLIAN: Aye.

9 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Aye.

10 All those opposed?

11 MS. MILSTEIN: Nay.

12 CHAIRMAN STUTO: We have one nay.

13 Thank you.

14 MR. BETTE: Mr. Chairman, may I just recap? I want  
15 to do this. Just so the Board is aware, we want to put  
16 those windows there, but that is going to be driven by  
17 Marriott. If we are not allowed to, we will be building  
18 this - the one that we submitted. It will be just the  
19 end of the building that will be changed. We put the  
20 stair in the building and we put some windows on the  
21 outside.

22 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I think that it puts more pressure  
23 on Marriott, if that's approved.

24 MR. BETTE: I don't disagree. That's the way that  
25 we are going to present it to Marriott. That's what the

1 Planning Board wants.

2 CHAIRMAN STUTO: So, you have to come back if you  
3 want to take the windows back.

4 MR. BETTE: Either way. I can come back to put the  
5 window there (Indicating) -

6 CHAIRMAN STUTO: We approved the one with the  
7 windows.

8 Does the Board agree with that?

9 (All Board Members agreed.)

10 MR. BETTE: Thank you.

11

12 (Whereas the above entitled proceeding was  
13 concluded at 7:17 p.m.)

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 \_\_\_\_\_

