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PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY

TOWN OF COLONIE

AIRPORT AREA GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
PLANNING BOARD PROPOSAL TO ACCEPT LEAD AGENCY STATUS
AND ISSUE A POSITIVE DECLARATION

THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled matter
by NANCY L. STRANG, a Shorthand Reporter commencing
on November 14, 2017 at 8:51 p.m. at The Public
Operations Center, 347 Old Niskayuna Road, Latham,
New York

BOARD MEMBERS:
PETER STUTO, CHAIRMAN
BRIAN AUSTIN
LOU MION
CRAIG SHAMLIAN
STEVEN HEIDER
SUSAN MILSTEIN

ALSO PRESENT:

Michael C. Magguilli, Esq., Town Attorney's Office
Joseph LaCivita, Director, Planning and Economic
Development Department
Michael Tengeler, Planning and Economic Development
Department
Joseph Grasso, PE, CHA
Mary Beth Buckner

1 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Last item on the agenda is the
2 Airport Area Generic Environmental Impact Statement,
3 Planning Board proposal to accept lead agency status and
4 issue a positive declaration.

5 MR. LACIVITA: The only thing that I will add
6 before we turn it over to Joe Grasso is -- you will
7 remember this project. We went through a Powerpoint
8 presentation and talked about what the actual updates to
9 the Airport Area is and they talked about the first
10 action that we had to do which was take lead agency
11 status for the project.

12 We have gotten some responses back from our
13 involved agencies and they have no concerns with us
14 acting in that capacity and that's what we are here
15 for this evening.

16 I will turn it over to Joe.

17 MR. GRASSO: So, CHA was hired to not do a full
18 update to the airport area GEIS but to take it through
19 the scoping process. So, that is the process that was
20 started a couple of months ago.

21 As Joe had mentioned, one of the first
22 procedural steps of SEQR and doing an update to a GIS
23 would be to decide who the lead agency is and this is
24 a decision as to who is going to be the lead to make
25 sure that the study includes what the intent is and to

1 be the primary review of the documents and then make
2 the administrative decisions through the course of the
3 process.

4 As we have talked about before, the Planning
5 Board is interested in being the lead agent. There is
6 a number of involved agencies. There is a list of
7 about 20 of them. We had sent notices out on
8 September 6th to all the involved agencies notifying
9 them of the project and letting them know that the
10 Planning Board was interested in being lead agent and
11 seeing if they had any questions or concerns regarding
12 that and all of the responses that we have gotten was
13 that nobody objected to the Planning Board being lead
14 agent.

15 There is a statutory 40-day time clock that
16 you have to allow to do that level of coordinated
17 review so we are well past that 30-day time period.
18 So, the Planning Board now has the comfort to know
19 that it is the only agency that decided to step up and
20 want to be lead agent on the study, assuming that it
21 continues to move forward for a full update.

22 So, the action tonight is for the Planning
23 Board to accept lead agency status and the second
24 action is actually make the determination that
25 cumulative impacts of development within the study

1 area - the Airport Area GIS study area which is about
2 8,400 acres could have a potential impact on the
3 environment. When we talk about the environment we're
4 talking about traffic, infrastructure and ecological
5 resources, vegetation and open space, character of the
6 community - all those things fall within that SEQR
7 review umbrella. So, what we have done is we have
8 gone through and prepared a full Environmental
9 Assessment Form which as you know, includes three
10 parts.

11 Part I describes the project and the
12 environmental setting of the study area and because
13 this is a GEIS, it's done at a very high level and
14 very different from the types of information that we
15 would get from a site specific environmental
16 assessment form.

17 Part II actually goes through - it's actually
18 the identification of potential project impacts and as
19 we went through this it talks about the impact on
20 land, geology, surface water, traffic, utilities,
21 plants and animals, air, flooding and a number of
22 significant environmental issues and for many of these
23 questions it was determined that cumulative
24 development in the study area could result in a
25 potential significant impact and when you come to that

1 realization which is obviously different from the
2 realization that we get when we look at only looking
3 at impacts associated with one project but when you
4 look at completed development over a large area and
5 you look at these cumulative impacts, it could result
6 in significant impacts. So, that's what triggers the
7 need for taking this broader look at things and
8 looking at the impacts and seeing what levels of
9 mitigation are required.

10 Part III of the full EAF - typically the
11 Board grants negative declarations regarding specific
12 projects. On this one we are actually going to
13 recommend a different determination and that's a
14 positive declaration basically saying that based on
15 the information as provided and what we know about the
16 study area that we do think that there is a chance for
17 potential significant environmental impacts and
18 therefore we recommend that completion of a GEIS.

19 So, that is what is included in a positive
20 declaration. So, that is the second determination or
21 decision that the Planning Board needs to make tonight
22 which would be the issuance of a positive declaration.

23 We have included a Draft Resolution for the
24 Planning Board's consideration of those two actions.

25 One is accepting lead agency status and the

1 second is the following of a positive declaration.

2 I believe that the Planning Department has
3 issued that to all the members of the Planning Board
4 for your review.

5 With that, I'd be happy to go through any
6 more detail that may be required regarding either the
7 items and the full Environmental Assessment Form, the
8 solicitation for lead agency or the resolution before
9 the Board tonight.

10 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Thank you. That was a great
11 presentation. We all have the EAF in front of us. We
12 have had it for a while and have been reviewing it. We
13 also have the Resolution in front of us.

14 Can you tell us what the next steps in the
15 process will be after, assuming that we adopt this?

16 MR. GRASSO: Okay, so after you accept lead
17 agency status and issue the positive declaration, we
18 will notify all of the other involved agencies that step
19 has been taken and then we get into the scoping process
20 where we prepare a draft scoping document which includes
21 the issues that we think are worthy of inclusion in the
22 study. In this case we are able to rely on the study
23 that was done back in 1991 and we have the scope of that
24 complete study. So, that is a starting point for us so
25 we can carry those issues forward. Then, we can make

1 additions or refinements to that based on what we know
2 has occurred within the Town and whether or not there is
3 likely to be any changes in the development patterns
4 within the study area. We will come back to the
5 Planning Board with a draft scoping document and a
6 public scoping meeting is an optional process or an
7 optional step in the process. It's one that we strongly
8 recommend. We think that it would be great to go out
9 into the public and the landowners within the study area
10 and get their feedback on what are the significant
11 issues that they foresee happening or the things that
12 they worry about so that we can build that into the
13 scoping document. We would finalize the scoping
14 document and then present it to the Planning Board for
15 adoption. That is basically the end of this step is to
16 get through the scoping document that identifies two
17 things.

18 One of the issues that is going to be
19 identified in the study and to what level of detail is
20 to get into those issues and then it will be up to the
21 Town if they so choose to proceed into a full update
22 to the study.

23 In terms of the timing of this, we would
24 recommend to the town to only take it through the
25 scoping process right now because the town is working

1 through the comprehensive planning process and we know
2 that process is in the final stages and is going to
3 wind down toward the end of the year or the first
4 quarter of next year.

5 As a result of that process, the Town may
6 have a new vision for what it sees for future
7 development within the whole Town but specifically
8 within this 8,400 acre area of the Town and as part of
9 that Comprehensive Plan there could be new zoning
10 regulations or other land use that come out of it
11 which we can then take into consideration as we
12 develop what we think the growth projections may be.
13 Obviously, it's the growth within the Town that is
14 going to trigger the potential for these impacts to
15 occur. So, it's good that we get through the scoping
16 now because it does take some time to get through that
17 process and then we let the Comp Plan process be
18 completed. We see if there is going to be any land use
19 changes that come out of it and then we are in great
20 shape to proceed with this study and evaluate the
21 impacts of the new development projections.

22 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Thank you.

23 Does the Board have any questions?

24 (There was no response.)

25 Do any members of the public want to ask any

1 questions?

2 MS. BUCKNER: Mary Beth Buckner.

3 This may seem very superficial, but that
4 light is very annoying and I hope that they can fix
5 that. The light also seems to be broken or not
6 working.

7 CHAIRMAN STUTO: However you want to handle
8 this Resolution, Joe.

9 MR. GRASSO: I would like to read it. It's not
10 a long Resolution and so that it's completely in the
11 record so that everybody can understand the action that
12 is being taken.

13 Resolution of the Town of Colonie Planning
14 Board lead agency designation and filing of a positive
15 declaration for the Airport Area GEIS.

16 Whereas the Town of Colonie Planning Board
17 intends to understand an update to the Airport Area
18 GEIS to evaluate the cumulative impacts of growth
19 within approximately a 8,400 acre portion of the Town
20 off Colonie surrounding the Albany International
21 Airport.

22 Whereas the project is a Type I action under
23 SEQR and whereas the Planning Board has prepared a
24 full Environmental Assessment Form and is undertaking
25 coordinated review of the project with the involved

1 and interested agencies in accordance with the state
2 rules and regulations.

3 Now therefore be it resolved that the
4 Planning Board declares itself lead agency for the
5 purposes of SEQR review and be it further resolved
6 that based on a thorough review of the full EAF parts
7 I through III and the intent to use the GIS process to
8 evaluate the cumulative impacts of growth, the
9 Planning Board has determined that there is a
10 potential for significant adverse environmental
11 impacts associated with the future growth in the
12 airport area and a GIS will be required. Be it
13 further resolved that the attached draft positive
14 declaration be adopted and filed in accordance with
15 SEQR.

16 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Do we have a motion on that
17 Resolution?

18 MR. MION: I'll make a motion.

19 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

20 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Any discussion?

21 (There was no response.)

22 All those in favor say aye.

23 (Ayes were recited.)

24 All those opposed, say nay.

25 (There were none opposed.)

1 The ayes have it.

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3 (Whereas the above entitled proceeding was
4 concluded at 9:06 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.

Dated: _____

NANCY L. STRANG
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NISKAYUNA, NY 12309

