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PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY

TOWN OF COLONIE

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ON THE FARM  
CONSERVATION STYLE SUBDIVISION  
261 AND 261A TROY SCHENECTADY ROAD  
SKETCH PLAN REVIEW AND BOARD UPDATE

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THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled matter  
by NANCY L. STRANG, a Shorthand Reporter commencing  
on January 9, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at The Public  
Operations Center, 347 Old Niskayuna Road, Latham,  
New York

BOARD MEMBERS:

- PETER STUTO, CHAIRMAN
- KATHLEEN DALTON
- BRIAN AUSTIN
- LOU MION
- CRAIG SHAMLIAN
- STEVEN HEIDER
- SUSAN MILSTEIN

ALSO PRESENT:

- Michael Tengeler, Planning and Economic Development  
Department
- Michael C. Magguilli, Esq. Town Attorney
- Nicholas Costa, PE, Advance Engineering and  
Surveying
- Charles Voss, PE, Barton and Loguidice

1                   CHAIRMAN STUTO: Good evening, everyone. Happy  
2 New Year. Welcome to the Town of Colonie Planning Board.  
3 We have several items on the agenda.

4                   Mike Tengeler will be representing the  
5 department tonight.

6                   Mike, I see an administrative matter on  
7 there. Do you want to discuss that with the Board?

8                   MR. TENGELER: There has been a question if the  
9 Planning Board would be open a supplemental Planning  
10 Board meeting on February 13th where three or four  
11 sketch plan reviews would be presented. Generally, the  
12 sketch plan reviews are just that first walk in the park  
13 presentation to the Planning Board.

14                  CHAIRMAN STUTO: No votes - no action will be  
15 taken by the Planning Board.

16                  MR. TENGELER: No action by the Planning Board.  
17 It's just a chance to get these projects off the ground.

18                  CHAIRMAN STUTO: What does the Board think?

19                         (All members agreed.)

20                  MR. TENGELER: It would be the normal time of  
21 7:00 p.m.

22                  CHAIRMAN STUTO: Do you need a vote?

23                  MR. TENGELER: Maybe we should take a vote.

24                  CHAIRMAN STUTO: Do we have a motion on that?

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

1 MS. DALTON: Second.

2 CHAIRMAN STUTO: All those in favor, say aye.

3 (Ayes were recited.)

4 All those opposed, say nay.

5 (There were none opposed.)

6 The ayes have it.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. MAGGUILLI: This is not a regularly  
9 scheduled meeting on the 13th. It will be 72 hours prior  
10 to the meeting, we have to notify the media in writing  
11 and post it on-line and we have to post it on the Town  
12 Clerk's bulletin board.

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Mike, are you good with that?

14 MR. TENGELER: Yes.

15 MR. MAGGUILLI: Let us know about the agenda  
16 and we'll take care of it.

17 MR. TENGELER: Okay, thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN STUTO: We'll call up the first item  
19 on the agenda.

20 On The Farm, Conservation Style Subdivision,  
21 261 and 261A Troy Schenectady Road, sketch plan review  
22 and Board update.

23 Mike, do you have any introductory comments  
24 before we turn it over to the applicant?

25 MR. TENGELER: Not really. The Board has seen

1 this a couple of times. This is the newest iteration. I  
2 think that it's more in line with what the Board was  
3 looking to see last time.

4 We can just turn it over to Nick Costa, as  
5 soon as he's ready.

6 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Nick, can you talk about  
7 conventional single family subdivisions and conservation  
8 subdivisions and what that means so that the Board and  
9 so the public understands?

10 And just to reiterate something that we said  
11 at the prior public meeting which was one or two  
12 meetings ago. We are studying a modern audio/visual  
13 system, so our target is to have that implemented in  
14 the first quarter of 2018.

15 MR. COSTA: I'm Nick Costa with Advance  
16 Engineering and Surveying and we have prepared the plans  
17 that are in front of you tonight that present the  
18 conservation subdivision layout. This differs  
19 substantially from the previous plan that was presented  
20 to the Board back in October. That was a conventional  
21 subdivision.

22 A conventional subdivision has 80-foot wide  
23 lots and they have to be a minimum of 18,000 square  
24 feet. So, there is a lot more road required. That's  
25 the biggest difference.

1                   CHAIRMAN STUTO: And it took up most of the  
2 property, right?

3                   MR. COSTA: It did.

4                   CHAIRMAN STUTO: Can you show how far back the  
5 houses went under the last iteration?

6                   MR. COSTA: Actually, I brought the plan with  
7 the conventional layout. As you can see, we were making  
8 a connection to Harding Avenue. That plan showed about  
9 64 residential lots. The square footage of those lots  
10 were 18,000 square feet.

11                   What we did, at the request of the Board and  
12 working with the departments and Chuck Voss - we have  
13 modified the plan to be what is defined as a  
14 conservation subdivision. Instead of making the  
15 connection to Harding, we are making the connection to  
16 Sylvan Avenue.

17                   CHAIRMAN STUTO: No where it says that it's an  
18 emergency connection.

19                   MR. COSTA: You're right. That will be  
20 modified. After meeting with the departments, everybody  
21 requested that we make that as a permanent connection.

22                   CHAIRMAN STUTO: We may want to talk about  
23 that.

24                   MR. COSTA: That's not a definite. I'm just  
25 letting you know that during the DCC meeting there was

1 discussion about making that permanent connection.  
2 You're absolutely right. We have shown it and noted it  
3 as being an emergency connection.

4 So, as you can see, the layout here from  
5 Route 2 all the way up to this cul-de-sac hasn't  
6 really changed that much (Indicating). There has been  
7 slight changes, but not any major changes. The major  
8 changes are from this intersection to Sylvan versus to  
9 Harding. So, 18 acres of land that is currently acting  
10 as a stormwater detention area -- you can see all this  
11 wetland is created from the drainage that comes  
12 off-site and also has some trails.

13 There are existing trails that people use  
14 from the neighborhood to get over to the school, which  
15 is over here (Indicating). So, that 18.4 acres would  
16 remain as open space. It could be utilized by the  
17 residents of both the existing neighborhood and the  
18 residents of On the Farm to continue accessing the  
19 school. In fact, there is potential for kids to walk  
20 to the school from the neighborhood. I think that some  
21 of them do already, just by how extensive the trail  
22 system is, currently.

23 The biggest difference is the lot sizes. The  
24 lot sizes for most of these are 60 feet wide and they  
25 average about 15,000 square feet. There are some lots

1 that are smaller than 15,000 square feet, but there  
2 are some that are larger. The average is 15,000 square  
3 feet.

4 Again, just to reiterate, all the utilities  
5 that are necessary to serve this subdivision are  
6 already in place. They just need to be extended. There  
7 is sanitary sewer over here (Indicating), there is  
8 water over here and water and sanitary sewer at the  
9 end of Sylvan. They are going to be extended to serve  
10 the new neighborhood that is being proposed. There are  
11 stormwater management areas that we are proposing.

12 There is one stormwater management area here  
13 (Indicating), another one at the end of this  
14 cul-de-sac and at the end of this cul-de-sac  
15 (Indicating). They basically serve those areas.

16 For this portion of the site, the topography  
17 is all going towards Route 2 and there is a street  
18 that is called Blue Creek that comes from this area  
19 (Indicating) and runs through and eventually goes into  
20 the Hudson River.

21 The topography changes a little bit and there  
22 is a depression in here. That's why all the stormwater  
23 accumulates here.

24 This probably was, at one time, some type of  
25 drainage swale or drainage ditch but it was piped when

1 this was developed. So, there has been some issues  
2 that have been identified with that drainage system.

3 So, water will be looped so that it  
4 reinforces the system. It will come from Route 2 all  
5 the way to Sylvan Avenue which right now is a dead end  
6 waterline.

7 That is pretty much the change to the  
8 conservation subdivision. Like I said before, it is a  
9 substantial change because the area that I think that  
10 some people described as being a wildlife area, an  
11 area that has some ecological value will remain as it  
12 currently is.

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, thank you.

14 We have a Town Designated Engineer, Chuck  
15 Voss from Barton and Loguidice.

16 Chuck, I don't think that you formally  
17 reviewed this yet because we are just getting the  
18 project, but do you have any comments from what you  
19 know so far?

20 MR. VOSS: Yes, Peter; thank you.

21 Actually, when the applicant first came in  
22 with the first conventional subdivision design, once  
23 we looked at that we had some comments on that for the  
24 Board.

25 As Nick said, I think that this is the

1 preferred alternative that the Board had asked for.

2 If you remember the last time that they were  
3 here, you really wanted to see a conservation  
4 subdivision overlay developed on the site, which I  
5 think is the perfect site for that. We have a large  
6 wetlands complex of about 10.5 acres - almost 11 acres  
7 off the north side of the site which really I think  
8 was worth taking a closer look at. The earlier  
9 application shows some encroachment of new houses and  
10 things back in that area which really weren't probably  
11 as appropriate as it should be.

12 So, the new configuration, I think, certainly  
13 works well. The smaller lot sizes, as we had  
14 previously advised the Board, as we proposed here, are  
15 certainly consistent with the general lot sizes that  
16 you find in the neighborhood. It's an older  
17 neighborhood with smaller homes and smaller lot sizes.  
18 Sprinkled into this new design will be a couple of  
19 slightly larger parcels - maybe eight or ten of them,  
20 give or take 10 or 12 which again, are consistent, I  
21 think with what we've seen in the area. Absent the  
22 question of accessibility from Sylvan, I think the  
23 Board will want to discuss a little bit more.

24 CHAIRMAN STUTO: What is your opinion on that?

25 MR. VOSS: Typically, you like to interconnect

1 neighborhoods. That's really the design. When these  
2 earlier cul-de-sacs were put in place, especially a  
3 vista of Sylvan off Ashland -- back then when they were  
4 built, the intent was to reconnect those streets at some  
5 point. As a parcel develops, you connect streets and you  
6 move your neighborhoods along. However, there certainly  
7 is concern about access, traffic going through  
8 established neighborhoods and I know that this Board is  
9 sensitive to that.

10 I know that in going to the DCC meeting and  
11 listening to the departments, the DPW department would  
12 like access from Sylvan into the site for  
13 accessibility for snow plowing and maintenance and  
14 those kinds of things.

15 Other than that, all the utilities are here,  
16 as well.

17 If there is a sensitivity about the  
18 neighborhoods and that they really don't want to see  
19 any additional traffic, this site can accommodate its  
20 own access onto Route 2 very well and very  
21 efficiently, as designed. I think that you would be  
22 okay, either way.

23 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Is that it for your comments?

24 MR. VOSS: Yes.

25 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, I'll open it up to the

1 Board.

2 Chief, do you have anything?

3 MR. HEIDER: As I've said before, I know what  
4 Chuck is talking about with the accessibility to the  
5 neighborhoods. I believe in accessibility but more for  
6 pedestrain and the bicycle traffic.

7 In my previous history the biggest problem  
8 that we used to have is with the older neighbors and  
9 you just open them up to more traffic. I'd be much  
10 more in favor if you leave it as an emergency entrance  
11 only.

12 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Craig?

13 MR. SHAMLIAN: Thank you for bringing this in.  
14 It's much closer to what we were looking for, I think.

15 I don't have anything else.

16 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Susan?

17 MS. MILSTEIN: I don't have anything.

18 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Brian?

19 MR. AUSTIN: I don't have anything.

20 I agree with the Chief on the comment about  
21 the foot traffic being preferred over the vehicle  
22 traffic. I'm sure that the residents would agree with  
23 that, too.

24 I do appreciate the fact that you did come  
25 back with more greenspace.

1 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Lou?

2 MR. MION: I agree with the foot-traffic  
3 comment.

4 One question that I have is when you're  
5 coming up Blue Ridge Drive that has that cul-de-sac --  
6 why there is nothing on it.

7 MR. COSTA: That is just a turn-around. If we  
8 eliminated that cul-de-sac, that would be a sharp turn  
9 onto Sylvan Avenue. If a plow has to turn around or a  
10 school bus has to turn around, it makes it much easier  
11 for them to do that movement in that cul-de-sac than to  
12 have to make the 90. We could do just a T-turnaround.  
13 The preference by DPW is the cul-de-sac. We can discuss  
14 that further.

15 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Chuck, do you have any opinion  
16 on that?

17 MR. VOSS: No, not really. You can do a  
18 hammerhead in there potentially, but as Nick said, DPW,  
19 in terms of snowplowing -- they prefer a cul-de-sac. So,  
20 there is easy movement for them so that they can go  
21 right around the loop versus pulling in, backing up and  
22 coming back out.

23 CHAIRMAN STUTO: You can keep going down the  
24 street and turn around at the next cul-de-sac.

25 MR. VOSS: Nick, I think that the only concern

1 is just access to that stormwater management area, but  
2 that could be done via a gravel easement, as well.

3 MR. COSTA: Or even a paved road. There is also  
4 access to that future stormwater management area for  
5 that structure. As we develop the design, we can  
6 certainly work on that.

7 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Kathy?

8 MS. DALTON: I want to thank you for the  
9 conservation overlay. I think that it looks much better  
10 and I very much appreciate how much greenspace you left.  
11 I think it looks good.

12 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Craig?

13 MR. SHAMLIAN: We talked in previous meetings  
14 about some of the drainage issues that even though  
15 you're not now developing anything in the back half of  
16 this property, will you be doing things to help improve  
17 that situation?

18 MR. COSTA: Yes. I think that we are going to  
19 be working closely with Barton and Loguidice and Chuck  
20 Voss and his staff to take a look at what could be done  
21 there. They have done some studies and they are open to  
22 assist in some of the issues.

23 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I think that I'm hearing the  
24 Board say that they prefer a conservation to a  
25 conventional. I don't think that anybody has disagreed

1 with that. If they do, they can speak up.

2 At the next meeting it will presumably be  
3 concept that would be the next logical step. We will  
4 be notifying the neighbors and will be hearing from  
5 them so, I'd like to reserve our comments until we  
6 hear their comments.

7 The connection will be probably one  
8 significant issue. There may be some comment on the  
9 lot layout or even the density. I noticed that some of  
10 the lots come in off the other road.

11 MR. COSTA: That's correct.

12 CHAIRMAN STUTO: We reserve rights to react  
13 when we hear from the neighbors.

14 MR. COSTA: Just as a side reply to your  
15 density comment, we are at 1.29 units per acre. We are  
16 allowed two units per acre. We have substantially  
17 reduced the density.

18 CHAIRMAN STUTO: That's a fair comment and we  
19 will digest that and think about that.

20 MS. DALTON: So, you were talking about the  
21 fact that the lots were a little bit smaller. I am a  
22 little concerned - we're not going to put the giant  
23 houses on the small lots, are we?

24 MR. COSTA: As the lots gets smaller, the only  
25 way to get bigger houses is to go into multi-stories.

1 With 60 feet, you are substantially reduced by the  
2 length of the house.

3 MS. DALTON: For what it's worth, when we get  
4 to the design phase, I would encourage not to try to put  
5 too much house on these smaller lots.

6 MR. COSTA: One thing, too, is that there is a  
7 depth to the lots. There will be substantial rear yards  
8 and also in the front where we are asking for --  
9 conservation usually has 30-foot setbacks instead of a  
10 40-foot setback. It's not a lot of reduction in depth,  
11 it's just in the width.

12 MS. DALTON: I am just concerned that we don't  
13 want -- I would not like to see a whole bunch of  
14 mansions on these postage size lots.

15 MR. COSTA: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, see you next time.

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18 (Whereas the above entitled proceeding was concluded  
19 at 7:17 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

