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PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY

TOWN OF COLONIE

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HOFFMAN CAR WASH  
1066 TROY SCHENECTADY ROAD  
SKETCH PLAN REVIEW

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THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled matter  
by NANCY L. STRANG, a Shorthand Reporter commencing  
on May 22, 2018 at 7:16 p.m. at The Public Operations  
Center, 347 Old Niskayuna Road, Latham, New York

BOARD MEMBERS:  
CRAIG SHAMLIAN, ACTING CHAIRMAN  
LOU MION  
CRAIG SHAMLIAN  
SUSAN MILSTEIN  
STEVEN HEIDER

ALSO PRESENT:  
  
Kathleen Marinelli, Esq., Counsel to the Planning  
Board  
Michael Tengeler, Planning and Economic Development  
Department  
Frank Palumbo, PE, C.T. Male  
Joseph Grasso, PE, CHA  
Thomas Hoffman

1                   ACTING CHAIRMAN SHAMLIAN: The next item on the  
2 agenda is Hoffman Car Wash, 1066 Troy Schenectady Road,  
3 sketch plan review.

4                   I will turn it over to the applicant.

5                   MR. PALUMBO: Thank you. My name is Frank  
6 Palumbo from C.T. Male Associates. Also with me is Marty  
7 Andrews from Hoffmans and Tom Hoffman, Jr. from  
8 Hoffmans.

9                   We are here for sketch plan approval. We have  
10 taken this project to the Zoning Board and got a  
11 variance that was required for structures in the  
12 front yard. I'll explain that a little bit more in a  
13 second.

14                   Route 7 is here (Indicating). Residence Inn  
15 Drive is here (Indicating) and it ends in a  
16 cul-de-sac and the Residence Inn is back here.

17                   Their plan is to have a car wash that will  
18 enter in off of Residence Inn Drive. They will cycle  
19 back here and all the stacking is in this area. They  
20 will feed through and then come out.

21                   This is a vacuum area and these are the  
22 vacuums that you may have seen at some of their other  
23 locations. They are the newest style with the wide  
24 spaces for people to get in and out of easily. They  
25 are 12 feet wide instead of the nine feet wide which

1 is the regular width. There are some parking spaces  
2 here for employees (Indicating).

3 The site will have storm water management in  
4 these areas and that is being conceptually looked at  
5 right now. We will obviously be doing more detail on  
6 that.

7 I'll go back to this plan in a second.

8 This is just to give you an idea of the style  
9 of buildings. You may have also seen some of their  
10 newer buildings and this is the style of building.  
11 So, it's not the older version. This is the newest  
12 style that they are planning on building. It's a very  
13 attractive building.

14 That's about it as far as sketch plan. We  
15 meet all the setback requirements at present and we  
16 have over 40% greenspace with concept plan as it  
17 stands.

18 ACTING CHAIRMAN SHAMLIAN: Okay, thank you.

19 This project is with Joe Grasso with CHA.

20 I know that you have not done a full review  
21 of this, Joe, but do you have any initial comments?

22 MR. GRASSO: Sure do.

23 So, we had the DCC meeting and we have looked  
24 through the application materials. I just wanted to  
25 touch on a few things. We don't have the formal

1 letter in your file. I will pick up on some of the  
2 comments that were raised during the DCC and by the  
3 Planning Department.

4 The project is eliminating the curb cut on  
5 Route 7 and their access is off the Residence Inn  
6 Drive which we are in support of and DOT even  
7 commented that they think that is a great feature of  
8 the project. We think that the access on Residence  
9 Inn Drive is a good location.

10 The site is in the airport area GEIS study  
11 area. So, the project could be required to comply  
12 with the findings of that study. Mitigation fees are  
13 applicable and I just wanted to point out that one of  
14 the mitigation fees in the airport area GEIS is for  
15 water usage. The typical calculation on water usage  
16 is based on square footage of the building. Unless we  
17 are dealing with a use that is considered a  
18 non-standard water user. A car wash meets that  
19 standard. From the get-go we have been discussing the  
20 issue with the applicant because obviously they are  
21 looking to use a lot of water.

22 They haven't ironed out exactly what type of  
23 water recycling system they are going to use. There  
24 are different systems available. They obviously have  
25 different costs. They have different water reduction

1 capabilities. So, we are going to work with the  
2 applicant and the Latham Water District to nail down  
3 exactly what their anticipated water usage on the  
4 site is and what the appropriate mitigation fee is  
5 going to be, based on their actual water usage,  
6 different than the normal calculation in the  
7 statement of findings. A final decision on that won't  
8 be made until the project works through the final  
9 plan process, but I wanted to alert the Board to  
10 that.

11 The site plan, as laid out, would require  
12 some waivers so I wanted to bring to the Board's  
13 attention so the Board can start thinking about these  
14 and whether or not they would be supported by the  
15 time the application makes its way to concept.

16 The building exceeds the 25 foot major road  
17 setback from Route 7.

18 A second is the parking in front and setback  
19 of Residence Inn Drive.

20 The third is a drive-thru access aisle and  
21 stacking spaces within the front yard of Residence  
22 Inn Drive.

23 The fourth is parking lot pavement within 15  
24 feet of Residence Inn Drive.

25 The last would be parking lot pavement within

1 the 10 feet of the rear property lines.

2 It appears to us that this plan could go  
3 through some modifications and reduce or eliminate  
4 the need for some of these waivers. I think that the  
5 general layout of the site for this type of use is  
6 laid out appropriately with the parking laid out  
7 along the Residence Inn Drive site and the building  
8 setback from Route 7. Obviously, you've got to have  
9 an exit lane from the car wash along the Route 7  
10 side. I think that works and I think that waivers  
11 there are appropriate.

12 The site shows a by-pass lane on the east  
13 side of the site. There is a single family residence  
14 on that side of the site. Whether or not that can be  
15 modified or pushed away to either meet that side yard  
16 setback or possibly eliminate the by-pass lane, I  
17 think that's something that the applicant should look  
18 at and see if that would work. That would reduce the  
19 impacts of the residents and make the plan work and  
20 compliant with the design standards.

21 The other thing is if you look at the layout,  
22 there is almost redundant access circulation between  
23 the building and the Residence Inn Drive. You've got  
24 the parking aisle - which those spaces are for either  
25 employees or for the vacuums. Then, you have a second

1 access drive further out towards Residence Inn Drive  
2 to allow you to circulate it around the site. It  
3 seems redundant to us. The plan is compliant with the  
4 greenspace requirement, but by tightening up some of  
5 these access drives and making the site more  
6 efficient, you could probably drive up the greenspace  
7 and make the plan more compliant with the design  
8 standards. That's something for the Board to keep in  
9 mind.

10 One of the design standards is recommending  
11 decorative wall or fencing, to provide a minimum  
12 frontage build-out along Route 7. That is something  
13 that we support. We have seen other projects  
14 successfully do it along the Route 7 corridor and we  
15 think that could be incorporated into the site plan.  
16 We know that Hoffman Car Wash does probably the best  
17 job out of all the car wash sites in landscaping  
18 their sites, but we would like to see compliance with  
19 that as the plan evolves.

20 There is a sidewalk along Route 7 right now.  
21 You've got the old curb cut that has been abandoned.  
22 We think that when you eliminate that curb cut  
23 officially, they will need to actually extend the  
24 curb across the frontage and replace that section of  
25 sidewalk.

1                   A question becomes whether or not additional  
2                   sidewalk or pedestrian accommodations are required  
3                   for the project and a connection from making the curb  
4                   cut out to Route 7 is something that the Board may  
5                   want to consider and was raised during the Planning  
6                   Department's initial review during DCC. So, that is  
7                   something to give some thought to as the plan  
8                   advances.

9                   In terms of the vacuum - there is no actual  
10                  structure or canopy. It's just the vacuum unit that  
11                  would be pedestal mounted. There is no roof or canopy  
12                  that goes over that; correct?

13                 MR. PALUMBO: That's correct.

14                 MR. GRASSO: So, we don't have a zoning issue  
15                 there.

16                 The site is within the limits of the  
17                 Niskayuna sole source aquifer, so when they do the  
18                 stormwater management design it will include some  
19                 special provisions to address ground water recharge.

20                 In terms of SEQR, it's an unlisted action  
21                 pursuant to SEQR and the applicant will be providing  
22                 a short EAF as part of the concept applications  
23                 materials.

24                 That's all we've got so far.

25                 ACTING CHAIRMAN SHAMLIAN: Okay, thank you.



1 Lou?

2 MR. MION: A question that I had was - and this  
3 is a question for every project that we have - how much  
4 traffic is it going to generate? You're coming out onto  
5 a very, very busy road.

6 MR. PALUMBO: Right. One of the things that we  
7 did talk about in the DCC meeting - just in general -  
8 was that the car wash is not really a generator. They  
9 are getting a lot of pass-by traffic. People are not  
10 leaving and going directly to the car wash. They are  
11 usually making it as part of their trip. That's data  
12 that they have from their many operations. So, we're  
13 looking at people most likely at the end of a day - if  
14 it's a nice day, they will come back and come through  
15 and keep going in that direction. So, you'll have  
16 right-in and right-out.

17 There is a turning lane here already for left  
18 hand turn movements. I guess from the standpoint of -  
19 yes there will be traffic, but that traffic is  
20 generally on Route 7 already. We don't see this as  
21 people making a particular new movement to get to the  
22 site. So, we can apply our traffic description of  
23 that with our concept submission so we can give you  
24 more detail about what that is.

25 MR. MION: What you said works very well if

1           you're going from west to east. If you're going from  
2           east to west, granted, you have that turn lane, but now  
3           you've got cars being washed. How are you going to make  
4           that left-hand turn at 5:00 at night?

5                     MR. PALUMBO: The left-hand turn would be the  
6           one that we would be most concerned with. We will apply  
7           some data so that Joe will be able to review it and what  
8           we see is the traffic generation on this and the  
9           distribution.

10                    MR. MION: Thank you.

11                    ACTING CHAIRMAN SHAMLIAN: Brian?

12                    MR. AUSTIN: Nothing.

13                    ACTING CHAIRMAN SHAMLIAN: Susan?

14                    MS. MILSTEIN: Nothing.

15                    ACTING CHAIRMAN SHAMLIAN: Chief?

16                    MR. HEIDER: I have two little things. This is  
17           more to Mr. Hoffman.

18                    Is it really necessary to have 18 vacuum  
19           spots? That's what's taking a lot of the blacktop, as  
20           Joe was talking about.

21                    MR. HOFFMAN: It is a pretty big site. If we  
22           had fewer vacuums, it would cause traffic flow and  
23           traffic problems on the site. It's also going to be a  
24           centralized vacuum system, instead of the individual  
25           canisters. So, they are significantly quieter. Adding

1 additional parking spaces is much easier to do now with  
2 the central quiet system.

3 MR. HEIDER: I'm looking to reduce the number  
4 of parking spots and not add.

5 MR. HOFFMAN: Right, but the amount of traffic  
6 on the road and the amount of traffic we can generate  
7 here - we don't want to cause a problem where we have  
8 people waiting for vacuums. It's a service to the  
9 customers to give them ample room to get in and get out  
10 efficiently.

11 MR. HEIDER: This is not a full-service car  
12 wash.

13 MR. HOFFMAN: It is not.

14 MR. HEIDER: I'm confused about this stacking  
15 of 15 vehicles. I've never seen one of your car washes,  
16 other than the first day of spring where you need that  
17 stacking. Even your full-service on Central Avenue  
18 doesn't have stacking for 15 vehicles.

19 MR. HOFFMAN: Again, we have always had  
20 pressure from Planning Boards to reduce the amount of  
21 problems on the different roadways around our  
22 facilities. So, purchasing and spending the money on  
23 bigger properties allows us to create fewer problems on  
24 the odd chance that we are super busy and it stacks out  
25 into the street. This site will be the largest site

1 where we will be able to contain more traffic on this  
2 property than any of our locations to reduce problems  
3 for the roadways.

4 ACTING CHAIRMAN SHAMLIAN: In looking at this,  
5 there's obviously a much bigger area from the end of the  
6 car wash out onto Residence Inn Drive. I'm just thinking  
7 about trying to eliminate the situation where the public  
8 road gets chewed up from the winter.

9 MR. HOFFMAN: It's another feature of having a  
10 larger site. The more room we give the customer to exit  
11 to the street, the more chance any drippings of water  
12 will fall off the car. This, again, is one of the best  
13 sites that we will have to keep water off the roadway.

14 ACTING CHAIRMAN SHAMLIAN: Please make sure you  
15 take into account Joe's comments. I think he's  
16 absolutely right about the redundant traffic flow and  
17 your ability to maybe reduce some paving there. Also,  
18 get a little more buffer to the property to the east of  
19 it.

20 MR. PALUMBO: Right. We will give some  
21 consideration. There are unique things about the  
22 drive-thru.

23 One of the things about out front here is we  
24 did not want to have this movement in between where  
25 cars are pulling in and backing out of the vacuum

1 spaces. Some people will come and go directly through  
2 and go out and they won't use the vacuums. So, that  
3 is an area - from their operations standpoint, that  
4 is a big benefit. I realize that is extra pavement.  
5 We could do with less if we push this out. It is  
6 still cross traffic and a lot of it. These vehicles  
7 are going through on those busy days rather quickly  
8 and then you're going to have someone who wants to  
9 back out of the spaces. That makes it difficult.  
10 That's why we have that lane going around there.

11 In terms of the bypass, we will look at this  
12 closer. That's another thing. Someone who gets in  
13 here and then realizes that it's too busy, you do  
14 have a 15-car stack there if they decide they don't  
15 have the time for it and they want to get out of  
16 there for whatever reason - they have a route out  
17 from there. We will give that some consideration to  
18 see if there's anything that we can do.

19 MR. HEIDER: Say I reverse what I said before  
20 and say I love your stacking thing. However, you can  
21 stack probably 30 cars between those 15 spots and out  
22 toward the entrance. It looks like you can only stack  
23 about six cars from the entrance to Route 7. Why  
24 wouldn't you move that entrance back a little bit to  
25 allow a little bit more stacking?

1                   MR. PALUMBO: One reason is because of the  
2 slope. At this point back here (Indicating), it's  
3 getting into a slope and because this area requires to  
4 be relatively flat for that long length of the building,  
5 that's one of the issues with moving it down.

6                   MR. HEIDER: I'm not talking about moving it  
7 all the way down. I'm talking about moving it a little  
8 way down.

9                   MR. PALUMBO: Again, we will get the traffic  
10 data to make the case for it. We are considering that  
11 most of the exiting traffic will be going right.  
12 Left-hand turns would be the ones that would be most  
13 significantly slowing that down. Your point is well  
14 taken and we will take a closer look at that to see what  
15 we can do. A lot of it is going to be generated by based  
16 on what the traffic is.

17                   ACTING CHAIRMAN SHAMLIAN: Joe, does Residence  
18 Inn have a dedicated left-turn lane?

19                   MR. GRASSO: No. It's a straight two-way  
20 left-turn lane.

21                   ACTING CHAIRMAN SHAMLIAN: Is it wide enough?

22                   MR. GRASSO: It is wide enough.

23                   Speaking to Lou's comment, you're right.  
24 During peak traffic times there is a lot of  
25 congestion out there. The gaps for taking left-hand

1 turns out are going to be shorter. That's the purpose  
2 of the two way left-turn lane. There are signals  
3 along that corridor that do create gaps. When we look  
4 at these types of -- going along these busy  
5 thoroughfares, we want them at a Town road side street  
6 access, which is preferable.

7 We also jump ahead and say what kind of  
8 mitigation would we look for in terms of trying to  
9 make the traffic situation better? There is no way  
10 that this access would ever support a signal. The  
11 most that we would look at would be whether there  
12 should be a dedicated left turn lane. That is  
13 something that we will take a look at when we get the  
14 traffic data.

15 ACTING CHAIRMAN SHAMLIAN: Thank you. We look  
16 forward to seeing your project as it develops.

17 (Whereas the above entitled matter was  
18 concluded at 7:30 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  
LEGAL TRANSCRIPTION  
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NISKAYUNA, NY 12309



