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PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY

TOWN OF COLONIE

CRISAFULLI WAREHOUSE
348 OLD NISKAYUNA ROAD

THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled matter
by NANCY L. STRANG, a Shorthand Reporter commencing on
January 7, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at Memorial Town Hall,
Loudon Road, Newtonville, New York

BOARD MEMBERS:
PETER STUTO, CHAIRMAN
CRAIG SHAMLIAN
STEVEN HEIDER
BRIAN AUSTIN
SUSAN MILSTEIN
CHIP ASHWORTH

ALSO PRESENT:

Kathleen Marinelli, Esq., Counsel to the Planning
Board
Joseph LaCivita, Director, Planning and Economic
Development
Joseph Grasso, RLA, CHA
Paula Mahan, Town Supervisor
Michael Crisafulli, Jr.

1 CHAIRMAN STUTO: We still have a minute to go
2 but I think that Lou Mion wanted to make a statement.

3 MR. MION: There is some sad news. One of our
4 Board Members, Brian Austin, has resigned from the Board
5 because of some family issues that he has. Brian was an
6 excellent Board Member and was very knowledgeable and we
7 are going to sorely miss him.

8 CHAIRMAN STUTO: It's after 7:00, so welcome to
9 the Town of Colonie Planning Board. We see some familiar
10 faces and not familiar faces.

11 We have two items on the agenda which we are
12 going to be discussing and also voting on. We will
13 announce those as we go.

14 Before we get started on that, I'd like to
15 say that the Colonie Spotlight and Jim Franco - we are
16 also new to this simulcasting on the website. We'll
17 talk a little bit more about that, but first I want to
18 make this announcement.

19 The Colonie Spotlight and Jim Franco as the
20 reporter is doing good investigative reporting because
21 I learned sadly in the Colonie Spotlight that the new
22 year will see big changes in the Town's Planning and
23 Economic Development Department. Joe LaCivita who is
24 sitting right there, chaired the department since the
25 Supervisor, Paula Mahan was sworn in 12 years ago is

1 leaving near the end of January to be the City Manager
2 in Watervliet under it's new Mayor Charles Patricelli.
3 I guess everybody goes back home. Joe is a native of
4 Watervliet; born and bred there, educated there and
5 he's going back.

6 The article goes on, interesting enough, to
7 say a lot of the accomplishments that you've had since
8 you've started here.

9 They talk about the live-streaming but then
10 they talk about Mr. LaCivita. Coming from state
11 government that included stints at the Empire State
12 Development Corp and before that, the private sector,
13 Mr. LaCivita was brought in to help change the
14 development process in the Town to make it more
15 transparent, streamlined and fair to the neighbors and
16 developers. In the last dozen years he implemented the
17 Town Designated Engineer system which appointed
18 liaisons to work as a middle man between the developer
19 and the Planning Board and help Board Members with
20 better understanding the nuances of things like
21 drainage, wetland regulations, zoning and Land Use Law
22 and density parameters. He also sheperded through the
23 2019 Comprehensive Plan that will act as a blueprint
24 for all aspects of the Town including development,
25 public safety, recreation and open space. The day to

1 day grind of heading up one of the busiest departments
2 in Town went largely unseen. When it was seen, it was
3 often by residents who have particular opinions.

4 I'd like to say, Joe, I'm going to miss you
5 and I think that one of your greatest strengths is you
6 always put the residents first. And in the private
7 discussions that we have had I think that you've
8 worked towards it in public. You've tried to serve the
9 public and you've tried to serve the residents and I'm
10 personally going to miss you but I hope I'm going to
11 see you around. I'd like to thank you personally.

12 MR. LACIVITA: Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I don't know if anyone else
14 has anything they want to say.

15 MR. GRASSO: Yes, Mr. Chairman I would.

16 When Joe came on-board with the Town I think
17 that it was about the same time that CHA was named one
18 of the Town's Designated Engineers - me and Barton and
19 Loguidice have had the good fortune to work with Joe
20 for 12 years and through that time I've developed a
21 great close friendship with him. We have been hours
22 and hours in discussions about planning in the Town
23 and the projects that have come before the Town. I've
24 had the great fortune of working with many great
25 municipalities throughout New York State, but I've

1 always said that Colonie has always done Planning
2 great. Over the past 12 years, they've learned to do
3 it a lot better. I think that a lot of that positivity
4 is because of Joe's involvement in the Town. He's had
5 great impacts on the Town of Colonie's residents and
6 the planning process and all the projects that you
7 have touched. I'm going to miss working along side of
8 him and having discussions with him. We may not be
9 sitting up here side by side but hopefully will
10 continue our friendship in the years to come.

11 It was really great working with you, Joe.

12 MR. LACIVITA: Thank you, very much.

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Anybody else want the floor?
14 Paula Mahan, our Supervisor?

15 SUPERVISOR MAHAN: I know you have one more
16 meeting, Joe, but I'm not sure where I will be at that
17 time. I want to say thank you personally. It's been a
18 long journey with lots of challenges.

19 When I first came in 2008, planning was at
20 the top of the list. I think that you have put your
21 heart and soul in it and you have helped me to make it
22 a fair process for everybody. Certainly everyone is
23 entitled to their opinions, but I know what the facts
24 say and how everything was done and it certainly has
25 moved in the right direction. I have heard that from

1 residents, from developers to people that were
2 involved in the past that it's really a pleasure to
3 work with everyone on a fair and level playing field.
4 That was one of my top priorities.

5 Also, you know as well as I do the meetings
6 that we go to in Albany County and around the whole
7 region and we are always recognized as number one. Our
8 economy is fantastic. We have gone from nearly a
9 bankrupt Town to a thriving business community and
10 residential community and that could not be possible
11 without your help and the help of all the Planning
12 Department -- the TDEs that were brought on were
13 suggested by the developers, actually.

14 The Planning Board has changed through the
15 years, but you guys have a very difficult job.

16 Joe, I personally want to say thank you. I
17 feel bad for a lot of the aggravation that you've had
18 to go through. I think Watervliet is very lucky to get
19 you. I think that it's going to be an interesting job.
20 I wish you all the best and I know that most of the
21 Town Board Members feel the same way.

22 Again, I don't know if I'll be here in two
23 weeks, but I wanted to make sure that I got all that
24 in. So, congratulations and the best of everything for
25 you.

1 MR. LACIVITA: I didn't anticipate this, but my
2 cousin had said this best to me. This decision was
3 probably extremely hard and I was just talking about
4 this - what made the impact.

5 My grandfather came over from Simona, Italy
6 in 1901 and settled in the City of Watervliet and
7 raised his family there. I have the fortune now to go
8 back. My cousin said it very politely and very nicely.
9 She said: Grandpa brought the city where it was and
10 you're going to bring it back from the past and bring
11 it to the future. So, I feel like I'm going home. I am
12 going to miss this Town immensely. We did a lot here.
13 There were a lot of changes. I'm only at the bottom of
14 the hill. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Thank you, Joe.

16 I think we have to move on with business.

17 Do you want to talk about the simulcasting a
18 little bit or any other business?

19 MR. LACIVITA: For the people at home
20 listening, this is our first live feed. We know there's
21 going to be glitches possibly here and there. The system
22 has a word format behind it. We do a lot of things over
23 at public operations with the PDF as seen here. So if
24 there are glitches with some of the things that we do,
25 please be patient with us. This is designed for the Town

1 Board, so we're trying to get the cameras to work with
2 this so they can see everything at home. Right now, I
3 think it's the best we could possibly can have. We may
4 have to make some upgrades in the future.

5 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Can you introduce -

6 MR. LACIVITA: I'm very sorry about that. Back
7 in September we had the good fortune of bringing Zach
8 Harrison over as a planner from the Building Department.
9 Zach has an civil engineering background. He was in the
10 Code Enforcement part of the Town of Colonie. So, he has
11 a wealth of knowledge on building codes.

12 So, what we are going to do from a slight
13 perspective, he is also going to help with what comes
14 out of the ground with the knowledge he brings over -
15 he is going to help with what comes out of the ground
16 with a wealth of knowledge he brings over. I want to
17 welcome Zach Harrison to the department.

18 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay with that we will call up
19 the first project.

20 Crisafulli Warehouse, 348 Old Niskayuna Road.
21 Amend approval for elevations.

22 MR. LACIVITA: This project already has final
23 approval and is already through the grading process at
24 this point at 348.

25 The visual that you see before you tonight

1 was the approved building elevation for the project.
2 Mr. Crisafulli now has a tenant which will soon be the
3 property owner - the building owners. He will take us
4 through the project from what was approved to where we
5 are today.

6 MR. CRISAFULLI: Thanks, Joe. It's been nice
7 working with you for that past 12 years, as well. I wish
8 you the best of luck.

9 Back in April or May when this was approved,
10 we had no tenant for the project. We were marketing it
11 to various warehouse tenants. We had a conceptual
12 rendering that was done that you see here.

13 Since that time, we actually found a tenant
14 or as Joe mentioned a new owner of the property which
15 is very exciting. The owners of Chris' Coffee Service
16 will be buying the building with the closing very
17 soon. Since 1975 they have run Chris' Coffee which is
18 a coffee roasting supply/espresso machine sales
19 company. They employ over 40 people. They will occupy
20 the first 36,000 of the space of the building and then
21 they have a 27,000 square foot tenant space that they
22 are marketing right now.

23 This was a rendering that I proposed in
24 December and at the time we had not finalized the deal
25 with Chris and Pat. This was a rendering that was not

1 seen favorably by the Board. We decided to step back
2 and redesign the building to fit their needs with both
3 the design that they liked and the colors that they
4 liked. We incorporated their sign on the building and
5 this is what we have now.

6 We actually lowered the building by four
7 feet. They don't need the height that we were
8 previously marketing. We introduced a red stripe on
9 the front corner of the building and a very large red
10 canopy over this front area which will be the office
11 space. They have a lot of floor to ceiling glass going
12 in that front corner of the office which will be
13 roughly 6,000 square feet where they will run their
14 operation out of. They added roughly 24 feet of glass
15 at the top of the front elevation, giving it more
16 pizazz, if you will and incorporated their logo.

17 The logo is actually a 1975 El Camino that
18 Chris started the business out of which is
19 interesting. It's grown quite a bit since then. So,
20 this is where we are today. This is the building that
21 they would like to build and would like to own. We
22 think that it's an improvement.

23 We took some of the comments from the last
24 meeting that we had and incorporated those into the
25 design. We are open to hear your opinions on it.

1 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, we will just open it up
2 generally to the Board.

3 Are there any comments or questions?

4 (There was no response.)

5 Okay, I'll say that I think that it's an
6 improvement. I appreciate you working with us.

7 MR. CRISAFULLI: Sure.

8 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I'm happy to support what you
9 are putting in front of us today. That's where I'm at.

10 MR. CRISAFULLI: Great. I appreciate it.

11 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Anyone else?

12 (There was no response.)

13 Okay, can we have a motion to approve the new
14 rendition that's in front of us?

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

16 MR. ASHWORTH: I'll second.

17 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Any discussion?

18 (There was no response.)

19 All those in favor, say aye.

20 (Ayes were recited.)

21 All those opposed, say nay.

22 (There were none opposed.)

23 The ayes have it.

24 Thank you.

25 MR. CRISAFULLI: Thank you. I appreciate it.

1 (Whereas the above entitled proceeding was
2 concluded at 7:15 p.m.)

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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.

Dated: _____

NANCY L. STRANG
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NISKAYUNA, NY 12309

