

1 PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY

2 TOWN OF COLONIE

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4 TASADDAQ MIXED-USE
363 TROY SCHENECTADY ROAD
BOARD UPDATE

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6 THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled matter
7 by NANCY L. STRANG, a Shorthand Reporter commencing on
February 25, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at Memorial Town Hall,
Loudon Road, Newtonville, New York

8 BOARD MEMBERS:
9 PETER STUTO, CHAIRMAN
10 CRAIG SHAMLIAN
11 STEVEN HEIDER
12 SUSAN MILSTEIN
13 CHIP ASHWORTH
14 LOU MION

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13 ALSO PRESENT:

14 Kathleen Marinelli, Esq., Counsel to the Planning
Board
15 Sean Maguire, Director, Planning and Economic
Development
16 Joseph Grasso, RLA, CHA
17 Nicholas Costa, PA, Advance Engineering and Surveying

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1 CHAIRMAN STUTO: We are going to start a public
2 presentation now.

3 We won't take up any official business. We
4 will just get some announcements and so forth out of
5 the way.

6 The clock is a minute or so before 7:00. So,
7 we won't start any official business.

8 Welcome to the Town of Colonie Planning
9 Board. We have several very important items on the
10 agenda. I think people want to be heard on those.

11 With respect to the Loudon Road PDD, that is
12 up for a vote tonight and we will be taking public
13 comment. That is the third item on the agenda. If you
14 would like to speak, I would ask that you sign up on
15 the sign-in sheet toward the entrance way door, to the
16 left of the clock back there.

17 We also have some other announcements to
18 make. It's déjà vu all over again. We have Paul Rosano
19 here who was on the Planning Board and was on the Town
20 Board. He has a lot of various experience with Town
21 planning and has various certifications.

22 Paul, welcome back.

23 We are also happy to announce, as we have
24 announced at the other meetings, that Joe LaCivita,
25 our Director of Planning and Economic Development,

1 went to work for the City of Watervliet today. We are
2 happy to announce that Sean Maguire will be taking his
3 place. Let's have a round of applause for Sean.
4 Welcome aboard. I will just read a few of your
5 credentials.

6 I see that your name says AICP after it and
7 CECD. I'm not sure what that stands for.

8 MR. MAGUIRE: It's American Institute of
9 Certified Planners which is the American Planning
10 Association's professional credential. I am a Certified
11 Economic Developer which is the credential of
12 International Economic Development Corp.

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Well, that fits perfectly
14 because you are the Director of Planning and Economic
15 Development.

16 I will just read off your bio, if I could.

17 Sean is a dual Certified Planner and Economic
18 Development professional with additional expertise in
19 workforce development and public administration
20 professional and has more than 20 years of community
21 development, local government, management and public
22 affairs experience. He's an experienced administrator
23 with supervisory and financial management expertise
24 and forward thinking professional with a passion for
25 research and developing innovative solutions for

1 sustainable, successful communities and organizations.
2 He also has spoken on such topics as government
3 efficiency and intermunicipal cooperation.*We are
4 happy to have you aboard and hopefully you will feel a
5 member of our team very soon. Thank you.

6 MR. MAGUIRE: Glad to be here. Thank you,
7 Peter.

8 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Do you have any other business
9 that you would like to announce? Are there any upcoming
10 meetings or anything? Perhaps you don't.

11 MR. MAGUIRE: I think we have two days in so
12 far, so it might be a little premature.

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Next time if there any
14 important announcements, you have an opportunity.

15 MR. MAGUIRE: Absolutely, thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN STUTO: The first item on the agenda
17 is Tasaddaq Mixed-Use, 363 Troy Schenectady Road, Board
18 Update. The proposal is to construct three new
19 buildings; retail office of 7,500 square feet, 10
20 apartments at 6,660 square feet and a small storage
21 garage of 300 square feet.

22 Is the applicant here?

23 MR. GRASSO: I can give a status on that?

24 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Sure.

25 MR. GRASSO: As Pete mentioned, this is a board

1 update. The project was first heard by the Development
2 Coordination Committee meeting of the Town departments
3 back in August 2018. It was before the Planning Board
4 for first time as a sketch plan review in October 2018.
5 Then, it was last before the Planning Board for concept
6 approval in August 2019. Concept approval was granted
7 that night.

8 There were some significant comments issued
9 by the Planning Board that night, as well as in our
10 August review letter that we wanted the Planning Board
11 to work in addressing and come back to the Board for
12 an update before they proceeded into final design.

13 The applicant consultant is Nick Costa from
14 Advance Engineering.

15 MR. COSTA: Thank you, Joe. Nick Costa from
16 Advance Engineering and Surveying. The applicant for
17 this site is here with us tonight, too. His name is
18 Mohammed Tasaddaq. He will be helping us if there's any
19 questions.

20 Basically, the site is about two acres in
21 size. It is zoned COR, commercial/office/residential.

22 As Joe summarized, it has been in front of
23 the Board a couple of different times. I just want to
24 point out the lot.

25 It starts over here on Route 2. It is known

1 as 363 Troy Schenectady Road. It is occupied by two
2 buildings currently. One is a garage and one is a
3 two-family house. It has a driveway basically where
4 this driveway is (Indicating). It is fairly open for
5 its entire area - large lawn area. Mr. Tasaddaq lives
6 there with his family. He is proposing to develop the
7 site in accordance to the
8 commercial/office/residential zone which allows the
9 mix use of apartments and retail. The building that is
10 out front here is a retail building and the building
11 that is back here is a two-story apartment building.
12 He does have a small garage/shed that he wants to
13 build to keep maintenance equipment at that location.

14 The last time we were here, the Board asked
15 us to look at the layout of the building and change it
16 or see if it can be changed to have individual access
17 to each one of those apartment units. We have done
18 that.

19 As you can see, there's a sidewalk all along
20 the perimeter of the building and there are entrances
21 to each one of the units. Obviously, there are
22 entrances to the upstairs units. They all have
23 individual accesses. The previous proposal was to have
24 a corridor down the center and access to the
25 apartments in that manner.

1 The other comment was to try to get more
2 parking closer to the retail building and we have
3 added that. We also added landscaping along the
4 easterly line and also the southerly line to screen
5 the neighbors and to screen the roadway. There is a
6 road here, and access driveway that goes to a building
7 that's located back here (Indicating). So, we have
8 done that.

9 There is also a solid six-foot fence that is
10 located right along that northerly property line.

11 Those are really the changes that we made.

12 There are some architectural drawings that we
13 would like to introduced to the Board. These are the
14 floorplans that show the individual access to each one
15 of the units.

16 Again, this is the second floor with access
17 to the individual units.

18 This is the apartment building elevation
19 (Indicting). As you can see, the sidewalk is
20 highlighted and the entrances are also highlighted for
21 each one of the units.

22 This is the retail building. That has a
23 combination of different materials. There's masonry
24 and there's metal.

25 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Is that one story, or two?

1 MR. COSTA: that is two stories - and glass.
2 So, the design criteria - the requirements have a mix of
3 materials and we certainly have shown that we can
4 accomplish that.

5 That's really the update that we have for the
6 Board. If there are any questions, we will try to
7 answer them.

8 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I have one question that jumps
9 out at me. I will ask Joe Grasso to give his comments on
10 that.

11 Our agenda says that the building is 6,650 -
12 the apartment building. So, the simple division would
13 be like, 10 units. It makes it look like small
14 apartments. That's what's on the agenda.

15 I see on the current drawings that it 7,869
16 square footage. Did something change, or was there a
17 typo on the agenda?

18 MR. COSTA: I think it is a type on the agenda
19 because I believe it is the larger of the value there.

20 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Just for the record, can you
21 say how many one-bedrooms and how many two-bedrooms?

22 MR. COSTA: They are all two-bedrooms.

23 CHAIRMAN STUTO: So, there are 10 two-bedroom
24 units.

25 MR. GRASSO: In terms of square footage of the

1 building - I think the ground floor alone is 7,869
2 square feet.

3 MR. COSTA: That's right.

4 CHAIRMAN STUTO: So, it's double that total.

5 MR. COSTA: Yes, with the two stories.

6 CHAIRMAN STUTO: So, they range from like 1,200
7 to 1,300?

8 MR. COSTA: Yes, that's correct.

9 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I was concerned they were
10 smaller than that.

11 CHA is our Town Designated Engineer. Joe
12 Grasso is the representative.

13 Joe, can you give us your comments?

14 MR. GRASSO: Yes. So, we didn't issue a new
15 letter because it's just a Board update, but I'm going
16 to go by some of the comments we had raised in our last
17 letter. Then, I will touch on some of the additional
18 comments that were raised during the last Planning Board
19 review when the project received concept approval.

20 Our first comment was regarding the density
21 calculation. There was some differences of data
22 presented in the initial application. All of those
23 things have been corrected. I do believe that what is
24 proposed for square footage from a use standpoint is
25 consistent with the zoning from a maximum allowable

1 density issue.

2 MR. COSTA: That's correct.

3 MR. GRASSO: Then we had a comment previously
4 about the proximity of the various parking spaces. There
5 weren't a lot of parking spaces proximate to the office
6 building. This plan has addressed that so that comment
7 has been addressed.

8 We had touched on the fact that this is a
9 rather small project site - two acres. It's got just
10 one apartment building and in a rather isolated
11 location that's not an apartment complex without a lot
12 of amenities.

13 We commented in our letter and that was a
14 topic of concern by the Planning Board. I probably
15 will come back to that in a minute.

16 We had commented about a recommendation for a
17 dense landscape buffer along the property line to the
18 automobile service station. Nick did show on the plan
19 that they added additional landscaping there.

20 Based on our cursory review, there is not
21 enough there to provide a really solid vegetative
22 screening from the service station. I assume that is
23 something that we can address during final site plan
24 review. We Hassell commented about the one exterior
25 entry door and recommended consideration for

1 individual entrances. They have addressed that
2 comment. We had a bunch of other technical comments
3 that we knew that Nick could address through a final
4 design process.

5 Some of the concerns that I took out of the
6 minutes from the last meeting that the Board had was
7 the lack of amenities for the apartment building. The
8 fact is that there are no accommodations for children
9 and how these apartments are constructed and marketed
10 and whether or not they would have a significant
11 population component to it. There was a desire by the
12 Planning Board to have more of a shared parking
13 arrangement and I think Nick has accommodated that in
14 the plan.

15 Nick, is it still parked per Code?

16 MR. COSTA: Yes.

17 MR. GRASSO: So, it is still parked per Code.
18 With a small site like this, it's not something that we
19 would be overly supportive of for a waiver to reduce or
20 land bank parking further than what is required by Code.

21 There were comments about the need for more
22 green space between the apartment building and the
23 parking lot serving the apartments. That has not been
24 accommodated in the plan. I think that something that
25 could still be worked on more.

1 There was a comment from the Planning Board
2 regarding a desire for patios on the first floor.
3 Those aren't apparent on the plan that Nick presented
4 tonight.

5 Then, there were some other comments about
6 the strong separation from the service station. Like I
7 said, I think that landscaped buffer and lack of
8 fencing there is something I think needs more
9 attention as well as the landscaping towards the drive
10 of the inside of the site, as well.

11 That's a summary of our comments and the
12 comments that we heard from the Planning Board at the
13 last meeting and how they have been addressed.

14 CHAIRMAN STUTO: So, how many issues are
15 deficiently addressed? There are at least five, right?

16 MR. GRASSO: There's about five issues. I won't
17 say they are major. The one big major issue that the
18 Board discussed at length last time was the fact that we
19 were looking at one apartment building rather isolated
20 and the lack of amenities and to make sure that it is a
21 sustainable development which will continue to attract
22 tenants.

23 There's a concern about the up-keep of the
24 property and making sure that the buildings that are
25 initially built are very high quality.

1 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Can you talk about the concept
2 of sustainability? I know we have had that discussion
3 privately and also at Board meetings.

4 MR. GRASSO: It's interesting because the zone
5 supports mixed-use on the property - both commercial and
6 residential. The property could be developed solely with
7 commercial uses like office and retail, but they
8 couldn't be developed solely residential. Nonetheless,
9 it supports mixed-use which is what the applicant has
10 brought to the table. So, it is zoning compliant. That
11 mixed-use concept is usually geared toward more of an
12 urban environment where you've got mixed uses within a
13 building like apartments up above and office and retail
14 on the first floor, or larger sites when the residential
15 component can have more units - more of a neighborhood
16 context and more amenities that appeal to a larger group
17 of residents. The concern is that if we have a lot of
18 these one-off developments - and we talked at the last
19 meeting about some specific projects that have been done
20 this way, the fact as to whether or not long-term - if
21 the going to keep up the level of reinvestment in
22 command a higher rank so they are sustainable and don't
23 degrade over time because they are kind of an anomaly
24 and they are not always in keeping up with what the
25 market will support from an apartment style housing

1 complex or development.

2 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Thank you for elaborating on
3 that. I think it is a very important point and is
4 important to me personally. I think on the smaller lots
5 when the Town Code allows mixed-use, I think we can run
6 into these problems.

7 I think the comp plan that was just finished
8 by the Town - I think it addresses that in concept. I
9 think that hopefully the Town Board is studying that
10 to make some revisions to the Land Use Law.

11 Be that as it may, you have this project
12 which conforms and we still have several
13 comments.*Craig, do you have comments or questions?

14 MR. SHAMLIAN: Yes, I have a question or two.

15 Can we go back to the floor plan for the
16 first floor?

17 Nick, I see the stairs going up - you
18 identified them as going up to the second floor. Where
19 are the doors to the first floor units?

20 MR. COSTA: They are right here.

21 MR. SHAMLIAN: That is a vestibule?

22 MR. COSTA: Yes.

23 MR. SHAMLIAN: I just want to make sure I
24 understood that.

25 First of all, I think that the commercial

1 building out front is really attractive. I think it's
2 forward thinking and looks really sharp and will be an
3 asset to that corridor.

4 I'm not in love with the aesthetics of the
5 apartment building. It looks, at least from what
6 you're showing, it's kind of bland. The double-door
7 arrangement where you have the two stairs going
8 up-stairs is not normal. I know this is not something
9 that's going to be highly visible, but I think one of
10 the things that we as a Board try to do is maybe
11 elevate the look of a lot of the apartment complexes
12 that are being built and multi-residential building.

13 Touching on a couple things that Joe talked
14 about: We still obviously have a question about
15 amenities. I think that again, the point that Joe
16 talked about is: Is there reason why the building is
17 and shifted to the west 10 or 15 feet so there is a
18 greater green space between the parking lot in the
19 building?

20 MR. COSTA: One of the reasons is that we left
21 this area to be an amenity with a place for kids to have
22 some play area. There is a barbecue space. I believe
23 there's a gazebo that's being used. So, we thought that
24 we wanted to keep more green here and sacrifice some of
25 the green space here (Indicating). If the preference is

1 for us to shift the building further to the west another
2 10 feet or 15 feet, we can certainly do that. We thought
3 it was better to have a bulk of green space and have
4 that available for the tenants to use.

5 MR. SHAMLIAN: I think it depends on what
6 amenities you end up actually deciding to present.
7 There's about 115 feet from the building to the property
8 line. I think from the parking lot looking toward the
9 building and having more green space - possibly some
10 shrubs and flowers - that will be pretty attractive
11 opposed to what's really just a very small strip of
12 green space there right now.

13 MR. COSTA: We can certainly look at shifting
14 it.

15 MR. SHAMLIAN: Again, I understand the
16 trade-off. Those are my major comments.

17 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Susan?

18 MS. MILSTEIN: I think the commercial building
19 looks great. The apartment building - I like it. I think
20 it may need a little bit more color, but ultimately I
21 like it.

22 I can see the argument to moving it over, but
23 I also know the people don't like to walk. So, the
24 closer they are to the parking lot, that may be a
25 consideration.

1 I'm not opposed or concerned about the
2 amenities. If you want to attract residents, you're
3 going to need amenities. With this size apartment
4 structure, I don't know how many amenities there are.
5 Those are critical to me. The other question I have is
6 how much are you planning on charging for rent?

7 MR. TASADDAQ: Probably \$1,300 to \$1,500 or
8 maybe \$1,800.

9 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Lou?

10 MR. MION: I agree with everything that has
11 been said already. I think you might want to take a look
12 at the amenities.

13 I would frankly like the building moved back
14 10 feet.

15 MR. COSTA: We can certainly accomplish that.
16 We are having that discussion because I don't want to go
17 into detail design and then have that comment. Thank
18 you.

19 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Chip?

20 MR. ASHWORTH: I don't know how close the
21 footprint is - - do you have space for a rec room or
22 something?

23 MR. COSTA: Do you think we have room for that?
24 We can take a look at that.

25 MR. TASADDAQ: We can take a look at that.

1 There is a Vent Fitness down the road, too. I could
2 offer that to those guys. I will buy the membership for
3 you guys there to go over there and work out. That would
4 be better managed than what I would be able to do.

5 MR. ROSANO: Nick, from a fire safety
6 standpoint, how much access do you have on the north and
7 east side of this building for fire trucks? Are they
8 necessary? Do they have 360 access and do they need
9 that?

10 MR. COSTA: You're absolutely right. We only
11 have it on the two sides. We would have to have pavement
12 all around it.

13 MR. ROSANO: So, would you bring that back and
14 final so we can look at that?

15 MR. COSTA: And we could talk to Joe with
16 regards that, yes.

17 MR. ROSANO: That was my main concern. Thank
18 you.

19 MR. COSTA: You're welcome.

20 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, there were a lot of good
21 comments made here tonight. I think you should look at
22 the list of deficiencies that Joe Grasso mentioned. I'm
23 in favor of being wowed by some aspect of the amenities
24 and something for the kids. I know the scale isn't huge.
25 I also personally favor moving the building back a

1 little bit.

2 MR. COSTA: We have the room. We can move it,
3 that's not a problem.

4 Thank you.

5 By the way, Mr. Tasaddaq is going to be
6 living in the building. I wanted to mention that. It
7 does make a difference.

8 MR. TASADDAQ: I don't know if you guys know
9 the history of that place. When I bought it, it was
10 abandoned. It was junk property, pretty much. If you
11 guys drive by, you will notice a difference. I put a lot
12 of money into it.

13 This is my first project and I just want to
14 make sure that I could afford it, too. I will maintain
15 it myself. I don't want to let it go. I have lived
16 here for 20 years now and I work in the Town and I
17 graduated from the colleges here. I want to make sure
18 that where I live is a nice place to live and it's not
19 run down or anything like that.

20 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Thank you. And, you could drop
21 things off to Joe Grasso also.

22 MR. COSTA: Thank you.

23 (Whereas the above entitled proceeding was
24 concluded at 7:20 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
LEGAL TRANSCRIPTION
2420 TROY SCHENECTADY RD.
NISKAYUNA, NY 12309