

1 STATE OF NEW YORK COUNTY OF ALBANY
 2 TOWN OF COLONIE
 3 *****
 4 STARLITE RETAIL
 5 REVISED SITE PLAN
 6 635 COLUMBIA STREET EXTENSION

7 *****
 8 THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled
 9 matter by NANCY L. STRANG, a Shorthand Reporter
 10 commencing on August 25, 2020 at 7:32 PM at
 11 Memorial Town Hall 534 New Loudon Road, Latham,
 12 New York.

13
 14 BOARD MEMBERS:
 15 PETER STUTO, CHAIRMAN
 16 CRAIG SHAMLIAN
 17 PAUL ROSANO
 18 SUSAN MILSTEIN
 19 STEVEN HEIDER, RECUSED
 20 LOUIS MION
 21 FREDERICK ASHWORTH

22
 23 ALSO PRESENT:
 24 KATHLEEN MARINELLI, ESQ. COUNSEL TO THE BOARD
 25 SEAN MAGUIRE, AICP, CEcD, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT
 OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1 ZACHERY HARRISON, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC
2 DEVELOPMENT
3 DANIEL HERSHBERG, PE, HERSHBERG AND HERSHBERG
4 VICTOR CAPONERA, ESQ.

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1 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Next item on the agenda
2 is 635 Columbia Street Extension, Starlite
3 Retail, update, sketch plan for the proposed
4 construction of three-story 60,344 square-foot
5 office/retail building including a bank and
6 restaurant on a 6.1 acre site.

7 Any comments from our Department Head?

8 MR. MAGUIRE: No, we will just turn it
9 right over to Dan.

10 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Thank you.

11 MR. HERSHBERG: We started here with a
12 building that was way back from the road and
13 you guys pointed out that the Code said to be
14 up close to the road. So, we came back with
15 this plan here, which moved it up closer to the
16 corner and then we showed you that.

17 This is a rendering submitted April
18 2020. You said the building was too massive
19 and too close to the road - is basically
20 what I think we heard. We revised the plan
21 and we move the building back.

22 We have a large courtyard area in front
23 of what is going to be a restaurant area.
24 The revised site plan moves it back on the
25 site. The advantage to this building is that

1 a portion of this is two stories and a
2 portion is three stories.

3 If you go to the next rendering, the
4 front portion of the building is a two-story
5 building and there is three stories in the
6 back. We think that this reduces the visual
7 impact of it significantly and does the job
8 you wanted to do.

9 We have a bank drive-thru on one side
10 and have space for a restaurant on the
11 corner and a large patio area surrounded by
12 landscaping. We think it will be a great
13 addition. we haven't made a whole concept
14 submission because part of the concept
15 submission - we wanted to find out whether
16 or not this plan is the plan we should
17 continue and go with. It sounds strange -
18 sketch and then concept and then were back
19 to sketch, but I think the reason is good
20 because we don't want to spend a lot of
21 effort getting the concept ready if you
22 folks had a problem with this revised
23 rendering.

24 The question here was parking. In order
25 for this to work, we asked you folks to

1 allow us to take a 10% credit for shared
2 parking. I point this out because although
3 shared parking is measured in the Town Code,
4 it doesn't have a percentage. The lowest
5 percentage allowed for shared parking is
6 only 10%. Sometimes, it's as much as 20%. In
7 this case here, we ask you folks to allow
8 10% credit towards shared parking which
9 brings us down to 269 parking spaces
10 required. We are at 273. We didn't think it
11 was worthwhile to bank for parking spots and
12 replace them later. So, we would like to
13 build the 273 parking spots.

14 We still stay over 50% green. We do
15 have the advantage that we have a lot of
16 spaces and a lot of large landscaping spaces
17 in the parking lot that will allow us to put
18 landscaping in front. We have a dumpster
19 area there, or a truck area there that we
20 intend to landscape in front of that.

21 We think the site plan has come a long
22 way. We think the building elevation view
23 was well done. You have to look at that hard
24 copy because the architect that did it is
25 very proud of it, and rightly so.

1 There's a small portion of the area
2 that's in the conservation overlay district,
3 but we already accounted for that when we do
4 the conservation overlay district accounting
5 for the entire site. The balance of the
6 green area is a deed restricted area so we
7 can't use that at all.

8 The next slide shows all of the wetland
9 areas that we are preserving. The green area
10 on the right side is the area that is
11 staying with the site, but that was planned
12 When we got the permit from DEC and the Army
13 Corps of Engineers, we said essentially
14 because we are dedicating a significant
15 amount of acreage of wetlands, we would like
16 to be able to disturb the wetlands when we
17 build the corner project. Obviously, we had
18 to disturb the wetlands to get Coliseum
19 Drive across. That's the green area.

20 The black area is the area where we
21 have a large culvert going across. In the
22 context of the site, this works well with
23 regard to the relationship to our wetlands
24 and our wetland's permit. We think it works
25 better with regards to the requests having

1 to do with the viewscape and we think that
2 it works for the client's needs to have
3 60,000 square feet.

4 I am prepared to answer any questions
5 which the Board may have.

6 CHAIRMAN STUTO: This is being reviewed by
7 CHA. Joe Grasso is here for them.

8 Joe, can you give us your comments?

9 MR. GRASSO: Sure. There's not a letter,
10 but I will go through some of the noteworthy
11 aspects of the plan. Dan touched on a lot of
12 them.

13 I would agree that the building is
14 extremely attractive. That was something
15 that the Board had commented on last time.
16 We appreciate the fact that it is still
17 attractive, even though they've moved the
18 building back into the site. The plan does
19 include really strong pedestrian connections
20 which was a concern of ours from the
21 original plan. So, that comment has been
22 addressed.

23 You may remember that the first time
24 the site plan was presented, there were four
25 drive-thrus for the bank. They have cut that

1 down to two, which we feel is an improvement
2 to the plan where the drive-through will be
3 such a dominant element of the building
4 design.

5 You may recall that we had expressed
6 strong concerns previously over the general
7 layout of the site and the arrangement of
8 the various parking areas and how both
9 vehicular traffic and pedestrians would
10 navigate through the site trying to get to
11 the building. With this total site redesign,
12 we feel that it is a much more orderly
13 arrangement of drive aisles and parking
14 areas. So, we are much more supportive of
15 this plan. We like the fact that the parking
16 areas are spread throughout the site now
17 that the building is pushed back more toward
18 the center, so that you don't get the large
19 expansive parking areas that we have seen
20 with previous plans.

21 We are supportive of the access
22 arrangement which includes the rights
23 in/rights-out on 9R and a full access on
24 Coliseum Drive across from the Ayco land
25 access. So, we are supportive of the access

1 arrangement.

2 One thing on the drive-thru - we would
3 ask that the plan continues to progress to
4 look at where you would expect traffic to
5 come from trying to get to the drive-thru
6 and then exiting the drive-thru -- if you're
7 coming in off of Coliseum Drive, it's not
8 very easy to circulate back to Coliseum
9 Drive without having to go through and
10 around the parking lot.

11 The same thing if you're coming in off
12 of Columbia Street trying to get to the
13 drive-thru - it could be a little bit
14 cumbersome. So, we think that there are some
15 minor changes that could be made to the site
16 plan to make it more user-friendly for the
17 bank drive-in patrons.

18 One thing regarding this project as it
19 relates to traffic -- this area is covered
20 by the Boght Road GIS study area. The
21 significant transportation improvement was
22 the construction of the connector road. This
23 project is going to contribute to the
24 mitigation funds that helped fund the
25 connector road and this is with respect to

1 smart development with a smart regional plan
2 to address traffic from not only this
3 project site, but as incremental traffic
4 that has occurred over the past 20 years. We
5 said that was the case with the Ayco project
6 and this project still plays a vital role of
7 funding those comprehensive traffic
8 improvements which we feel dramatically
9 improve traffic conditions in the Boght Road
10 area.

11 I think I've touched on all of my
12 comments.

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, we will open up to
14 the Board.

15 Chief?

16 MR. HEIDER: I have just a couple.

17 I was against the original submission
18 because I thought the project looked like a
19 1970's shopping mall. I like the
20 resubmission. I really like this one. I
21 think the building is beautiful. It is very
22 complementary. The Ayco building - I think
23 is a complement to that corner. I would hope
24 that it would encourage some of the
25 landlords in that area to update their

1 structures, also.

2 The loading docks in front of the
3 building - I'm assuming that's going to be
4 well protected so you won't be able to tell
5 it's a loading dock.

6 MR. HERSHBERG: Yes.

7 MR. HEIDER: Because it doesn't show here
8 on the submission.

9 The other thing - with this whole Covid
10 19 thing - there are two things and I know
11 that it's going to sound contradictory but I
12 can imagine only 20 parking spots for
13 restaurant. I'm sure it came out of some
14 manual, but I think that manual is rather
15 outdated. I look at Laney's or Ralph's or
16 whatever and they have 2,000 square feet
17 places and they have 80 cars there.

18 MR. HERSHBERG: The shared parking would
19 help there because it does a lot of dinner
20 business by the time when the office parking is
21 available.

22 MR. HEIDER: And I'm not going to worry
23 about this, but has anybody looked at all at
24 what the requirements are for post Covid 19?
25 You drive through this Town and all you see is

1 empty parking lots and loads of blacktop. This
2 would be a perfect example of loads of blacktop
3 on a corner where you could do a lot better.
4 I'm for the project. I'm just talking generally
5 here. I don't know if we're going to need 246
6 parking spots for office for people who are
7 going to work remotely from home.

8 MR. HERSHBERG: Well, the one question -
9 and it is a question for the Galessi developer
10 is: Do you have a seat to sit in with all that
11 office space, because that's an awful lot of
12 office space. The leases are coming up and
13 people are not renewing the leases for the same
14 area because three-quarters of the staff are
15 working from home. This is a decision that the
16 lessee will have to struggle with, but I think
17 essentially - I don't know how to handle it
18 because this building won't come online for
19 another 18 months or so. The point then is
20 nobody knows whether Covid will be a distant
21 memory or still with us. I think that a lot of
22 people have gotten used to working from home
23 and it may reduce the demand for office space.

24 MR. HEIDER: That's basically all I had.

25 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, thank you.

1 Lou?

2 MR. MION: Great improvement. I like it.

3 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Chip?

4 MR. ASHWORTH: I think the building is
5 outstanding. It's really superb.

6 I don't see any benches or bike racks
7 around the building.

8 MR. HERSHBERG: We will have street
9 furniture around the building. We just haven't
10 gotten to that level of detail yet.

11 MR. ASHWORTH: Is there going to be a
12 pedestrian light over here at Coliseum
13 (Indicating)? You've got possibly a crosswalk
14 there.

15 MR. HERSHBERG: No, that was always meant
16 to be signalized. We thought that we would have
17 a crosswalk there with crosswalk warning signs
18 on both sides of it and the question is: Is
19 that adequate? We think it is. Again, we don't
20 really think we need to have the ones that
21 sense people are in the crosswalk and flashes
22 the light. We will review that as we go through
23 the process and where there is a plan to be a
24 crosswalk when we did the very first
25 presentation for the Ayco building. We showed a

1 building here - a different building than this,
2 but we did plan on having a crosswalk. It makes
3 sense to tie them together when a whole bunch
4 of the lunch businesses walking across the
5 street from Ayco, I am sure.

6 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Craig?

7 MR. SHAMLIAN: Just a couple of things.

8 I agree with Joe. I think the traffic
9 flow for the bank is less than optimal. You
10 just kind of look at a puzzle that somebody
11 has to go through to get to the drive-thru
12 and there are a couple of awkward turns,
13 quite frankly. That's something as you go
14 forward that you need to take a look at.

15 The other is: Are we accounting for
16 some future date to have a connection with
17 the Latham Ford property? I know that's been
18 a point that has come up at other times on
19 this project. Are we at least making a
20 provision for that at some point?

21 MR. HERSHBERG: We could allow an easement
22 across our area to allow the access to our
23 parking. It's normally done. With the present
24 resident of Latham Ford, there is no rationale
25 to have it implemented now. We can always have

1 it depending upon who develops at the corner.
2 We may very well like to have them have access
3 to our retail space.

4 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Do you agree, Joe?

5 MR. GRASSO: Yes, we had made the previous
6 comment I just forgot to mention it.

7 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Susan?

8 MS. MILSTEIN: I just had a question
9 because I couldn't hear you with a mask. About
10 the parking - are you going to be banking any
11 parking? Was that the proposal?

12 MR. HERSHBERG: Right now we say with the
13 10% credit for shared parking, we require 269
14 and where we are inputting 273. My guess is
15 that we can certainly talk to our client and
16 see if they are willing to bank more of it. We
17 are not sure what the parking demand is going
18 to be for new office space. It's something that
19 we can certainly take on as we go through the
20 process and may be proposed to bank some and
21 see what happens when it starts to fill up.

22 MS. MILSTEIN: That would be my
23 preference.

24 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Paul?

25 MR. ROSANO: Dan, for this picture of the

1 building as opposed to Ayco, are there any EV
2 hook-ups proposed for this parking lot?

3 MR. HERSHBERG: We definitely will have an
4 EV connection. We don't know how many. The
5 whole question is: How many and where to put
6 them?

7 MR. ROSANO: I know that you're probably
8 going to put them in at a later date because
9 we're talking about preconstruction.

10 MR. HERSHBERG: We're talking about
11 electric vehicles.

12 MR. ROSANO: Yes.

13 MR. HERSHBERG: We will always have some
14 electric vehicles and the tendency now is to
15 put in more than two or four or six on the
16 building because there is a demand for them and
17 more and more people are driving electric
18 vehicles. As demand go up, landlords will try
19 to apply for it. As we move forward in the
20 process, we will have to quantify that a little
21 bit better.

22 MR. ROSANO: I noticed on the places that
23 would be closer to the building - most of them
24 are occupied by handicap parking. You still
25 have a few. Would that be the location

1 possibly?

2 MR. HERSHBERG: Again, I'm not sure.

3 Unfortunately the ADA requires that they be
4 built the closest to the entrance provided for
5 handicap parking. We really don't have a choice
6 there.

7 MR. ROSANO: Okay, thank you Dan.

8 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I'm not going to repeat.
9 You've heard a lot of good comments and I think
10 everybody has a consensus that this is a great
11 improvement and we appreciate you working with
12 us and it's a great looking building.

13 MR. HERSHBERG: We will be back shortly
14 with concept.

15 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Thank you. We look
16 forward to it.

17 MR. HERSHBERG: Thank you.

18 (Whereas the above entitle proceeding
19 was concluded at 7:51 PM)

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CERTIFICATION

I, NANCY L. STRANG, Shorthand Reporter
and Notary Public in and for the State of
New York, hereby CERTIFIES 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.

Date: _____

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