



TOWN OF COLONIE

347 OLD NISKAYUNA ROAD

LATHAM, N.Y. 12110



Town of Colonie Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Minutes – August 7, 2014

Present: B. Ulrich, L. Whelton, D. Allard, E. Rosano, L. Weed, M. Brennan, S. Kulkarni

The meeting was called to order at 7 pm.

The meeting minutes were approved with one typo corrected, moved by Sudhir, seconded by Linda.

Chair Bob circulated the bulletin board and meeting minutes duties schedules.

Member Report:

Linda Whelton brought information on the Clark Art institute's newly redesigned grounds which feature a porous pavement parking area with trees, grass and pools, recycling of water, and a 24 hour walking space. There is also a dog walking area on the grounds.

The committee discussed the possibility of recommending that the Town of Colonie buy some of the attractions from the Hoffman Playground, which is closing, for relocation in a town park. Mike Brennan thought that this would be a financial loser for the town. Don Allard pointed out that not-for-profits manage similar park projects some places in the country. Linda Whelton pointed out that NPR had done a broadcast on the history of the Hoffman's Playland. Apparently, Guptills had considered buying the equipment, but could not provide sufficient drainage. The discussion was inconclusive.

Ellen Rosano pointed out that the town has protected areas on the Golf course. She suggested that we tour them.

Planning Board meeting reports

Laura Weed reported on the July Planning Board meetings.

Town of Colonie Planning Board Meeting July 15, 2014

Joe LaCivita: Recommendation to Town Board: Mitigation fees are typically paid in thirds. For some of the multi-million-dollar projects, this is a burden. LaCivita recommends that the mitigation fees be spread out more.

River Hill Center, 1207 Troy Schenectdy Rd. 12,000 sq ft office park. The planning board had objected to the elevation of the proposed building.

The developer has altered the appearance of the building satisfy the board. Joe LaCivita commented that the new architectural design is more aesthetically pleasing. One tenant will be a dentist, others are not yet leased. The board approved the latest plan. Final approval is next.

4232 Albany Street Vehicle Parking facility, for storing dealers' vehicles. The developer skipped sketch plan review, and is currently here for concept acceptance. Nick Costa Advance Engineering is the developer. The site is 11.9 acres, of which 9.2 acres are NYS wetland. The Wetland extends to the railroad and the adjacent property. Currently the property has been the Crisafulli Plumbing Contracting co. Abandoned vehicles and parts are currently there. The department of Environmental Conservation permit has been granted, and the developer has agreed to mitigation of the uplands and set aside of a restricted area as forever wild. The Conservation Overlay covers all by 2.7 acres of the property. 1.32 acres will be kept forever wild by deed restriction. Grading of the property would be required to pave the parking area. The paved area will be fenced, and the existing building will be turned into an office for the facility. New landscaping has been requested by DEC. Non-invasive species are promised. A board member requested down-lighting. The Developer claims that the development will require very little lighting. Additional landscaping will screen the property from surrounding houses. Old trees will remain. Very few trips in and out are expected. Some cars will be brought in on trailers, some will be driven or paced on flatbed trucks.

Joe Grasso: This is a redevelopment. The zoning is light industrial, within the pine bush overlay.

The developer must protect 100 sq. feet of constrained land and 40% of preserved land. The deed must protect 52% of the nature conservancy wetlands. The developer wants to keep possession of 1.3 acres to use as green space. Storm water management should not be within the wetlands. This further reduces the amount of land that can be developed, because Storm Water management requires ongoing maintenance and should not be within the wetlands. This will require reduction of the number of cars in the parking lot. The project is an unlisted SEQR, but an environmental protection plan has been requested.

Neighbors point out that overflow lots are often problematic and question whether 243 cars can be parked in 1.3 acres. Neighbors expressed concerns about potential oil leakage and noise pollution. Neighbors objected that they were not notified of the planning board hearings on the project. One neighbor had a petition signed by 47 neighbors, objecting to the project.

Also, neighbors were concerned about the financial solvency of the owner of the property, potential oil spills, the possibility of excessive traffic from big trucks, old cars being stored on the property, and the dilapidated condition of an old house on the property.

The Town Board wants to restrict hours of operation of the facility. There should also be a fence around the property, a privacy fence on Albany St. and security cameras. More lighting could be added for security purposes. Down lighting would reduce light pollution.

The developer responded to the neighbors traffic concerns that delivery would be two hundred + cars, but maybe only 5 or 10 per day. The TDE pointed out that this use of the property will provide very few additional trips. He recommended that the businesses limit hours of operation to 7am-7pm.

The developers plan to use gravel rather than pavement on the site. Gravel has less environmental impact, however, spills are worse. Pavement would send runoff to the storm water system. The developer says only new vehicles will be there. The TDE wants to limit property use to new vehicles. The

TDE asked where the developer plans to do plowing and snow storage. The developer replied that the storm water management area will absorb environmentally friendly salt.

The DEC letter requests a SEQR study, especially of Karner Blues and other endangered species. The Developer responded that an Environmental Ecologist will respond. He pointed out that this is actually a redevelopment area.

The Town Board wants a copy of the DEC report. Laura Weed requested that the DEC report also be sent to members of the CAC committee. Research is also necessary on the Natural Heritage Database.

The project was tabled until a lawyer can comment on the parking variance application. A revised application should be submitted, for concept review. Levels of land use control also have to be considered in more detail: deed restriction, vs. Nature Conservancy dedication, vs. DEC easement, for example.

Upstate Veterinary Specialties: 152 Sparrowbush Rd. triangular lot.

The planned animal medical facility will be initially 22,000 sq ft of floor space to be expanded later. There are two designated parking areas: one for customer and parking one for employees.

The sanitary easement is connected to the town sewer, and a new watermain is going in. The land is currently vacant. The storm water mgmt. area is an underground detention system which will meet 100 year storm requirements.

There will be landscaping near the roads, but No plantings on parking lot islands, only light poles.

A parking waiver was requested by the developer. The TDE said that a concept letter was issued July 3rd. The Water Dept. has been in consultation and approves. The TDE approves of the parking waiver.

Phase two is planned to happen within 10 years. Concept approved.

July 29, 2014 Planning Board Meeting

RIVERHILL CENTER BUILDING 1207: 1201 TROY SCHENECTADY ROAD, APPLICATION FOR FINAL REVIEW, WAIVER REQUESTS & SEQRA DETERMINATION

The developer had revised the project to improve internal circulation of traffic, provide more parking, improve storm water drainage, and improve curb cuts, all as suggested by the TDE.

Joe Grasso said that a SEQR had been done, and since it was a redevelopment project, there were no important environmental issues. The developers requested waivers for setbacks, additional parking in

front of the building, and excessive elevation. TDE Grasso pointed out that the board wants to see a pedestrian path through the property, in the future, if not now.

The developer met with Mr. Stuto to discuss this. The result of that meeting was a plan for a connection through this property as well as through the Sunmark Credit Union piece.

MR. BETTE: The conversations that we've had concern connecting the bike path that is over the Watervliet Shaker Road by the airport. The connection was to connect the Watervliet-Shaker bike path to this new bike path through the British American complex. This would effectuate that connection down to River Road and the new park on River Road that is now accessible to the river bike path. So, in essence two bike paths will be connected.

A neighbor raised issues about stormwater runoff. The neighbor is below the project, between it and the river. The neighbor objects that the stormwater plan is only good for a 25 year storm. Mr. Bette replies that it has been redesigned for a 100 year storm.

Mr. Stutto points out that the stormwater problems in this area are bigger than this site. It is the whole watershed area and all of Rt. 7 that is problematic, and this developer is not in a position to solve all the problems. Mr. Bette agreed to remain in discussion of the problems with the board, on a long term basis.

A Type I full Environmental Assessment action study had been done on the site, and 13 items were specified.

The first item is impacts on surface water. The proposed action could affect wetlands or surface water bodies. The project includes mitigation measures to reduce its impact on surface water and will result in less surface water discharging off the site than currently runs off. Based on the current drainage patterns, the TDE doesn't expect that this project will have any significant impact.

The second item concerns impact on plants and animals. There are some sensitive issues in the area, but not on the site. The same is true of agricultural resources and historical significance. The site design mitigates noise, odors, and light pollution. The town board approved a resolution of negative findings on the EAF issues. A negative declaration on SEQRA was approved.

Setback waivers and waivers for parking on all sides of the building were approved, in light of the fact that the building is in a parking lot anyway, and contains a drive-through window.

MAXWELL ROAD EXTENSION METRO PARK ROAD TO MARCUS BOULEVARD; COURTESY UPDATE ON PROJECT STATUS

This project was ordered by the town and is part of the GEIS Airport study to relieve traffic congestion on Wolf and Albany Shaker Rds. The current extension would involve a roundabout on Albany Shaker, extending through the CAP com building on Marcus Blvd. Subsequent extensions will go to the Beltrone Center, to Computer Drive, and ultimately through Parkside Crossings to Albany Shaker Rd. The

road will be two lanes, and there will be traffic circles at Cap com., and lights at the Crossings and Albany Shaker Rd. and Computer Drive. Substantial alterations will take place at the Beltrone Center's three buildings. Walkways will also be installed to make the area walkable. There are sidewalks on both sides of Winner's Circle. Sidewalks are also on both sides of Aviation Road, all the way down to Computer Drive East. Any other sidewalks that would be built along these crossroads would be addressed by the Planning Board by doing a site plan review.

MR. GRASSO: Right now Clough Harbor A has been hired to go through the final design and has been working through the summer. The final design of this segment will be done in September or October of this year. It could be ready to bid the project through the winter for construction first thing in the spring, if money is available.

A SEQRA determination is needed because the Town Board, which is the only involved agency, has to fund the project. So, it does require another SEQRA determination. Involved agencies include the Planning Board, which should be lead agency. The County Planning Department, and the health department are involved because of a water main, and DEC should also be involved on storm water issues.

The project is mostly funded by mitigation fees from the commercial properties in the area.

Latham Plaza, 1210 Troy Schenectady Road: application for concept acceptance.

The demolition of the old bowling alley buildings on the site has begun. The planned project is about 35,000 square feet. The parcel is just under six acres and two pad sites will be added. One is about 3,000 square feet and the other one is about 10,000 square feet. The builder is applying for parking and set back waivers. He owns the adjacent two properties, and plans to connect them so that inter-parking lot traffic does not have to go onto Rt. 7.

The developers claim to have exceed required green space.

One neighbor was bought out and re-located in the same school district, because the project would have impacted his house.

Stormwater currently is a problem. Stormwater comes from Vly Road. It gets picked up by the storm water system and it's connected through the pipes to the storm system on Route 7 without being attenuated. It has a major impact when peak run-off gets into that system on Troy Schenectady Road. The developer will create a stormwater project in the back of the property to release the stormwater that comes from Vly Road, contain it, and then install an outlet control structure that will have multiple openings that would release the stormwater run-off at a controlled rate. The plan is to diminish the current impacts of this system. Obviously, the entire volume of water will get into that system eventually but it will be at a slower rate, so the project represents a major mitigation for that system.

TDE: Wants more info on curb cuts and traffic impact. The TDE also considers the area overparked. TDE suggests islands in the parking lot to increase plantings and green space.

There are also issues concerning an access road behind the buildings. The zoning board of appeals wants restrictions on dumpster times of access, and a buffer and fence between the buildings and the rear of adjacent residences on Vly Rd.

Neighbors want a higher fence and more substantial burm between them and the access road behind the buildings, and are concerned that the stormwater buffers might breed mosquitos. Also, traffic, lights and noise, especially if one of the buildings might be a restaurant that is open very late. The developer says that the storm drainage areas will usually be dry, so not mosquito prone. The developer agreed to work with neighbors on other issues. Concept acceptance was granted.

TDE recommendation for alteration of GEIS mitigation fees

"Now therefore be it resolved that the

Motion: "The Planning Board hereby recommends that the Town Board determine whether to grant requests to deviate from the existing payment schedule and adopt an alternative schedule for payment of the development mitigation costs."

This alteration would apply only to residential development, not to commercial development, and it would allow developers to spread mitigation fees out over much longer periods of time, and to make payments at shorter intervals. Currently developers pay the fees in thirds, but for some large projects, this is a serious burden. Motion Approved.

Don Allard moved to adjourn the CAC meeting at 7:55 pm. Ellen Rosano seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Laura Weed August 21, 2014