

1 PLANNING BOARD COUNTY OF ALBANY

2 TOWN OF COLONIE

3 *****

4 MIDWAY FIRE DISTRICT
5 1956 CENTRAL AVENUE
6 APPLICATION FOR CONCEPT ACCEPTANCE

7 *****

8 THE STENOGRAPHIC MINUTES of the above entitled
9 matter by NANCY STRANG, a Shorthand Reporter,
10 commencing on September 15, 2015 at 8:40 p.m. at The
11 Public Operations Center, 347 Old Niskayuna Road,
12 Latham, New York

10

11 BOARD MEMBERS:
12 PETER STUTO, CHAIRMAN
13 TIMOTHY LANE
14 LOU MION
15 KATHY DALTON
16 TIMOTHY LANE
17 CRAIG SHAMLIAN

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16 ALSO PRESENT:

17 Kathleen Marinelli, Esq., Counsel to the Planning Board
18 Michael Tengeler, Planning and Economic Development
19 Milan Jackson, Lamont Engineers
20 Peter Signorelli, PE, Mitchell and Associates
21 Charles Rappazzo, Midway Fire District
22 Theresa Moran, Midway Fire District
23 Joseph Grasso, PE, CHA
24 Bob Mitchell

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1 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Next on the agenda is Midway Fire
2 District, 1956 Central Avenue. This is an application
3 for concept acceptance. This is to raze the existing
4 firehouse and construct a new 1.5 story 13,617 square
5 foot firehouse.

6 Mike Tengeler, do you have any introductory
7 remarks on this?

8 MR. TENGELER: Not much. It's an existing
9 firehouse at 1956 Central Avenue. They are here for
10 concept and for the sake of time let's just turn it over
11 and see the presentation.

12 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, sounds good.

13 MR. JACKSON: Hello. I'm Milan Jackson with Lamont
14 Engineers. This is the concept plan. We have tried to
15 address all the Town's comments from the first
16 submission.

17 This is the drawing and this is the new fire
18 station. Taft Furniture is over here on your right
19 (Indicating). Central Avenue is south and there are
20 apartment buildings over here (Indicating). We only
21 show a very small portion of the site. The site is
22 about 18.5 or 19 acres. It goes way in the back.
23 Most of the rest of this parcel is New York State
24 regulated wetlands.

25 We are showing a detention pond in the back.

1 It's not a detention pond, actually, it's a flood
2 storage pond. The site does experience flooding
3 during heavy rain events.

4 I'll just address the comments of the Town.
5 The first one was to eliminate the parking in the
6 front yard, which we did remove two or three spaces
7 up front. We moved the parking back out of the
8 front yard.

9 They asked for the inclusion of a bench and a
10 bike rack. We extended the sidewalk down to Central
11 Avenue.

12 We are looking for two waivers from the Town.
13 One is for the front setback; a 20 foot maximum. We
14 are asking for about 60 feet. The primary reason
15 for that extended setback is the ladder truck;
16 that's 47 feet. Sometimes the Fire Department likes
17 to park the truck in the front driveway. So, it
18 requires a greater setback than 20 feet.

19 The other waiver that they're asking for is the
20 front build out of the 80% required. We are
21 proposing a 52% build out. I'll let Pete address
22 that one.

23 MR. SIGNORELLI: I'm Pete Signorelli from Mitchell
24 and Associates.

25 Those two issues kind of go hand in hand. The

1 fact that this is a civic public building, we feel
2 that it should blend in with the neighborhood. They
3 should be set apart. So, setting it back from the
4 street as well as not building that 80% build-out
5 makes it a unique building for it to sit by itself
6 and really give it the kind of focus that we think
7 that it should have.

8 MR. JACKSON: Just to review, the building size has
9 gone up about 5,000 square feet, but we have reduced the
10 impervious surface of the site by about 4,000 square
11 feet mostly by reducing the parking area. We have laid
12 out the parking area to increase the parking by about 20
13 parking spots. I guess that's the majority of the
14 changes since the last time we were here.

15 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Any members of the public
16 interested in speaking on this project?

17 MR. RAPPAZZO: I'm Charles Rappazzo and I'm the
18 Commissioner of the Fire District and I've been a member
19 for over 41 years.

20 Just on the setback that you requested that
21 we're looking at getting an additional setback - our
22 ladder trucks have to pull out and stop, even though
23 we have a traffic light. One of the reasons we have
24 to have them on the apron is people driving by can
25 see all the lights and theoretically they're going

1 to stop when they see all the lights flashing. We
2 have a problem pulling out of side streets and such
3 where we have to stop and inch our way out so they
4 can see the lights on the vehicles. It's a safety
5 issue. If we can pull out on the apron and stop
6 long enough for them to see us, that's why we need
7 that extra space. We have lights all the way down
8 the whole side of the truck for that reason and we
9 want them to see it. It gives us a little bit of a
10 safety issue. That's all. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Thank you.

12 Anybody else form the public?

13 You want to say anything else?

14 MR. JACKSON: With this concept submission we also
15 submitted the development building alternate. The
16 building alternate is simply a bump-out of this one room
17 on the side here (Indicating). I just wanted to make
18 everyone was aware of that.

19 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Joe Grasso, our Town Designated
20 Engineer with CHA, do you want to give us your comments?

21 Is there someone else who would like to make a
22 comment?

23 MS. MORAN: My name is Theresa Moran and I'm the
24 Chairman for the Board of the Fire District. We have
25 asked with numerous people throughout the Town if we

1 would be able to submit additional submissions when we
2 are ready and when we have everything together. We're
3 just asking that the Planning Board grant us that so
4 that we can move this process for us along in a quicker
5 manner because we are looking at going into winter
6 conditions at this point which would increase the amount
7 of money that we are going to have to -

8 CHAIRMAN STUTO: You're asking us to move fast? Is
9 that your request?

10 MS. MORAN: Not necessarily. At this point we are
11 just at the second submission. We have the materials
12 and everything moving forward as quick as possible. We
13 would like to be able to come to you the next time that
14 you meet, if we have everything ready to go.

15 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Mike is with the department and he
16 works with Joe and he sets the agenda.

17 MR. TENGELER: There is a pretty structured
18 process. We will accommodate you anyway that we can,
19 but we still have to take everything through the normal
20 course of review, working with Joe Grasso and working
21 with the Town Departments. As soon as everything is
22 deemed ready by the TDE and by the departments, we'll
23 get you on. There won't be any delay. We'll get you on
24 that first agenda as soon as everyone is on board.

25 MS. MORAN: The information that we received from

1 Mike Lyons was that we wouldn't be able to see you again
2 until October 20th. We would just like to be able to,
3 if possible, if everybody's ready -

4 MR. GRASSO: You won't be on before then and I can
5 tell you why. You will make a final plan submission and
6 before it gets to the Planning Board, because that's the
7 final submission that you're going to be going for
8 because you get concept acceptance tonight. Our
9 comments and that from the Town Departments need to be
10 addressed and reflected in those plans before it comes
11 back to the Planning Board. What we try to avoid is
12 having to have you come back before the Planning Board
13 multiple times. They need to be able to be acting on
14 the final plans just like you saw the other applicant
15 do. If we get you back too early and there are still
16 other comments out there that are going to change the
17 plans, you're going to have to go through that process
18 again and just because of the Planning Board scheduling,
19 it's going to eat up a lot of time.

20 So, like Mike said, we have a pretty efficient
21 system. We don't want to see piece meal
22 submissions. Do a real good quality submission. Be
23 really responsive to the comments that you see from
24 us and from the Town Departments and then the
25 Planning Department will try to get you in front of

1 the Planning Board as soon as possible. They will
2 do their job, but you have to do your job in order
3 to get to that.

4 MS. MORAN: I understand. Thank you.

5 MR. GRASSO: And just a tag on that, they've done a
6 really good job in every submission that we have had
7 before us. They are really more advanced than where
8 they are in the process. I commend them for that. They
9 also have been very responsive to the comments. The
10 plan is relatively consistent with the plan that we saw
11 at sketch plan. We didn't have significant comments and
12 we thought that it was a really well laid out, well
13 designed project and this is a nice reflection of the
14 advancement in what I would consider a preliminary
15 design stage. So, our comments are relatively minor.
16 We don't have a problem with the waiver that is being
17 requested regarding the front yard set back. We can
18 prepare those findings based on what is in the record
19 and when it's up for final. We also don't have a
20 problem with the relief from the frontage build-out.

21 In terms of the architectural design, are you
22 planning on screening all the mechanical equipment
23 from view?

24 MR. SIGNORELLI: We would like to talk to you about
25 that.

1 MR. GRASSO: Okay, can you talk about it?

2 MR. SIGNORELLI: Sure. This building was
3 originally designed, as you can see, from the rendering
4 here and the plans pretty much stick right to that
5 design. We weren't aware of this requirement when the
6 building was designed. We could raise the parapets at
7 some significant cost to the department, which they
8 hadn't planned on. They're on a pretty tight budget, as
9 you can imagine, being a volunteer department and all
10 this went through a public referendum. So, the money
11 just wasn't allocated for that kind of thing - for that
12 kind of additional funding. So, we would like to ask
13 that we get a waiver from that particular requirement.

14 MR. GRASSO: You provided some elevations with the
15 application materials. Could you show on that where
16 they would be visible or on the building? It's not a
17 zoning requirement. It's something that we typically
18 bring up during the review of commercial site plan
19 applications when there is a great concern where it may
20 be visible where otherwise they would be screened.

21 MR. SIGNORELLI: You can see the front of the
22 building is here. One of the funny things about
23 building elevation is that they are really a lie. You
24 never see a building this way. You see a building
25 perspective. When you're on the ground, if you're right

1 in front of the building, you'll never see them because
2 they're up over the roof.

3 The question becomes how far away does it
4 become an issue that you can see these mechanical
5 units? I'm going up and down.

6 I did a Google street view. Coming from the
7 Taft side, the building is pretty prominent with
8 whatever is happening on the roof. That would be
9 this side of the building. Most of those mechanical
10 units are back from that edge, so they're not really
11 as visible as the elevation shows. Coming from the
12 other direction there are a lot of trees on that
13 side of the street, so you can barely even see the
14 building, let alone what is on the roof.

15 MR. LANE: Joe, isn't another part of the -- the
16 intent is to screen, but it also has to do with the
17 noise and prevents that. These things really make a lot
18 of sound when they're on. Doesn't it also kind of
19 prevent that from emanating around the area or is that
20 not a factor?

21 MR. GRASSO: Based on today's standard rooftop
22 units - the RTUs is what we call them - it's normally
23 not a factor. We have more concern about a stand-by
24 generator unit.

25 MR. SIGMORELLI: We also have that.

1 MR. GRASSO: If it was a highly developed area, it
2 could be more relevant. It's really more about the
3 visibility of them from the public corridor.

4 CHAIRMAN STUTO: What is your response to what he
5 just said?

6 MR. GRASSO: I like the fact that he went through
7 the thought process of where would they be visible from
8 and how impactful are they going to be. It sounds like
9 the most prominent viewshed is from the west, from the
10 Taft side, and it looks like the rooftop units or
11 mechanicals are toward the east side of the building so
12 that should help screen that view. It's something that
13 when you're working through the final design, if you can
14 just look to see if there is any other things --
15 painting the things to match the siding of the building,
16 putting up a screen - a partial privacy screen on part
17 of the roof along that side are just things to consider
18 when you come back to final.

19 MR. LANE: How much actual cost would they be
20 talking?

21 MR. SIGNORELLI: About \$25,000.00.

22 MR. GRASSO: That would be excessive. I would have
23 to look at the rooftop plans, but normally that's an
24 excessive response to raising all the parapets up to
25 completely screen it. Like you said, you have to look

1 at your line of sight from a street view and stuff.
2 Normally, you don't have to go that high. Sometimes
3 you'll see buildings and they'll do a separate screen
4 wall in from the side.

5 MR. LANE: And what would that be?

6 MR. GRASSO: I think 10 or 15 grand, I would say,
7 tops.

8 MR. LANE: It's still not -

9 MR. GRASSO: It's not chump change. Everything
10 that the Planning Board asks for and we ask for costs
11 money.

12 MR. SHAMLIAN: I'm never one to spend anyone else's
13 money, but we're talking about a multi-million dollar
14 project. From the westbound lanes, how much of the
15 rooftop would a person see if they were traveling
16 westbound? I was thinking that westbound is furthest
17 away from the building. Right in front of the building,
18 if you looked to your left, you want the building to be
19 prominent from what you said, so people are going to
20 look that way.

21 MR. SIGNORELLI: It's less of an issue right in
22 front of the building because you are so close to the
23 building. There is nothing at that front edge as far as
24 mechanical goes. It's all towards the back. It's
25 actually less of an issue when you're in front of the

1 building than from down the street.

2 MR. SHAMLIAN: That being said, you could be 150
3 feet from the front of the building.

4 MR. SIGNORELLI: Right.

5 MR. GRASSO: I can follow up on the concerns. As
6 part of your preliminary plan submission, if you can
7 provide some cross sections - simple, but focusing on
8 what mechanical equipment may be viewable based on a
9 certain distance from the building so we can look at it
10 and see if there is something more to do. Normally, you
11 don't include building plans with your preliminary
12 submission, but a simple roof plan that shows your
13 mechanical equipment and a couple of quick cross
14 sections and we'll inform the Board when you come back
15 for final.

16 MS. MORAN: I just want to address the point that
17 you just said about this being a multi-million dollar
18 project. You are correct. It is a multi-million dollar
19 project, but every cent that we are using is accounted
20 for. This is public money. We have been working for
21 two and a half years on this project with volunteers on
22 this committee. We are ready to go out to bid. That's
23 how advanced we are and ready to move forward with this.
24 We are just waiting for your comments so that we can
25 move forward. It is a multi-million dollar project, but

1 it's an emergency services building. We aren't talking
2 about how pretty it is. If we made it as pretty as we
3 wanted it to be, then we would be back to a \$6 million
4 dollar project. We're at a \$4 million dollar project
5 because we were voted down the first time. I really
6 hope that you are taking that into consideration that
7 we're an emergency services. We are looking to use
8 every dime that we have towards emergency services and
9 not toward making this look like the most beautiful
10 building.

11 MR. SHAMLIAN: As I said, I'm not trying to spend
12 any more money - yours or any applicant's money, but we
13 also have a responsibility to make sure that it meets
14 with everything else that we're trying to accomplish in
15 planning throughout the Town, keeping it mind that it is
16 a community building and that's the balance that we have
17 to make. Those elevations show an awful lot of rooftop
18 units that may be visible.

19 MS. MORAN: How many units do we have actually on
20 the roof? There isn't a lot.

21 MR. GRASSO: We're looking at the elevation right
22 there. That's what was submitted that we had picked up
23 on.

24 MR. SIGNORELLI: You talked about us submitting a
25 roof plan and some sections that may be helpful.

1 Actually, I had done a series of perspectives from up
2 and down the street, as if you're driving one way or the
3 other. In this particular set, we didn't put trees in.
4 You can really see what is visible. I can give this to
5 you, if you like. We'll certainly have it in our next
6 submission. That's if you'd like to look at it. You
7 can see that once we put trees in -

8 MS. MORAN: Do you have more of those that you can
9 give to the Board Members?

10 MR. SIGNORELLI: Not at this point.

11 If you look, this plan doesn't really show it,
12 but this lot over here is almost completely treed.
13 There are a couple of existing trees here on our
14 property. If you look at the Google street view,
15 you barely see this building until you're almost
16 right on top of it. So, not only can't you see the
17 rooftop, you can barely see the building. Like I
18 said, this side is a little more because the parking
19 lot is pretty much empty. This side - the roof is a
20 little more visible from there.

21 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, what else?

22 MR. GRASSO: We would request additional foundation
23 plantings because the landscaping package seemed minimal
24 and not consistent with what we would see from these
25 types of facilities.

1 The other things are pretty minor technical
2 comments that they should be able to address as they
3 advance through the final design process.

4 In terms of SEQRA, the Town Attorney's office
5 classified it as an unlisted action. The applicant
6 did provide a full EAF that more than adequately
7 describes the environmental setting of the site and
8 we do not think that there will be any significant
9 environmental impacts.

10 I do want to bring to the Board's attention the
11 Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission did provide a
12 comment letter which is in your packet. They do not
13 see any significant impacts with the project, but
14 they are requesting native landscaping and outdoor
15 lighting to be either sodium vapor or LED because
16 they have less impact within the Albany Pine Bush
17 study area habitats.

18 That's really all we have.

19 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, any other comments or
20 questions from the Board?

21 (There was no response.)

22 We want to follow up on this and we just want
23 to take a closer look at the rooftop issue.

24 MR. GRASSO: Yes, I think that we can take a closer
25 look, assuming that Craig's comments speak for the

1 Board. It's something that we will be sensitive to when
2 we look at the final plans and those sections. If there
3 is something that we obvious think should be done or
4 should be changed on the plans, we'll bring it to the
5 applicant's attention. Obviously, we're at a
6 disagreement and we'll bring it to the Board for a
7 decision and it's not something that we want to drive on
8 the whole project schedule. Maybe it might be something
9 where you had me come before the Board at the next
10 meeting and say, hey, here is an issue that I just want
11 to bring it to your attention so that they can take it
12 into consideration as they work on the final plans.

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Okay, I think that we have a
14 consensus on that.

15 Do we have a motion for concept acceptance.

16 MR. SHAMLIAN: I'll make that motion.

17 MS. DALTON: Second.

18 CHAIRMAN STUTO: Any discussion?

19 (There was no response.)

20 All those in favor, say aye.

21 (Ayes were recited.)

22 All those opposed say nay.

23 (There were none opposed.)

24 The ayes have it.

25 MR. MITCHELL: May I ask a question? I'm Bob

1 Mitchell.

2 Our understanding is then that we're are
3 complete with this cycle by October 20th. The
4 district needs to get in the ground. They are
5 demolishing the existing building. They need to get
6 the new building up and completed so that they can
7 provide safety protection for the community. By
8 October 20th, we are at the edge of what we can do
9 in terms of winter construction. Can we have some
10 idea from the Board here if we will be able to be
11 out of here at the October 20th meeting and break
12 ground? Is that a fair question?

13 CHAIRMAN STUTO: These gentlemen handle the
14 application and look at the final site plans. Whether
15 you get it in on time --

16 MR. TENGELER: It really depends on the quality of
17 the submission and the comments. If all comments are
18 addressed, we will move it through the process at the
19 quickest speed we can go through the process and get it
20 back. If five weeks away, the 23rd of October is the
21 earliest deadline and the project meets all the criteria
22 that it needs to meet, then we should make every effort
23 to get it on that meeting.

24 MR. GRASSO: Are the full plans done and the full
25 SWPPP is done?

1 MS. MORAN: Yes.

2 MR. GRASSO: I don't understand why if you've been
3 working on it for two years - the Town has a pretty easy
4 process to follow and it's been since you have been your
5 first submission -- it's been lightening quick through
6 the Town. We could have taken a few month longer to get
7 you -- if you already had your final plans done, I could
8 have acted on final tonight if you had just started the
9 process a little earlier -- if your plans are done and
10 your SWPPP is done, submit it tomorrow and we'll start
11 the review.

12 MS. MORAN: Our next submission is ready to go and
13 it's going to you tomorrow.

14 MR. GRASSO: Great, we'll review it as soon as
15 possible.

16 CHAIRMAN STUTO: I don't see any major issues.

17 MR. GRASSO: It's going to come down to the design
18 details and if you have them all done, it should be
19 quick.

20 MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, very much.

21 (Whereas the above entitled proceeding was
22 concluded at 9:05 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.

NANCY L. STRANG

Dated _____

