

Village of Lansing
Planning Board Meeting
January 30, 2001

The meeting of the Village of Lansing Planning Board was called to order at 7:30 P.M. by Acting Chairman Steve Halevy. Present at the meeting were Planning Board Members Phil Dankert, Carol Klepack and Janet Waterman; Code Enforcement Officer Ben Curtis; Engineer Brent Cross; Attorney Randy Marcus; and members of the public.

Public Comment:

There was no one present who wished to speak. Klepack moved to close the public comment, seconded by Waterman. All in favor.

Public Hearing – Final Plat Approval for Minor Subdivision by Trip. Dev. Co.:

The first item on the agenda was a Final Plat Approval of a minor subdivision by Triphammer Development Company of one 3.1 acre lot into two lots, one 1.6 acre lot and one 1.5 acre lot, at 15 Sheraton Drive, the NW corner of Sheraton Drive and Cinema Drive, in the Commercial High Traffic District, Tax Parcel No. 46.1-6-4.2

Curtis noted for the record that he had received an affidavit as proof of notification of contiguous property owners.

There was no one present who wished to speak. Klepack moved to close the Public Hearing. Seconded by Dankert. All aye.

Richard Thaler, Secretary to Triphammer Dev. Corp., spoke first. He stated the purpose of the subdivision is to separate an undeveloped lot from that already approved for the branch building of the Cornell Federal Credit Union which would like to begin construction in March. Halevy stated he thought that the remaining undeveloped lot would be the last piece of undeveloped High Traffic Commercial property remaining and Thaler agreed.

Waterman moved to approve the final plat for the minor subdivision by Triphammer Development Corp. Seconded by Klepack. Marcus stated this action is exempt from SEQR because it is a minor subdivision under the Village's regulations. All aye.

Halevy signed the subdivision plat and gave it to Thaler.

Special Permit No. 1589, Cornell Univ. Lab of Ornithology - Continued Discussion

The next agenda item was a continued discussion for Special Permit No. 1589, Cornell University Lab of Ornithology, to construct an 80,000 sf building for use as office space, research, and public exhibition and assembly to replace their existing facility at 159 Sapsucker Woods Road in the Research District, Tax Parcel No. 45.1-1-55.4

John Heintz, consulting engineer for the project, spoke first about resolving any SEQR issues. Halevy asked for time to review a memo from Cross. Cross reviewed the concerns included in his report. He stated the Town of Dryden is now willing to accept the road, as currently designed, as a Town road although it does not conform in all respects to the specifications for a Town road. Cross's main concern is the tight right-hand curve at the intersection of the new proposed road and the existing Sapsucker Woods Road. The Ornithology Lab is proposing a stop sign and Cross feels that stop signs are only appropriate at intersections. Curtis asked Cross how he felt this turn differs from those in Lansing Trails Subdivision. Cross responded that there is little difference and he feels those are also poorly designed. Cross is recommending approval with the condition that the record reflect that the Village finds the design to be substandard and the Town of Dryden be so notified. Marcus attended a meeting last week with the Town of Dryden and the stop sign was discussed. Upon the recommendation of Dryden's Town Highway Superintendent and Code

Enforcement Officer, it was Dryden's recommendation to approve the design with the stop sign and to agree to accept the road when completed as designed, as stated in the 1/26 letter from Supervisor Mark Varvayanis. Marcus stated Cornell has agreed to deed the property over to the Town of Dryden, rather than simply grant a ROW. The Village Board of Trustees will decide next week if the Village would accept the portion of the road that will be in the Village and if so under what conditions. Cross noted that the Village of Lansing will be asked to accept the same deficiencies and physical dimensions which the Town of Dryden was asked to accept. Marcus stated if Cross wants to get information to the Board of Trustees, he should provide materials prior to Friday for distribution. Cross noted the smaller road width and material used for pavement surfacing.

Marcus stated his understanding the Town of Dryden is willing to accept the portion of Sapsucker Woods road that is in the Town as a public road provided that the Village of Lansing will accept the portion that is in the Village as a public road. Curtis noted the maintenance of the roadway needs to be discussed because the Village has not previously maintained the road and may be reluctant to do so now. There needs to be clear indications as to who will be responsible for the full maintenance of the road and not just snow plowing.

Waterman expressed her concern about the right-angle turns, although they are located within the Town of Dryden, and her reluctance to approve the proposed design is because of those safety concerns. Cross further noted that half of the first turn is indeed within the Village of Lansing although the stop signs would be in the Town of Dryden. Curtis spoke of the feasibility of using chevrons to indicate curves. Cross noted they are used for pre-existing roads built many years ago and are not generally utilized for new construction.

Waterman asked for clarification as to the design of the road and why it could not be relocated. Scott Sutcliffe, Associate Director of the Lab of Ornithology, noted that the road has been designed so as to impose on the wetlands as little as possible and also to avoid the necessity of purchasing private property adjacent to the curve. Heintz also stated that the stop signs were put in at the request of the Town of Dryden. Cross questioned whether Dryden had actually required the stop signs, or whether Cornell requested that Dryden accept this design with the stop signs; Heintz did not respond to this question.

Halevy asked if the Village needed to identify mitigation for this issue. Marcus stated the Board is looking at the overall design for the project. In the broader context of all of the SEQR issues, this may not be a significant concern. On the other hand, Marcus is unsure of what authority the Village would have to impose conditions on the road's layout since the Village already owns the portion of this road within the Village, although it is being reconfigured. Klepack felt this curve with stop signs may be a traffic calming measure. Heintz stated the stop signs are not illegal and will provide some traffic calming and will provide for a safer curve because of decreased speed. He also noted there would be advance notice for the curves and for the stop signs. Sutcliffe stated that the stop sign placed at the right-angle turn where Brown Road Extension meets Sapsucker Woods Road, at the request of the Town of Dryden, has alleviated many problems in that area. Sutcliffe also noted that with the redesign of the road, three major right-angle curves on Brown Road Extension have been eliminated.

Cross noted that the naming of the road needs to be determined - whether the entire road will be Sapsucker Woods Road or whether a portion of it will continue to be Brown Road Extension. Marcus asked for input from Cornell. Heintz stated that at the conclusion of the meeting with Cornell and the Town of Dryden, it was determined that it should be Sapsucker Woods Road in its entirety which would include the portion within the Village of Lansing.

Cross also expressed concern about the water service which must come from the Town of Ithaca. Cross has seen no direct correspondence from the Town and wants to be certain there are no problems. Heintz stated the Ornithology Lab has been working with Dan Walker in the Town of Ithaca and the engineer's report should be forthcoming soon and Walker has stated he is comfortable with the design. Heintz will provide a copy of correspondence. Also, Cross noted approval of Bolton Point is necessary.

Cross stated the issue of sewer units need to be resolved. The new Ornithology Lab will require 4 units and currently the Lab owns 2 units from the Village of Lansing and 2 units from the Town of Ithaca. The new building is entirely within the Village of Lansing. The Town of Ithaca will need to release their two units back to Cayuga Heights so the Village of Lansing can then acquire them for allocation back to the Ornithology Lab. Cross was to have spoken with

Walker about this but has not. Although Cross does not see this as a problem, the logistics must be worked out.

Cross stated drainage is about wrapped up although a few details may need further review when it is complete. Dumpster details are incomplete. The Lighting Plan has been revised to accommodate the recommendations of the Lighting Commission.

The Board proceeded with the SEQR Review. Marcus stated the Board has received a great quantity of materials to complete their review. Most of the SEQR topics have been completed and the Board was awaiting further information on traffic and the Route 13 intersection. Cross noted the right-hand turning lane added to the design at that intersection would be an improvement. Waterman noted that no left-turn during peak hours also needs to be implemented. Signage on Sapsucker Woods Road also needs to be incorporated.

The Board reviewed and revised the draft of findings for Part 3 of the LEAF.

Waterman moved that the Board finds that this proposed action will not result in any significant adverse environmental impact pursuant to the following findings included in Part 3 of the LEAF:

1. Impact on Land

While the depth to the water table in this area is near or less than 3 feet, the site is being modified in a way that does not alter its character or function as part of this environment. The overall elevation of the site will remain essentially unchanged.

While the project will take 18 to 24 months to complete, it is being done in one uninterrupted phase and there is no evidence that the duration of construction will result in any significant adverse impact on the environment.

2. Impact on Water

This construction site does contain a protected water body and designated freshwater wetland. The project will, however, enlarge the water body and wetlands and enhance their ability to function as a storm water retention area and natural wildlife habitat.

New wetlands will be created which will act as part of this drainage system and these wetlands have been carefully studied and designed to meet the natural habitat needs of the area.

3. Impact on Drainage Flow or Pattern, or Surface Water Runoff

90% of this area is classified as poorly drained and development of the site will impact existing drainage patterns. Some drainage areas will be filled, but the drainage flow will be redirected in part to new wetland areas. Some new drainage areas will be established particularly along the east side of the new roadway.

Conventional storm water management techniques will reduce post development storm water runoff by 10%. The combination of the wetland mitigation plan and the storm water management plan have resulted in an overall beneficial environmental impact. The primary technique used is the creation of an additional 2.7 acre feet of wetland storage area.

4. Impact on Transportation

The expansion of the Lab of Ornithology will increase staff from 100 to 135 and will increase visitors by 6 to 30 per day which will result in an increase in traffic which could be considered a significant impact by adjacent residential property owners. It will constitute a 129% increase in traffic from Hanshaw Road and a 132% increase from Rt. 13 at peak hours of 5 – 6 PM, Mon – Fri. The Hanshaw Road intersection will continue to operate at an A level and the Rt. 13 intersection to operate at a B level.

The Village of Lansing will request that the Town of Ithaca and the Town of Dryden add signage at the Hanshaw Road end of Sapsucker Woods Road to reduce thru traffic and additional signage to reduce speed. These actions in addition to those recommended in the applicant's traffic report will mitigate the traffic impact on adjacent residential properties.

Signage will be installed at the Rt. 13 entrance indicating that it is the Ornithology Lab entrance, along with bird watching emblems visible from Rt. 13 to notify the public of the nature of the site. These latter actions may be subject to approval by NYS DOT.

Also, to mitigate increased north bound traffic on Sapsucker Woods Road, Cornell intends to provide a right-hand turn lane and signage prohibiting left-hand turns during peak hours, provided that Cornell obtains the required NYS DOT work permits to do so.

Seconded by Dankert. All aye.

The Board then reviewed the eight Draft Conditions for the Special Permit discussed at the previous meeting. Halevy stated additional conditions should be added regarding signage at intersection of Brown Road Extension and Route 13 indicating dangerous intersection ahead; signage for right- hand turning lane onto Route 13; signage to prevent left-hand turning lane onto Route 13 during peak hours of 5 – 6 PM Monday thru Friday. Waterman expressed a desire to have the Village Engineer, Brent Cross, meet with the Town of Dryden engineer, David Putnam, regarding the 90 degree turn on Sapsucker Woods Road. The Village of Lansing will transmit to the Town of Dryden the concerns of the Village of Lansing engineer regarding the curve at the transition from the existing Sapsucker Woods Road to the new proposed design in the Town of Dryden. Cross will do this prior to Feb. 15. Regarding Item 7, Cross noted that DOT owns land and transfer of title to Cornell or an easement is required. Heintz stated a letter has not been provided but DOT in Syracuse feels they will be able to provide the opportunity to Cornell to purchase the land. If not completed in time, Cornell will be allowed access to the land during construction prior to actually purchasing it. Curtis stated the Village would require confirmation from DOT for permission to construct the road as indicated on the site plan for the land currently owned by DOT. Cross noted the item for the Town of Ithaca water main concern. Heintz will request Dan Walker write a letter to the Board stating he approves of the submitted design for the extension. Cross felt a permit from the Town may be required. Curtis stated this may be included in Bolton Point's approval. Cross noted that the Town of Ithaca is also going to require their Board's approval to own this water main. Marcus stated it might be possible to get Walker to write a letter confirming his approval of the extension and the Town of Ithaca Board will accept it. Regarding Item 9, it was determined that the sign is proposed be placed on Route 13 and the Village has no control about signage on that road. Signs on Route 13 would indicate the entrance to the Ornithology Lab. Marcus recommended seeking confirmation from DOT on this issue. It was agreed that installation of signs at the Route 13 entrance indicating the Ornithology Lab entrance, as well as bird watching emblems, visible from Rt. 13 be required for a Certificate of Occupancy. Regarding Item 11, there was discussion as to who owned the land where the sign will be located and what it will state. The condition will state that Cornell shall supply signage as the Village requires for the dedication of the road.

Curtis reviewed the following conditions for the permit:

1. Cornell must provide maintenance and protection of traffic during construction to minimize disruption that might be caused by the reconfiguration of Sapsucker Woods Road and Brown Road Extension.
2. Approval by the Town of Dryden and the Village of Lansing for all conveyances of real property and construction that may be required to effect the reconfiguration of Sapsucker Woods Road and Brown Road Extension.
3. Hours of construction discernible from adjoining properties shall be limited to 7AM to 7PM Mon. – Sat.
4. Approval by the Village Engineer of final site plan including drainage, parking lots, erosion control and similar site work.
5. Approval by the Planning Board of a Lighting Plan reviewed by the Lighting Commission which includes all exterior site and building lighting.
6. Approval by the Planning Board of a Final Landscape Plan, including dumpster screening.
7. Approval by NYS DOT of the intersection of Sapsucker Woods Road and Rt. 13.
8. Permit from NYS DEC to modify wetlands.
9. The Village of Lansing will transmit to the Town of Dryden the concerns of the Village of Lansing Engineer regarding the curve at the transition from the existing Sapsucker Woods Road to the new proposed alignment, prior to February 15, 2001.
10. Confirmation from NYS DOT of permission to construct the road as shown on the site plan and particularly on land currently owned by NYS DOT.
11. Approval by the Town of Ithaca of the extension of the water main to the Village boundary.
12. Signage will be installed at the Rt. 13 entrance indicating that it is the Ornithology Lab entrance, along with bird watching emblems visible from Rt. 13 to notify the public of the nature of the site.
13. Cornell shall provide such signage as the Village requires for dedication of the road.

Marcus reminded the Board that in December, the Board reviewed the General Conditions required for all Special Permits. Klepack moved that the Board finds that the applicant has met the general conditions specified in Section 304.05 of the Zoning Law. Seconded by Waterman. All aye.

Next, Dankert moved that Special Permit No. 1589 be approved subject to the special conditions listed above. Seconded by Waterman. All Aye.

McDonald's Lighting Plan:

Curtis notified the Board that he has sent a letter to Francis Essien, McDonald's project manager. The conditions for the Special Permit require the implementation of a lighting plan approved by the Planning Board. Curtis has notified Essein of the concerns expressed by the Lighting Commission, particularly regarding the roof lights and the level of lighting in the parking lot. Curtis is now requesting the Planning Board officially adopt the Lighting Plan recommended by the Lighting Commission for McDonalds so Curtis may enforce it. Klepack moved the Planning Board accept the McDonald's Lighting Plan Recommendations dated Jan. 12, 2001. Seconded by Waterman. All aye.

Approval of Minutes:

Waterman moved to approve the Jan. 8, 2001 minutes as revised. Seconded by Klepack. Abstain by Dankert. Ayes by Halevy, Klepack and Waterman.

The Board approved the December 20, 2000 minutes, as written, for distribution by Curtis.

Reports:

Halevy attended the Trustees meeting of Jan. 15. He reported that the Village has decided to contribute an additional \$1000 to the Lansing Community Library. Also, the light at Graham Road is now functioning.

Adjournment:

Waterman moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 PM. Seconded by Dankert. All aye.