

**Village of Lansing  
Planning Board Meeting  
February 24, 2009**

1 The meeting of the Village of Lansing Planning Board was called to order at 7:30 P.M. by  
2 Chairman Ned Hickey. Present at the meeting were Planning Board Members Maria Stycos,  
3 Phil Dankert, Carol Klepack and Mario Tomei; Village Attorney David Dubow; Code  
4 Enforcement Officer Ben Curtis; Acting Trustee Liaison Julie Baker; and Tobias DeBoer,  
5 observing for the Community Party.

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7 **Public Comment:**

8 Hickey opened the Public Comment Period. Tobias DeBoer stated that he was observing on  
9 behalf of the Community Party Observers Program. There being no one else who wished to  
10 speak, Tomei moved to close the Public Comment Period. Seconded by Stycos. Ayes by  
11 Hickey, Dankert, Stycos, Klepack and Tomei. Motion carried.

12  
13 **Walkway Policy Review**

14 The next item on the agenda was discussion of the Village's Walkway Policy. Hickey  
15 reported that Klepack had marked up a copy of the Village Map for the Stewardship Program  
16 indicating where she thought actual trails and walkways were and where future Greenway  
17 Trails were proposed. There were some existing walkways and trails about which she was  
18 uncertain and Hickey and Curtis drove around the Village to inventory the existing walkways  
19 and trails. They quickly realized that decisions needed to be made with regard to what should  
20 be included in the Greenway and what should not. For example there is a well developed trail  
21 system in the B&T Park, but it is privately owned and Hickey did not know whether it should  
22 be considered part of the Greenway and appear on the Map with Village owned recreation  
23 trails. Similarly, there are internal privately owned and maintained sidewalks at the Parkview  
24 Health Care Campus and others owned and maintained by the Village. In the Lansing Trails  
25 Subdivisions there are or will be recreational trails as well as sidewalks. He is concerned that  
26 putting all of the trails and walks on the map might imply that the Village was somehow  
27 responsible for them, all which is clearly not the case. He would like the Board to consider  
28 the issue and make some determinations before he marks up the Map.

29  
30 He directed the Board's attention to a Village Walkway Policy that was adopted in 1995 and  
31 suggested that this document be a starting point for the discussion. There are some general  
32 definitions for terms like walkway, sidewalk and paved shoulder. Further research indicated  
33 that there are standards to be met in order for a paved shoulder to be considered a walkway.  
34 He directed the Board's attention to a memo he had received from Dave Putnam at TG Miller  
35 Engineers with DOT standards. Shoulders used as pedestrian facilities should be at least 4'  
36 wide where pedestrians will be walking in only one direction facing traffic and at least 5'  
37 wide if intended for pedestrians walking in both directions.

38  
39 With regard to the trails in the B&T Park, Baker noted that although they are privately owned  
40 by Cornell, they are also used by the public. Hickey responded that when the system was  
41 developed, Cornell Real Estate had stated that they did not want the system to be part of the  
42 Greenway Plan, but that they did not object at all to the public using the trails. Hickey does  
43 not think trails such as those in the B&T Park should appear on a map as part of the official

1 Green Way Plan. The map should include only the trails and walkways the Village owns and  
2 maintains. Baker asked if the purpose of the map was to identify Village owned walkways  
3 and trails or to serve as a tool for walkers to identify routes they could use. If it is the latter, it  
4 might be appropriate to include private trails and walkways as long as they are open to the  
5 public. Hickey passed out the Greenway brochure the Village published in 1995. It was titled  
6 *Village of Lansing Greenway Plan* and did include the private walkways in the B&T Park.  
7 Stycos suggested that a private trail should not appear on the map. Curtis suggested that the  
8 map distinguish between sidewalks and recreational trails as the former are maintained by the  
9 Village year round, but recreation trails will probably not be plowed in the winter. As a first  
10 step Hickey stated he would mark all of the Village owned sidewalks and trails on the map  
11 and differentiate between the paved trails and soft surface trails. Where recreation land has  
12 been dedicated but no trails constructed, the Board agreed the parcels could be marked, but  
13 that no trail should be indicated as some of these parcels are quite steep and not really safe to  
14 hike without some improvements. Curtis noted that some road shoulders had been designed  
15 specifically for pedestrians with wider paved and striped walking lanes. Hickey will include  
16 on the map shoulders specifically improved for pedestrians.

17  
18 **Zoning Review**

19 Hickey distributed an initial draft plan for the Board to consider in undertaking a review of  
20 the Zoning Law. He noted that there are eight articles in the Zoning Law, but a couple are  
21 primarily technical in nature and the Code Officer and or the Village Engineer should  
22 probably review these. That leaves five or six articles for the Planning Board to review.  
23 Hickey suggested starting with Article 2, Definitions. He asked the members to read through  
24 the definitions and make notes as to which ones are needed, which are not, which make sense  
25 and which should be rewritten, and also terms that are not defined, but probably should be.  
26 The Board can then discuss the Article and recommend changes. Curtis noted that the Zoning  
27 Law should readily make sense to the average person picking it up and reading a section. He  
28 read the definition of “Building Line” confessing that it did not make sense to him. He also  
29 pointed out that the Law lacked definitions for terms such as “Townhouse” and  
30 “Condominium” to which the Law pertains either directly or indirectly, and the meaning of  
31 which he has been asked on more than one occasion.

32  
33 Dubow suggested that Village Clerk Jodi Dake presumably had the Zoning Law in electronic  
34 format and, if so, members could use the search function in Word to locate terms in the text.  
35 This might make the job easier. Making a change in one section of the Law may require  
36 making changes in other sections where the term appears. Hickey suggested that the Board  
37 first identify problems such as sections they read and can not easily understand; then decide  
38 whether and how to resolve the problem; and then search the Law to see if a proposed change  
39 requires additional changes in other sections.

40  
41 Referring back to the article, *Overhauling Your Zoning Code*, Hickey suggested that the  
42 Board identify stakeholders – people who use the Zoning Law on a regular basis – and  
43 involve them in the review. This might include major property owners, builders, developers,  
44 business people, etc. Klepack expressed concern that such involvement might create the  
45 expectation that the Law would be changed to accommodate a stakeholder’s special interest.  
46 Hickey noted that identifying a specific concern did not obligate the Board to propose

1 changing the Law to accommodate that concern, but knowing of the concern may help the  
2 Board understand how the Zoning Law is perceived by those who use it. Dubow responded  
3 that he was not counseling against gathering such information, but rather suggesting great  
4 care be taken in how it is done. He reminded the Board that the Shops at Ithaca Mall had  
5 brought a suggestion to the Board that mixed use – residential and commercial – be permitted  
6 in the Commercial High Traffic District. The proposal responded well to other planning goals  
7 the Planning Board had considered and the Board determined that it would be beneficial for  
8 the Village as a whole. In this case the fact that the proposal would benefit the Mall  
9 specifically did not preclude its benefit for the Village as a whole. Great care was exercised  
10 then and would also be required in the process Hickey was suggesting to ensure that the  
11 Board’s recommendations reflect only the interests of the Village and not the specific  
12 interests of a stakeholder. Hickey noted that the Village has had a very positive relationship  
13 with some developers and their input could be very useful in this process. David Fernandez  
14 from Cayuga Landscape has been very helpful to the Board in the past and could probably  
15 offer helpful suggestions in this case as well. Stycos asked if other municipalities had used  
16 this approach. Dubow suggested that Curtis contact his counterpart in the Town of Dryden as  
17 he thought Dryden may have recently undertaken a review of their Zoning Law. Klepack  
18 suggested that stakeholder comments and proposals be submitted in writing rather than  
19 verbally; the Board agreed. Hickey noted that in the course of the review one or more public  
20 hearings would be required if any change to the Law was proposed. Dubow noted that  
21 depending upon the nature and extent of proposed changes, more than one local law might be  
22 required.

23  
24 Hickey asked the Board members to get started on the review of Article 2, *Definitions*, and  
25 see how it goes. When the Board meets again on March 9 they can discuss their progress and  
26 how or whether to proceed. Dubow noted that the process itself would have the benefit of  
27 triggering discussion of various provisions of the Law and familiarizing the members with  
28 the Law. Hickey added that the composition of the Board will be changing in the near future  
29 and it would be important for the newer members to acquire the familiarity with the Law that  
30 some of the older members had from having developed the Law over the years.

31  
32 **Other Business as Time Permits**

33 Klepack reported that she had been working on the 3” x 3” diamond shaped marker signs for  
34 Village recreation land and the Conservation Easement. She asked if the Board thought she  
35 should order different signs for the recreation land and the easement as the nature of the  
36 Village’s interests differ for each. She does not know what the terms of the Conservation  
37 Easement are. The terms of easements owned by the Finger Lakes Land Trust differ from  
38 parcel to parcel. Dubow stated that the Conservation Easement for the Bolton Estate  
39 Subdivision had not been drafted yet. When it is it will be subject to the approval of both the  
40 Planning Board and the Board of Trustees. The Easement has been delineated and it is  
41 generally intended that the area not be disturbed, but the exact details have not yet been  
42 worked out. He suggested that the Board might approach the Land Trust and the Town of  
43 Ithaca, both of which have been involved with such easements, to get copies of those  
44 easements to help evaluate whatever easement is drafted for the Bolton Estate Subdivision.  
45 Returning to Klepack’s original question, Board members agreed that, given the differences  
46 between the Conservation Easement and Village recreation land, there should be different

1 signs for each. Klepack will work on two different signs. Dubow noted that effectively  
2 marking the boundaries of the Conservation Easement would it self require a lot of signs.  
3 Curtis noted that if the Board did not intend for trails to be identified until they had been  
4 improved as safe trails, then the improvements would identify them and no additional  
5 signage would be necessary to do so. Hickey suggested that some sort of trail sign would be  
6 needed to indicate the trail was for public use. Klepack stated she was inclined to simply put  
7 the Village logo on the signs for Village owned land and a similar sign with “Conservation  
8 Easement “ for the Bolton Estate easement, and she would leave it to someone else to order  
9 the trail head signs as that is not really part of the Stewardship Program.

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11 **Approval of Minutes**

12 Dankert moved to approve the minutes of the January 27 meeting as amended, seconded by  
13 Stycos, all in favor. Motion carried.

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15 **Adjournment:**

16 Stycos moved to adjourn at 8:45 P.M. Seconded by Klepack. Ayes by Hickey, Dankert,  
17 Klepack, Stycos and Tomei. Motion carried.

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