

Village of Lansing
Planning Board Meeting
January 31, 2017

The meeting of the Village of Lansing Planning Board was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Mario Tomei.

Present at the meeting were Planning Board Members: Deborah Dawson, John Gillott, and Lisa Schleelein; Alternate Member, Carolyn Greenwald; Code Enforcement Officer, Marty Moseley; Village Trustees Ronny Hardaway and Gerry Monaghan; Village Attorney, David Dubow; Village Engineer, Brent Cross; Dr. Ahmed H. Ahmed; and Jack Baker and Tim Votra, of American Homes.

Absent: Mike Baker.

Tomei appointed Carolyn Greenwald as an acting member for the meeting due to the absence of Planning Board member Mike Baker.

Public Comment Period

Tomei opened the public comment period. With no one wishing to speak, Dawson moved to close the public comment period. Seconded by Schleelein; Ayes by Tomei, Dawson, Gillott, Greenwald, and Schleelein.

Classification and Possible Consideration for Alteration to an Existing Special Permit

#2895 for the Al-Huda Islamic Center Proposed for 112 Graham Road

Dr. Ahmed recapped a presentation from 2014 and briefly spoke to the special permit that was originally approved. He reiterated the need for the mosque -- a place of prayer and identity for the Muslim community in Ithaca. Dr. Ahmed indicated that there are five daily prayer times at which it is expected there might be 20 participants. On Fridays during the mid-day there could be as many as 40-80 individuals coming to pray. About two times per year there might be other larger gatherings (100-120), generally on a weekend. The Al-Huda Center would also provide activities for the Muslim community.

Because of difficulties in fundraising for the Center, its building committee has revised the previously approved site plan from the previous plan. The committee is now considering a modular construction through American Homes that would include a full basement. Covering the stream has also been eliminated due to cost, and as a result parking has been moved from the rear of the property to the front on Graham Road. The square footage of the building is now slightly less.

Tomei asked about whether anyone would be living on the premises, and Dr. Ahmed indicated that no one would be living there.

Schleelein brought up her concern that parking had been moved to the front from the previously approved plan and it has been the goal of the Planning Board to have developers locate parking in the rear to create a more aesthetic and pleasing environment. Originally, the parking was planned to be in the rear and this was the preference of both the Board and the Al-Huda committee.

However, because of setback requirements and other cost considerations Al-Huda changed the plan when it was determined the cost to cover the stream was going to be prohibitive, necessitating the relocation of

51 the parking. There was much discussion on this topic with Dr. Ahmed and his colleague, Mohammed,
52 citing cost and setback concerns, and the Board expressing a clear preference for parking in the rear.

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54 Cross mentioned that one possibility might be to relocate the middle of the stream on the property as long
55 as the entry and exit points remain undisturbed.

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57 Tomei noted that all parties seem to want the same thing, and asked whether Dr. Ahmed would still prefer
58 to have the building closer to Graham Road if there were a way to accommodate that by getting a
59 variance from the setback regulations.

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61 After further discussion, the Board members continued to stress the desire to have the parking in the rear
62 and fully supported approaching the BZA for a setback variance. Prior to going to the BZA, Tomei
63 indicated that it would be important for Moseley to see the next plan revision and the need ultimately for
64 a more professional plan to be submitted to the Planning Board for the final approval process.

65
66 Cross also brought up storm water issues, reminding Dr. Ahmed that the future plans also need to include
67 a required storm water management plan. He also asked to be included in any discussions with Dr.
68 Ahmed and Moseley if there are to be any changes to the stream.

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70 Dawson indicated that she felt the change of moving the parking to the front constitutes a major change to
71 the special permit previously approved. The other board members agreed.

72
73 Dr. Ahmed agreed to approach the BZA for a variance. It was suggested that a letter be sent to the BZA
74 by the Planning Board supporting a setback variance, as the variance would be in keeping with the goal to
75 approve the intended visual appearance of the Village.

76
77 Moseley asked whether Dr. Ahmed could return to the February 13th Planning Board meeting. Dr.
78 Ahmed agreed that would be possible.

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80 **Approval of Minutes:**
81 Minutes of October 25, 2016. Gillott moved to accept the minutes as amended. Seconded by Dawson.
82 Ayes by Tomei, Dawson, Gillott, Greenwald, and Schleelein. Nays: None.

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84 **Trustee Report:**
85 There were no Trustee meetings held in January.

86
87 **Other Business**
88 Moseley reminded everyone that the NYPF Annual Conference will be held March 26-28th in Saratoga
89 Springs.

90
91 **Adjournment**
92 Dawson moved to adjourn at 8:14 PM. Seconded by Gillott; Ayes by Tomei, Dawson, Gillott, Greenwald,
93 and Schleelein.