

Village of Lansing

Planning Board Meeting

January 26, 1999

The meeting of the Village of Lansing Planning Board was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Acting Chairman Halevy. Present at the meeting were Planning Board Members Brown, Dankert, Klepack, Waterman, Village Attorney Marcus, and Code Enforcement Officer Curtis.

Public Comment

Waterman moved to close the Public Comment portion of the meeting as there was no one present who wished to speak. Seconded by Dankert. All in favor.

Amendment to Small Mall PSA for Bill Cooke Imports - Continued

Bill Cooke and David Fernandez of Cayuga Landscaping were present at the meeting to present the proposal. Mr. Cooke said that access to Cooke Imports is not good and he feels justified in his request to join the Planned Sign Area started by Bishops and the Small Mall. Cooke pointed out that there is a unity of design in the four buildings in this area. They are all large square buildings in similar shades of light gray to off-white, and each have facial mounted signs. Mr. Cooke asked the Board to contrast that view with what was there several years ago to see how all of the structures in this area have been improved and have become more uniform in appearance.

David Fernandez of Cayuga Landscaping presented a landscaping proposal for Cooke Imports:

- Plant 5 Columnar European Hornbeams along road frontage, 9-10' tall, 1.25-1.5" caliper;
- Plant 3 Floribunda Crabapples (also known as Japanese Flowering Crab), 6-7'tall;
- Create new ornamental flowerbeds approximately 100 s.f. in the area at the main pedestrian entry to the dealership. Focus is to be on seasonal color through mass plantings of perennial flowers and bulbs. A second display bed closer to Uptown Road is to be planted with ornamental grasses and Russian Sage.
- The gravel embankment along Cinema Drive will be reconditioned with new pea gravel and the deteriorating railroad ties will be replaced as needed. Overgrown old shrubs will be removed or replaced.
- For future consideration, an American flag and pole to be erected in the current sign pylon location.

The area on the South boundary is limited because there are large power lines overhead and there is an extremely steep embankment. There are buckthorn shrubs that have been cut back a couple times by the power company which will be removed and that area will be returned to natural grasses and clovers. Any additional plantings there have to be limited to plants that are mature at under 25 feet (according to the City's Shade Tree Advisory Council Guide for planting under power lines). Fernandez felt that adding three trees to this completely treeless landscape would be the most valuable first step. The Japanese flowering crabapple trees are tough and hearty and grow in poor soil. They have a horizontal branching structure, pink blossoms, and little red fruit that attracts birds. The European Hornbeam tree is a narrow tree that has dark green foliage year round. They are beautiful and extremely drought resistant. In the area around the showroom he proposes to replace the old shrubs with a durable perennial garden which will include Black-eyed Susans and Russian Sage. The slopes will be re-graveled, but an alternative such as crown vetch would be a possible alternative treatment.

Halevy noted that it is somewhat difficult to maneuver in the parking lot with all the cars. Fernandez pointed out that because of this they did not want to block the visibility at the entranceways with plantings. Halevy asked if there were some way to make the front strip along Cinema Drive more interesting. Fernandez said that a treatment for that much area of steep bank would be more expensive than all the rest of the plantings put together. It's constrained by budget as well as other site constraints, but it could be part of a longer range plan to upgrade that strip. There are a lot of different treatments that could be used.

Brown expressed concern that there did not seem to be any connection between Cooke Imports and the Small Mall and

Bishops properties and the signs that have been proposed have no relation to the Small Mall signs. She asked if the signage could be scaled down so that Cooke Imports could work within the existing Sign Law and not depend on being part of a Planned Sign Area.

Curtis reviewed the proposal. Cooke Imports is requesting 243 s.f. and they currently have 200 s.f. because they were once two businesses. Now it's one business, so strictly speaking under the Sign Law they are entitled to 100 s.f., 75 s.f. of which can be free-standing. The Toyota sign is 65 s.f. free-standing and the GM sign is 135 s.f. They will take down the 135 s.f. sign.

Marcus said that one of the things that is peculiar about how the Sign Law impacts this situation is that the law defines Bill Cooke Imports as a single business, but in fact that business is three different franchises and deals with three distinct product lines. It is a unique circumstance, and somewhat of an anomaly in the retail sales arena that the purveyor of those products is required to provide signage for each one of them. It's somewhat a different relationship being a franchise rather than a retail store. That isn't provided for in the Sign Law. The only other option under the Sign Law besides the Planned Sign Area is for a variance for the number of square footage that is desired. Marcus said that he would interpret the language of the PSA as intending to give the Planning Board fairly wide discretion - more so than in the Zoning Law or the Subdivision Regulations. The PSA section talks about some very conceptual goals such as improving the looks of the area involved, and doesn't include quantitative restrictions. So it appears that it is intended to give flexibility. It is certainly the case that it is designed to somehow tie different businesses together in some visual sense. It is up to the Board to decide if there is something the applicant has provided to give enough justification to tie it together into the adjacent Planned Sign Area.

Curtis said that they have used a broad spectrum of methods for applying the Planned Sign Area Law in the past. Pyramid Mall was given a specific quantity of signage (2000 s.f.) and if they wanted to have any sign greater than 50 feet within that 2000 feet they needed to come back to the Trustees for approval. The Cayuga Mall signs will be consistently one color once its PSA is fully implemented. The Mobile Station and Friendly's are contiguous businesses there that are included in the Cayuga Mall Planned Sign Area that don't have signs that fit neatly with the rest of the mall. At the Triphammer Mall, the key was uniformity of sign color and size. At Lansing Village Place, the signs are different colors but are uniform in size and approximate placement. That would be closer to what Cooke is proposing. The Small Mall has no consistent color but there are limitations on the color of the awning.

Curtis said that contiguous businesses have not been included in many places, and they do seem to have been treated somewhat differently. There has been no absolute uniformity of signage in the few examples of contiguous businesses in a Planned Sign Area. In other Planned Sign Areas uniformity was not based on the signage at all; at Pyramid Mall, the tradeoff was almost entirely landscaping. There wasn't that attempt to arrive at some kind of uniform placement, size or color of signs.

Marcus suggested that one analogy that can be drawn between the Small Mall and Bishops and Cooke's proposed signage is the approximate location of the signs on the face of the buildings. In addition, the overall effect of the improved landscaping along Cinema Drive is positive. Waterman felt that this is a unique situation because these are different dealerships combined under one business. Klepack saw the 200 s.f. as a grandfathered situation, and what the Village would receive in return for the extra 43 s.f. would be a substantial visual improvement.

Halevy moved that the Board vote to recommend the amendment of the Small Mall Planned Sign Area to include Bill Cooke Imports per the specific proposal submitted by Mr. Cooke. Seconded by Waterman. All in favor.

Small Mall Planned Sign Area - Letter of Credit

Mr. Goldberg submitted a letter to the Planning Board containing cost estimates for the required plantings. The Board felt that the amount estimated for 3 deciduous trees was either too low or that the trees that were intended to be purchased would be too small. They also felt that since the Board customarily requires that a written estimate be used as the basis for Letters of Credit, it would be appropriate to be consistent and require this from Mr. Goldberg as well. The estimate should be for the cost of 1.5" to 2" caliber trees, and the type of tree should be specified. Curtis will request an estimate from a landscape contractor.

Green Space Advisory Council - Update

Halevy announced that they have received two applications for the Green Space Advisory Council. One was from Jim Orcutt and the other was from Walt Weitgref, previously a professor of Agriculture at Cornell.

1999 Work Plan

Halevy encouraged Board members to bring suggestions to the next meeting.

Laws Pending Planning Board Action

Mobile Homes: Marcus said that this proposed Local Law was originally brought up in February '98. A draft was prepared and then Curtis distributed some literature. In April the Board decided to go on a field trip a manufactured home plant and further discussion was held until after that trip. That's where it left off. The Board will discuss further development of this proposed Local Law at the next meeting.

Road Shoulders: Halevy reminded the Board that Dennis Reinhart was supposed to bring this draft up-to-date and give it to Halevy to supply illustrations. Halevy will check with Reinhart.

Reports

Trustee Meeting: Doris Brown reported that the Trustees approved the Shannon Park district regulations. However they did not take any action on the Comprehensive Plan because the latest changes had not been incorporated into the Plan, but were listed on a separate document. This was due to a misunderstanding, and those changes will be incorporated into a final draft.

Adjourn

Klepack moved to adjourn at 9:10 p.m.. Seconded by Waterman. All in favor