

**Village of Lansing
Planning Board Meeting
January 29, 2008**

The meeting of the Village of Lansing Planning Board was called to order at 7:30 P.M. by Chairman Ned Hickey. Present at the meeting were Planning Board Members Carol Klepack, Maria Stycos and Mario Tomei; Village Attorney David Dubow; Trustee Liaison Lynn Leopold; and Code Enforcement Officer Ben Curtis.

Public Comment:

Hickey opened the Public Comment period.

As there was no one else present who wished to speak, Tomei moved to close the Public Comment Period. Seconded by Stycos. Ayes by Hickey, Klepack, Stycos and Tomei. Motion carried.

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In-Service Training: David Fernandez, Cayuga Landscape:

Hickey stated that David Fernandez would be providing in-service training for Board members. Fernandez gave Board members an outline of landscape plan review issues.

Fernandez stated it is often hard to evaluate landscape plans because of the differences in scale and standards used. Fernandez would recommend the Village purchase engineering scales for member use. There are good 5" long flat scales available for about 5 dollars which fit easily in a pocket and would be useful to Board members.

Fernandez stated it is much easier to read and evaluate plans drawn to a 1" equals 10' scale. But it is not uncommon to find a 1" to 30' scale for larger projects. All plans should have bar scales to help in evaluation if the plans have been reduced. Fernandez stated that on drawings with a 1" to 30' inch scale details are often too small to really evaluate the plantings. Developers can be asked to do blow-up detail drawings for specific areas. Fernandez stated that plants should be shown as they will appear at some specific time in the future. A helpful resource is the University of Pennsylvania Street Tree Fact Sheets which shows common tree growths at 30 years. Another useful document used by the City of Ithaca is Nina Bassuck's book, Recommended Urban Trees published by Cornell. Other useful references are Michael Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs, Don Leopold's Native Plants for the Northeast and the American Association of Nurserymen's American Standard for Nursery Stock.

Fernandez stated that spacing of trees should be shown on the plans. The Landscape Architect should prepare a plan to allow the viewer to see what is under the layers. The plants should be shown at 2/3 of their size in 30 years. Landscape architects would understand these guidelines. Although used more in residential drawings, elevation plans are a good way to show heights of plants. The vertical view of plants in scale would provide Board members with useful information. Computers can easily do this to depict plantings in front of the buildings. Fernandez stated the Board can ask for one or two key views; for example, from a neighboring building or from the road. Hickey stated having

this view from a residential lot would be an asset for the Board. Fernandez stated that showing all trees as point and circles is more difficult to interpret than showing conifers, for example, with spikey edges and deciduous with rounded edges, or possibly using different colors for different types of vegetation. The required spacing for conifers in the Village's buffer strip regulations is 6 ft. apart. Fernandez stated this is very close and very aggressive but should cause no complaints although many grow to be 20 - 40 ft. wide. Typically the spacing is for 10 ft. apart. The resource American Standards for Nursery Stock provides useful information regarding different types of conifers and their spreads. Tomei asked if 6 ft. is too close and should be changed. Fernandez stated no, and although no individual plant would become a perfect specimen, collectively they would provide for a great buffer.

Fernandez stated the plans should also include orientation so north could be determined. Generally the top of the page is north, although sometimes due to the shape of the lot this rule of thumb must be abandoned. Other key information should include clear notes as to who prepared the landscape plan, the date of plans plus any revisions, and the plant schedule (including both the botanical names of the plants and the Latin names). The quantity of each type of plant should also appear in the schedule, along with the sizes of the plantings. Fernandez stated there is a big difference between a 2.5 and 3 inch caliper tree so a drawing indicating a 1-3 inch caliper plant is virtually meaningless. Fernandez stated that listing the sizes of containers can also be very deceiving. Shrubs are sold by heights, spread or size of container. Curtis asked if there were ideal calipers for specific trees. Fernandez stated that smaller is better for flowering trees but maples and other commercial and street trees should be larger. Fernandez stated that having plantings in beds is a good idea as the plants are more likely to endure for a longer period of time.

Fernandez stated it is a good idea to use native plants where appropriate. These plants are not as important in small garden settings or as foundation plantings. Invasive plants should be discouraged. Members discussed the problems associated with the removal of hawthorne, honeysuckle and false bamboo. Fernandez stated deer resistant plants should be encouraged. Deer resistant ornamental grasses can be planted as well as high trees in place of shrubs. Fernandez stated plants must be hardy for this zone. Fernandez stated that some trees such as pears and cherries should not be planted in the fall. Some plants are also susceptible to salt such as hemlocks and white pines. Conifers will not thrive well if there are deciduous trees in the same area so shade tolerance is important. Fernandez stated that existing trees are often the big problem because their shade inhibits the growth of the newly planted trees. Many of the sites are sunny until the plantings mature. Fernandez stated that good planting techniques often utilize soil replacement versus native material, especially in places like parking lot islands where the existing soil may be compacted clay and gravel. Replacing that with top soil can make a very big difference in how the tree develops.

Fernandez stated that the root flare should always be above the soil grade. It is better for a plant to be planted too high rather than too deep. Planting too deep is a very common mistake which essentially suffocates the tree.

Dubow stated that the Village Law has requirements regarding buffer strips and the need for additional plantings if required. Hickey stated there might be provisions for phasing. Fernandez responded that phasing plantings might be preferred in situations like that at Colonial Vet where soil is being moved, some areas are ready to be planted, and others would be better left until spring. Dubow read a section from Village Zoning Law regarding the phasing of plantings in buffer strips which allows for some flexibility. Fernandez stated this might have to do with the seasons and the Certificate of Compliance.

Fernandez stated the City of San Diego Municipal Code has a point system to determine the number and sizes of plants, including those to be planted and credit for those existing, which would be required for the site. For example, a condominium conversion requires 50% of the area to be planted and .05 points per square foot. This will produce the number of plants required for a specific area.

Fernandez stated there is a big difference between lawns and meadows with regard to upkeep and habitat, and ultimately energy consumption. Hard fescue and white clover low meadows mixes are very effective and take lots of abuse. Cornell has utilized meadow grasses for steeper slopes in the Plantations and Arboretum. This approach is also good for bio-retention areas.

Hickey asked what the most serious problem the Board might encounter on landscape plans. Fernandez stated it is probably plant choice issues with plants being selected that will not be there in 5 years due to such things as not being deer resistant, not being adaptable to drought conditions, or not being hardy enough.

Hickey asked if Landscape Designers have to defend their landscape plans to those hiring them. Fernandez responded that the plan often has to be defended on several levels, such as cost, aesthetics, and maintenance. Developers are less concerned about the species of plantings.

Tomei asked if maintenance people are advised as to the best herbicides and weed killers to use. Fernandez stated there is often a manual provided at the end of the planting regarding best practices for maintaining the plantings.

Klepack stated she thought the Village Code provided for a 1 year warranty period for plantings. After that time, if the plantings are not effective, Klepack asked what are the remedies. Klepack stated it would probably be a resident that files a complaint. Hickey stated it could either be someone from the Village – staff, board member, etc. -or a neighbor that notifies the Village of the inadequacies of the plantings. Curtis stated in the case of Billy Bob Jacks and Pyramid Mall, the Village requested that dead, damaged or missing plants be replaced. Dubow stated that in the Zoning Law buffer strip provisions there is an obligation that the developers maintain the screening, but it would be difficult to ask for replacement plantings for individual landscape plans. Fernandez stated part of Village Law requires the plantings remain for 2 years. Curtis stated Pyramid Mall has been told that when a tree dies another must be planted in the same location.

Klepack noted that it is sometimes awkward for a lay board member to question the developer's landscape architect about which plants were chosen for which locations. Hickey stated when he has questioned a developer about the choice of plants, he has then told them that if the plantings are not effective then the plants will need to be replaced. Fernandez stated the developers can be told the plan is inadequate and another plan required.

Hickey thanked Fernandez for his presentation.

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CMA, 16 Brentwood Drive:

Hickey stated the next item on the agenda was the entrance off of Warren Road into the Parkview Health Care Campus. Curtis provided Board members with a copy of communications with Superintendent of Public Works John Courtney who has strong concerns about the proposed emergency access at that entrance. Dubow stated that the special permit condition regarding emergency access requires Courtney's approval. Hickey wondered if an alternative might be to authorize Curtis and Hickey to write a letter to Cornell Real Estate expressing the Board's concern about increasing development with only one means of access and egress. The letter might serve notice that approval of any additional buildings beyond the three proposed in the current plan would require a master plan with an additional means of access. Curtis stated Shannon Park was required to put in a boulevard with islands to create two isolated lanes. The entryway to the B & T Park near the Airport is similarly divided. Hickey stated one building has been approved for the Cayuga Medical Associates site although there are a total of 3 buildings in the plan. Hickey stated there must be another entrance or a boulevard provided before additional buildings beyond these are approved. Dubow stated Arrowwood is a Village road and the Village may not have the authority to require changes to the road after its dedication, although the developer may propose to make the change. Dubow stated the Village can hire professional assistance to do a generic environmental review, if they believe that a prospective review is warranted. Curtis stated that Cornell should be informed that they need to provide a solution to this problem before proposing further development. Hickey stated the Village must do something or the development will be done piecemeal. Dubow stated this is an area where the Village can take a pro-active role to do an environmental review and traffic impact review. Dubow stated the Village can be pro-active and take the lead role or Cornell can take the role of presenting a plan. It is a matter of whether the Village or Cornell will take the lead. Dubow stated the Village might decide it is important to do a review now rather than to wait until Cornell is ready to proceed. Dubow stated the Village can evaluate the broader potential environmental impacts of the area and determine how to proceed for the future. Dubow stated maybe Hickey and Curtis would want to meet informally with Cornell for a discussion. Hickey will contact the new director and Tom LiVigne who has a better understanding of the history and the issues. Curtis would like to see something like a memorandum of understanding in writing as a guide for future Board members. Hickey wants to see a plan for the entire parcel. Dubow stated the approval for the new CMA includes a condition for emergency access which must be approved by Courtney. Dubow stated there might need to be an amendment or a waiver for this particular building, but Cornell should be put on notice that further action by the Board is necessary and a further resolution is needed. Klepack does not want to see a waiver of the emergency access condition. Hickey stated the condition would not

be removed. Dubow stated the current proposal is for eco-grid in the Village's ROW which the Village would have to maintain in perpetuity. Curtis stated there are also utilities in the ROW. Hickey stated Curtis, Dubow and he will meet prior to the next meeting to make a proposal to the Board. Dubow stated Integrated Acquisition & Development needs to be informed that the proposal, including the eco-grid, can not be approved until this open issue is resolved. Curtis will notify them and a new proposal must be approved by Lee Shirliff, Fire Chief Scott Purcell, and Courtney, as well as this Board.

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Approval of Minutes Jan. 14:

Klepack moved to approve the minutes of January 14th as submitted. Seconded by Tomei. Ayes by Hickey, Klepack, Stycos and Tomei. Motion carried.

Other Business as Time Permits:

Hickey stated that the Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation has sent out the order forms for their annual Tree, Shrub and Groundcover Sale which includes single shrubs as well as the packets of 10 to 500 plants. Curtis will make copies of the information for Board members.

Klepack thanked Carol Willard who will be retiring for her transcription of the minutes over the past years.

Leopold stated it is budget time and the Board needs to submit a budget. Curtis stated it might be time to consider the equipment for power point presentations.

Hickey stated that Curtis included in the packets a newspaper clipping from Klepack on the Alleys of Chicago as well as an article from Zoning News on Monitoring Local Land Markets.

Adjournment:

Klepack moved to adjourn at 9:25 P.M. Seconded by Stycos. Ayes by Hickey, Klepack, Stycos and Tomei. Motion carried.