

Village of Lansing
Planning Board Meeting

August 9, 1999

The meeting of the Village of Lansing Planning Board was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Hickey. Present at the meeting were Planning Board Members Brown, Halevy, Waterman, Village Attorney Marcus, Village Engineer Cross, Code Enforcement Officer Curtis, and Trustee Liaison Leopold.

Announcements

Hickey announced that there will be no decision on the Pyramid Mall expansion at this meeting because the Environmental Assessment Form is not yet complete to the Planning Board's satisfaction and information is still being gathered.

Public Comment

Hickey said that although there have been two Public Hearings on the Pyramid Mall expansion, since there is a great deal of interest in the project he would allow comment on the expansion not longer than 2 minutes per person. However, no record will be kept of the comments and if anyone wants to go on record with their comments they can write a letter and it will be added to the file with other public comments. Susan Blumenthal, in her capacity as Deputy Mayor of the City of Ithaca addressed the Board on the Pyramid Mall expansion. As no one else wished to speak, Waterman moved that the Public Comment portion of the meeting be closed. Halevy seconded. All in favor.

Bill Cooke Chevrolet, Oldsmobile, Cadillac, Inc. - Developer's Conference

Mr. Cooke read a letter addressed to Chairman Hickey which said that the issue of parking is central to the decision of whether or not they can incorporate an additional dealership at their Lansing location. They requested that they be given a variance to park vehicles right up to the existing tree line on the east side of their property at 35 Cinema Drive. Cooke said it was his understanding that they were to maintain some 50 feet of green space between that property line and any improvement, including parking space. However, should this requirement stand without benefit of a variance they will be unable to proceed with plans for expansion. He urged the Board to consider the request that they be granted a variance to allow them to park new vehicles right up to the existing tree line, and stretching the full length of the eastern boundary of the property. This would accommodate 38-40 parking spaces, or 76-80 spaces if double-parked. He added that they have been using this space for parking for about 20 years and have had no objections from the owners or tenants of the apartments bordering them. Cooke hired David Fernandez of Cayuga Landscaping, who was present at the meeting, to devise a plan which would insure a proper and aesthetically improved green barrier to effectively screen the proposed parking area from the adjacent apartments

Hickey reminded the Board that the use of this property is grandfathered (in the sense that it predates the Zoning Law) but the Board had negotiated with Cooke to establish a 50-foot buffer zone. Now Mr. Cooke wants to take away part of the 50 feet and go right to the property line. They have been parking in the general area in question for 20 years, but this proposal would extend the parking area a considerable distance through to the back corner of the property which is closest to Bishops.

If it is determined that a variance is not needed, then it is a decision of the Planning Board. If a variance is needed, then the Board would need to make a recommendation and the request for a variance would need to be addressed to the BZA.

David Fernandez presented his plan to the Board. He said that for many years cars have been parked in the northernmost portion of the back line of Cooke Imports. The proposal now is to continue the parking all the way across the back line. The current buffer zone is a dense screen of scotch pines plus 40-50 feet of natural vegetation on both sides of a very deep swale to which they propose the addition of a stockade fence. The vegetation is actually so dense that there is not room to plant much in this area. They propose to extend the evergreen screen in the area adjacent to

parking lot of Gaslight Village. The stockade fence would be extended for a little over 200 feet under the existing scotch pine screen. It would then be a question as to whether the fence should be extended further. Fernandez said that they didn't feel that was necessary because the natural screen is so dense and it might be more attractive than a stockade fence. Initially they proposed a 6-foot stockade fence because the branches of the existing evergreens are at about 6 feet and they want to minimize having to cut them off. The Board viewed photos of existing conditions of the site from different vantage points which showed that the existing vegetation forms an effective screen. There is a 50 foot buffer strip all of which is off the property but very hard to change because of the topography. There is one part of the site where there is much greater openness and theoretically a view to mitigate, and the plan is to extend the screen there.

Marcus clarified that the proposal is not only to expand the existing parking, but is part of a larger proposal for expansion of the building. Curtis explained that if their proposal calls for them to park cars within 15 feet of the lot line they will then need to seek a variance from the BZA, and the Planning Board would make a recommendation,. However, the buffer issue has been implemented in different ways in the past when the property involved was grandfathered, so the Planning Board has discretion in responding to the proposal and that issue isn't something that would be dependent upon a variance request. Cooke will need to apply for a Special Permit to build the building, and the Special Permit cannot be granted until a variance is granted for the parking, should it be needed.

Hickey said that he would like to table this discussion until the next meeting so that he and other members of the Board can visit the site. Cross added that they would need an accurate map of the property, and that it would be important to lay out the precise dimensions of the parking spaces.

Tops - Developers Conference

Representatives from Tops were present to address the Board. Nelson Trimmer, from their real estate development company which is owned by the parent company for Tops Supermarkets, said that they currently have an option for the property at the corner of Triphammer Road and Pyramid Drive which is occupied by the closed Howard Johnson's motel. Their proposal is to demolish the structure and rebuild the property into a shopping center anchored by Tops Supermarket

Pat Broderick, another Tops representative, introduced the Board to Traffic Engineer John Tozzi and his partner from Creighton Manning, Engineer Dave Herrick, and Attorney Ed Hooks. He thanked Curtis and Hickey for all their help and suggestions. The original site plan called for over 450 parking spaces and they are now proposing 362 out of the 382 permitted. They also added more landscaping, two above surface drainage ponds and a perimeter drive. The driveway plays a key role in that they have a split retail experience between Tops, which is 48,208 s.f., and retail space of 19,200 s.f. Retail businesses may include such things as clothing and shoe stores, a bar and grill, a bank or medical office. This Tops is smaller than the Tops on Meadow Street by 10,000 s.f. The front of Tops faces Triphammer and the retail stores face Pyramid Drive. Sidewalks will come off of Triphammer and run down Pyramid Drive into the parking lot with crossover into the retail space. Small local buses will be able to stop at the front of the store. Hickey suggested that they consider putting a bus stop at Pyramid Drive on the Tops side of the road so people can have access to a large scale bus that would go up Triphammer Road. David Herrick said that TCAT is looking into whether or not they will consider any internal movements of larger buses in there.

Regarding storm water management, water will flow across the parking lot into a depressed area along the first entrance. This would be a controlled outlet so they would have some storm water management of the upper portion of the site. They have yet to finalize a grading plan for this area but storm water management for the lower portion of the site could well be an underground system. Hickey said that in the past they have had washouts at that corner, so underground pipes could relieve that situation. Herrick said that they are looking into creating a filter system by which you get the detention that you need but you also get the filtering action through the vegetation. This project is large enough in size so they have to conform with the New York State regulations on both quantity and quality of storm water discharge.

Hickey said that the runoff will need to be coordinated between both this facility and Pyramid Mall. Cross asked about the expanse of pavement in the back. This is to accommodate tractor trailers getting in and out to the three loading

docks in back. They will get between 15-17 large trucks per week and there has to be room for trucks to pass each other.

There will be approximately 130 new jobs (approximately 25-30 FTE) in the area and the site will generate a payroll of about \$2,000,000/year. Probably about 20-25% of those employees will earn household incomes that can support a family.

Traffic studies indicate that there will be approximately 490 new trips (in and out) on Pyramid Drive in a 24-hour period. The expected traffic from the development will require a traffic light. This signal will have to be coordinated with the signal on Triphammer Road because the signals are so close together. Their preliminary evaluation of this intersection indicates that it is not working very well. They would hope to be able to improve that with their coordination to get the two signals operating simultaneously. The preliminary work does not take into account the Pyramid expansion so the additional trips generated by the expansion of the mall would further warrant signal coordination.

Pat Broderick said that they feel they have provided an appropriate traffic study for this particular development. However, they are aware of the Board's concern about the proposed expansion of Pyramid Mall and are prepared to pay for a comprehensive traffic study to determine the combined impact on Triphammer Road of this project and the proposed expansion of Pyramid Mall. They have a relatively short period of time to devote to the approval process and they are prepared to pay Creighton Manning to do the study.

Hickey was concerned about stacking distance between the new traffic light and the intersection and suggested that the light be located at the middle entrance. He felt this was a safety issue for the Village. The Board discussed with the developers different options for the location of the traffic signal. Before the issue is discussed further however, they will need to see statistics on what the stacking time will be and what level of service the developers will provide at that light to get the traffic out. They will also need to look at how this project and the expansion of Pyramid Mall will affect the Graham Road and Catherwood Road entrances, as well as Oakcrest Road.

The Board suggested that trees be put in at the west end of the parking area. The developers said that such an arrangement makes snow removal difficult, but that they would consider having planters in front of the store. Halevy suggested they put trees in the parking area in removable planters.

Special Permit for #1466 Pyramid Mall - Continued Discussion

Cross clarified for the Board a letter from Cayuga Heights Mayor Anderson regarding sewer permits. He said that under the current moratorium the additional units that were being given out from time to time were done so under the specific condition that the total usage of the Village would be revisited annually. If during the course of the year the total consumption of the Village changed drastically plus or minus, those available units could be added or deducted from the Village's allocation. At some point in the past the mall used up to 117 units. Their most recent consumption plus their projected consumption is still less than 117 units so there is not a problem with the projected usage. The Cayuga Heights position with regard to Pyramid Mall's proposed expansion, as has been the position with previous projects, is that new projects should require new sewer units. The Village of Lansing takes the position that if you have a sewer pipe connected from your building to the sewer main, you can expand that building without additional permits so long as you do not exceed the capacity of the lateral. The two Villages don't agree on that subject, but there has never been a project that has caused the Village of Cayuga Heights to take a stance against that position because there has never been an expansion of an existing use that has been sufficient enough to change the consumption. This expansion is the largest expansion of an existing use that the Village has seen, but the Village of Cayuga Heights is satisfied that this expansion is still not likely to be so great that it will cause concern if it complies with the most recent projection of 13-16 units. Hickey said that the Board's only concern is whether there are enough sewer permits to build the expansion, and there are.

Cross said he has received no additional drainage information since the previous meeting but the calculations and the preliminary information provided as well as conversations with Mr. Tull demonstrates they have the ability to achieve the goal that the Village requires them to meet. However, they have not yet produced a final plan for Cross with the detailed information that would normally be required for final approval. Cross said that he felt comfortable in giving

the Board a report that the plan is adequate with the understanding that required drawings will be presented before the building permit is granted.

Old Business

- **Meeting Dates:** Waterman moved to move the September 13th meeting to September 8th and to move the September 28th meeting to September 21st. Seconded by Halevy. All in favor.
- **Planning Consultant:** Hickey has scheduled three interviews to be held at the Board meetings on August 31st, September 8th, and September 21st. Waterman moved to begin those three meetings at 7:00 p.m. so the consultants can make their presentations from 7:00 - 7:45 p.m. Halevy seconded. All in favor.
- **Grant Proposal:** Halevy moved to authorize Hickey to go ahead and finalize a rural grant proposal for an extra \$5,000 for the planning consultant. Seconded by Waterman. All in favor.
- **Greenspace Advisory Council:** Hickey reported that he has met with the Greenspace Advisory Council and they are very enthusiastic. They are picking up the Village logo issue again and will run a contest to get citizens involved.
- **Correction:** Lynne Leopold pointed out that in Pyramid Mall's LEAF, page 4, #16, needs to be corrected. Pyramid Mall's commercial waste goes to Superior, not to the County. Superior probably takes it to their commercial transfer station in Newfield.
- **Traffic Analysis:** The Board discussed the offer to have Creighton Manning prepare a comprehensive traffic analysis. The consensus was that the study should be done, and then reviewed by a third party.

Minutes

Halevy moved to approve the June 29, 1999 minutes as submitted. Seconded by Waterman. All in favor.

Adjourn

Waterman moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:55. Seconded by Halevy. All in favor.