

## **Village of Lansing**

### **Planning Board Meeting**

**September 21, 1999**

The meeting of the Village of Lansing Planning Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Hickey. Present at the meeting were Planning Board Members Brown, Halevy, Klepack, Waterman, Village Attorney Marcus, Code Enforcement Officer Curtis, and Trustee Liaison Leopold.

#### **Planning Consultant Interview - Trowbridge & Wolf**

At 7:00 p.m. the Planning Board convened to interview Peter Trowbridge of the planning consultant firm of Trowbridge & Wolf. He reviewed several projects that his firm has worked on in the past. Regarding process he said that first either the Planning Board as a whole or a subcommittee would walk the length of Triphammer Road with them talking in detail about the concerns. The second step would be to review a set of successful projects in other communities to see what might work for the Village. The focus initially will be on the public right-of-way and the other part is private sector development. Trowbridge said that every community has distinctive characteristics that are unique to the community. He described a very complex project that his firm worked on for the City of Ithaca in the southwest park area. He said it takes a partnering with the municipality, the utilities, and the new commercial concerns. There should be representatives from the public in helping to develop guidelines. Once guidelines have been established the firm provides a checklist for developers as well as construction detail standards.

#### **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 Klepack. All in favor.

#### **Public Hearing - Tops Market Special Permit #1479**

Tops Market, Inc. to construct a one story 51,000 s.f. supermarket and 19,200 s.f. retail/restaurant outparcel building at 2300 N. Triphammer Road, the property currently occupied by the Howard Johnson Motel, in the Commercial High Traffic District, Tax Parcel Number 27.1-1-21.

Hickey opened the Public Hearing. He said that they sent out traffic reports to New York State and to an independent consultant and are awaiting the return of one of those reports. Therefore, the Planning Board will not be in a position to vote tonight on Tops Market or the Pyramid Mall development. This Public Hearing is being held to give the public an opportunity to react to the Creighton Manning traffic report which has been available since Thursday, September 16th, and John Tozzi from Creighton Manning was present to answer questions.

Rita Smidt pointed out that at present there is a car every 14 seconds on Dart Drive and in 2 years, given the traffic projections, there will be cars passing every 10 seconds. That is not enough time for a child to run out and get a ball or an elderly lady to cross the street to get her mail. She suggested that traffic information on the speed of vehicles on residential streets should be collected as well. She pointed out that Dart Drive and Graham Road have no sidewalks or even paved shoulders and only one street light at the Warren Road intersection. The road improvements on N. Triphammer Road are supposed to divert the traffic, but the Fulton-Meadow Street area is a current example of how such improvements are not having that effect elsewhere. Another example is Wood Street which leads to Tops in the City of Ithaca. It's 3 blocks long, with a traffic light at one end and a stop sign in the middle and people are complaining that they have 600 cars a day on their street. She said that it is urgent to get someone to figure out how to get traffic off of Dart Drive before the Planning Board accepts a project that will put more traffic on it. The study has too short a time horizon. The Planning Board needs to know what will happen when these projects are as successful as their investors hope they will be, when Lansing gets sewer service and gets more residents. If you're not looking at more than 10 years down to road you're not planning.

Allan Cohen, Mayor of Ithaca, said that the scale of improvements identified in the report speaks to the inadequacy of

the existing roadway system to accommodate growth. Significant improvements including Triphammer Road improvements are needed regardless of future development. This is important because the basis of the Creighton Manning report is largely predicated on improvements to N. Triphammer Road proposed in the Corridor Reconstruction Project but the report only refers to the possibility that the improvements may be implemented at some point in the future. Without these improvements, future development in the area cannot be accommodated. It appears that the mitigation proposed in the Tops only scenario will result in reasonable levels of service without adverse operational safety concerns. The same cannot be said of mitigation proposed in the Tops -Pyramid Mall Expansion combination. The recommendation to modify lane widths and the number of lanes on the bridge across Route 13 introduce substandard lane widths for larger vehicles, semis and TCAT buses which then encroach on the operational and safety levels of N. Triphammer Road, a strategic link in the highway network. The section of Route 13 between the ramps is controlled by the NYS DOT and it is unlikely that the 5 lanes proposed in this study would be permitted by NYS DOT due to the inability of trucks to make turning maneuvers from the ramps onto N. Triphammer Road. The recommendation to install double left turn lanes from N. Triphammer Road turning left onto Pyramid Drive creates a weaving problem for motorists traveling in the outside lane who want to turn left into Tops development and those on the inside lane who want to continue onto Pyramid Mall. The weaving distance between intersections is inadequate. The most significant issue pertains to future queuing conditions on Pyramid Drive between N. Triphammer Road and the proposed Tops entrance. Higher traffic levels will result in increased traffic and queues on Pyramid Drive that extend back and into N. Triphammer Road. Further analysis of Pyramid Drive between N. Triphammer Road and the Tops entrance is clearly warranted. Also of note, there is no concept plan showing the recommended improvements included with the study document. How will transitioning between different cross sections be accomplished? It is also unclear as to how the alignments and transitions between the improved intersections on N. Triphammer Road between Route 13 and Graham Road and on the entire Pyramid Drive will be constructed or even if they are feasible given the short intersection span and the bridge constraints. The span of the bridge itself as well as the short distance in the roadways do not seem to be large enough to provide the queuing and other distances necessary. Nothing is being provided to show they are actually going to work. The distribution of traffic in the study indicates that 30+% of the site-generated traffic will travel south on N. Triphammer Road beyond the Route 13 intersection and additional 30+% of the traffic will travel south on Route 13 into the City of Ithaca. During Saturday peak traffic period this equates to over 300 vehicles per hour along each route. NYS DOT uses the guideline of an additional 100 vehicles per hour to determine whether an intersection should be evaluated in a traffic study. Hickey pointed out that the Creighton Manning report uses peak hour counts only. Cohen said that the area of influence for these projects covers a larger geographic area than what is defined in these reports, even if it's just restricted to the peak hours. An analysis of intersections beyond the study section are clearly warranted based on the peak hour numbers in this Creighton Manning report. Also the traffic report should consider the impacts on adjacent parcels and the driveways that will be impacted - particularly the bank, McDonalds and the office complex. N. Triphammer Road north of Catherwood Road reduces to one lane in each direction. Given the significant increase in volume associated with the mall expansion, the study needs to identify the adequacy of this highway link to accommodate the other traffic. On the issue of methodology the complete analysis used in this report is based on what is called highway capacity manual methods which are methods that are adapted primarily for isolated intersections and not intersection locations significantly impacted by traffic flows adjacent to signal controlled intersections. The level of service results in the study do not take into account any upstream or downstream queuing which already exists on N. Triphammer Road during peak p.m. and Saturday travel periods. We recommend using analysis models that are available for network operations and not for isolated ones.

Dan Hoffman, City of Ithaca, said that the development of a proposal of this scale will have an impact beyond the proximity of this municipality. It will be to the benefit of everyone in the region if there is a more regional approach to the planning and analysis of development, transportation, and population trends throughout the region. He agrees that the time for analysis needs to go further into the future.

Cross said that it is his perception that the time of 2 years does equal the time of full building out for that space. The numbers assume it's fully occupied so it won't change between 2 years and 10 years.

Hoffman said that a larger concern is the impact of the traffic changes on the area beyond the intersections that were studied. He is concerned about the traffic impact on Fulton and Meadow Streets traffic delays and congestion are experienced despite the fact that the DOT projected that it would have capacity well beyond this period. He is

concerned that the increase in traffic heading down Route 13 will add to the existing problem in the Fulton-Meadow area. Another concern is that a project of this impact in this particular location will stimulate development outside the City and have a significant impact on the character of the community within the City and adjacent areas. He did not see any discussion in the report about the impact of this project on the likelihood or need for a new connector road or any portions thereof as proposed in the NEST study. His analysis of a project of this scale is that the appropriate course is to require an environmental impact statement. He is aware of the thresholds for a Type I project and it appears this project clearly exceeds those thresholds. He was also concerned that the time period for public comment on the information that has been presented has been very truncated. This has not been enough time for people to digest this information.

Hickey said that this is a Special Permit hearing for Tops, not for the combined Tops- Pyramid Mall development and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary for Tops because it is not a Type I development.

An unidentified man said that we need something that's open 24 hours a day and it would be nice to have something here instead of going elsewhere.

"Joe" : said that it seems everyone has a negative attitude toward growth, and the area is far behind Big Flats, for example.

John Schroeder, City of Ithaca, said that we're a community and we need to listen to each other. His concern about the traffic study is that it doesn't deal with the broader issue beyond the limited number of intersections. One of the most crucial is the Fulton -Meadow Street area. On the southbound ramp heading into Ithaca at peak hours there will be a 25% increase in traffic and a 50% increase at the Saturday peak. Those intersections need to be studied. We are talking about significant increases in traffic generated by these projects and a traffic report should address how these increases in traffic would exacerbate the problems identified in the NEST study. Another crucial part missing from these studies is the livability issues on residential roads including Triphammer Road which is a residential street for much of its length

Robin Seeley, 332 Hurd Road, Dryden, said that she understands that under SEQRA the Board has decided that Tops is an unlisted project and Pyramid Mall is a Type I project but hasn't yet made a determination whether these proposed projects will have potential negative impacts. SEQRA law says that impacts that are supposed to be considered are reasonably related to long and short term direct and indirect and cumulative impacts. The SEQRA handbook says when cumulative impacts must be assessed. The SEQRA law says that when you have two projects closely related geographically or have the same kind of impacts on a short stretch of road, that their impacts need to be addressed cumulatively. The Board has already done that in the traffic study. It goes on to say in Section B that a cumulative assessment must be done under the following circumstances: if the impacts of related or unrelated actions may be incrementally significant and the impacts themselves are related. She wants to share her conviction that the cumulative traffic impacts of these two projects will require a positive finding of a potential environmental impact. The short-term impacts have been outlined in the Creighton Manning impact study, but she is asking the Board to consider the long-term impacts of this traffic increase of over 2,000 cars/hour. She suggested that one significant long-term impact is that the increased congestion may bring about the need for the north-south connector as proposed by the NEST working group. A north-south connector will have a huge negative environmental impact on her neighborhood in Dryden. One of the impacts that the SEQRA says needs to be considered is its irreversivity and it's geographic scope, its magnitude and the number of people affected. The number of people affected by this connector if it's stimulated by congestion in the Triphammer Road area will include people in the Towns of Ithaca, Dryden, Caroline, and the City of Ithaca. These impacts should receive the Board's serious consideration

Art Shull said that his memory from previous meetings is that a car entering the area doing its business and leaving the area count as two. Therefore when you talk about 492 cars, you're really talking about half that number entering the area, and a 25% increase is really a 12.5% increase. This is important to point out -- 14 cars/minute is really 7 cars going one way and 7 going the other way.

Martha Robertson, Dryden, said that this is a regional problem. The development of the Village of Lansing affects the whole County. All these cars will try to find the quickest way through and they won't always come down the main

highways. These issues do affect our quality of life. All of us are here because this County is a special place and we all have a responsibility to try to help preserve the quality for life that we have here. We recognize that these are the kinds of decisions that can go one way or another and either help us preserve what we have or make it just another big city. This is a short time frame for public comment as 2-3 business days is not enough time to read complicated reports. It is good that the Board has commissioned a third independent traffic study, and she hopes there will be time for the public to speak in response to all three of these studies. All the time that we take now is time well invested.

Matt Shulman said that the implication was that this was all new traffic that was going to be generated. He was confused because developers said that they were trying to capture traffic going elsewhere. Tozzi said that in the trip generation table (page 6 of the Executive Summary and page 12 in the traffic study) by "new trips" they mean that they have already taken into account other pass-by credits and multi-use credits.

Kevin Corbin acknowledged that there is a need to fill the empty Howard Johnson's lot but questioned the need for another grocery chain. The A&P and P&C are not open 24 hours anymore, but most of the community has to go elsewhere for their department store needs as well. The main question is what benefit does having a 3rd grocery chain in this vicinity do but put one or both of them out of business.

Hickey responded that the Planning Board has to go by Zoning Laws, and this type of development is permitted in the Commercial High Traffic District. The Board has to accept the application. They cannot pick and choose what goes in there. All they can do is hold them to the requirement of the SEQRA and the Special Permit processes.

Greg Bell, Town of Ithaca, said that he had formerly been on the Town Planning Board for 4 years. He drew the Board's attention to the lawsuit Pinebush vs. City of Albany Planning Board, in which the court ruled that the Planning Board was not legally able to examine one part of an action without examining the other parts of the action as well. He requested that the Board look into the legal precedent set by that case. Regarding having people from outside the Village of Lansing speak at the Public Hearings for these developments, he said that he feels this is a regional issue, and that the developers clearly want the income from all of us who don't live in this municipality. Finally he said we have to look at the larger structural issue. There are 96,000 people and 14 municipalities in this County and we're not looking at the big picture. We should be talking about competing with New Jersey, Massachusetts, Mexico, and Europe. Instead we are competing between Lansing and the Town of Ithaca. We have to look at the regional impacts and develop things that work for all of us.

Mayor Cohen asked for clarification on trips generated into the City. Tozzi said that numbers on the trip assignment graph are for one-way traffic. Total trips are two-way.

As no one else wished to speak, Waterman moved to close the Public Hearing. Brown seconded. All in favor.

Hickey said that they received that afternoon a reply from NYS DOT to the Creighton Manning report. The Board has not yet had a chance to read it and it was therefore not distributed for the Public Hearing.

Tops representatives said that the site plan is now the finished version that they would eventually like to have approved. Trees have been identified and added in the front, the peninsula has been extended to control traffic through the plaza, and landscaping is shown on the three islands in front of the store. They were able to save one maple tree. The two-way driveway system is continued on the plan. . They have identified 23 parking spaces as associate parking. Things that still need to be added to the plan include a sidewalk down Pyramid Drive, bus shelters, and the dimensions for planters on the edge of the parking lot .

Changes have been made to the islands at the entrance and additional planters have been added in front of the store based on comments made at the last meeting. Curbs on the islands are between 6-8 inches high but the landscaping itself will be bermed up higher because of the nature of the bushes. Bike racks aren't shown on the plan, but they will be near the entrance of the store. The site plan now indicates what additional trees they will be adding and their proposed locations. There are over 74 deciduous trees being added. Trees adjacent to the property on Triphammer Road will remain, as well as an additional cluster of green ash on the embankment along the Route 13 on-ramp. There will be a mix of deciduous and evergreen in the southwest corner and on the Route 13 side. The 4 maples trees in that area will be replaced. On Pyramid Drive there are seven maples and one spruce which will be replaced. Hickey asked

the developers to check with Dennis Rhinehart regarding any plantings in the right-of-way.

Halevy said they will need more information on the lighting plan. The developers said that the front of the store will be washed light from the light poles at the front of the store. The rest of the perimeter of the store will be wall units at the roof line, with the same thing at the back of the store. There will be lit directional signs at each of the entrances.

Cross asked about the type of sidewalk that would be put in. Hickey said that the Planning Board has not been able to solidify requirements on sidewalks so the Village Engineer will have to make the best decision he can make.

Hickey took a straw vote and the Board felt satisfied with the landscaping and lighting plan.

The Tops representatives presented the drainage plan. The watershed on this project is part of the same watershed as the airport. This site is at the lower reach of the 400-acre watershed. They recommend mitigation of water quality and quantity. This project of over 5 acres has to follow the design guidelines and mitigation patterns of the NYS Urban Runoff Guide. They propose to have a pair of extended detention basins being graded on the site. The smaller of the two will serve the retail outparcel area - rooftops, parking lots, sidewalk and impervious areas associated with this upper end of the development. The larger basin handles the majority of the parking lot and the rooftops from the market. These will be graded for 2, 10 and 100 year storm events with the focus being to mitigate or attenuate peak flows from the most developed condition. These open basins have beneath them an under-drain system which is typical of a tile drain. A 6" under-drain pipe wrapped in a large volume of stone and fabric will slowly meter out the water from these basins. Extended detention provides a way of dropping out pollutants which are carried into the water. All the water that runs through this basin goes through that underground system so pollutants are slowly metered out with time. That satisfies the first flush volume requirement - the first half inch of rain off the impervious areas which are most concentrated with these pollutants. There are also secondary spillways that serve to handle any larger events that might cause some overflow in the basin. However, under normal conditions the basin will fill up and slowly meter out water putting that water back into this tributary which right now is a 16" storm sewer system which extends under N. Triphammer Road and across Cayuga Mall to the east side of that parking lot. They both go into the tributary separately and there is an outlet control for each of these two basins. All the water from the parking lot is channeled into these grass-lined swales. The quality improvement of the water is monitored visually by looking at what is coming out of the discharge base. They do not plan to plant cattails but they do have recommendations for different kinds of groundcover within the basins. Cross said that he will go over the drainage plan and prepare his comments

Pat Brodrick asked when they will receive approval of the Special Permit and Hickey said that New York State DOT has called for additional information which will first need to be supplied.

Hickey also said that there is an existing condition which needs to be corrected first. A left turn light needs to be added for the south bound lane on the bridge as this intersection is failing now. Another issue is the intersection of Graham Road and North Triphammer which is also failing and where a traffic light is needed. Certificate of Occupancy would not be issued until such lights were installed and operable. Marcus clarified that when it is a certainty that these changes (Tops light, Graham Road light and the N. Triphammer Road left turn light) are going to be made, a building permit can be issued. The second step, operability, would have to be achieved before the Certificate of Occupancy is issued. The new traffic light needs to be place and operating at least a short time before the store opens to get the public educated. Marcus asked if the light at Graham Road could be established at this point given the uncertainty of when the N. Triphammer Road will occur. Dave Herrick, of T.G. Miller, confirmed that it could.

Eric Goetzmann from Pyramid Company responded to the traffic studies. He said that whenever you look at traffic use it is recommended that actual data be used when available rather than relying on the random samples from across the country which are used in ITE formulas. He suggested that the traffic projections using ITE formulas are significantly higher than they are when using real data. He said that 94% of the patrons will come to this center from within a 20-mile radius, because outside of that radius people have the opportunity to go to Elmira, Binghamton or Syracuse.

## **Adjourn**

Klepack moved to adjourn at 10:15. Seconded by Waterman. All in favor.

