

Village of Skaneateles Planning Board Public Hearing June 6, 2013

Informational presentation by QPK Architects regarding site improvements underway at the new Village Hall, 26 Fennell Street, and future potential improvements.

Present: Bruce Kenan, Chairman
William Eberhardt, Member
Mark Roney, Member
Carol Stokes-Cawley, Member
Douglas Sutherland, Member

Riccardo Galbato, Attorney for the Planning Board
Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Planning Board

Constance Brace, QPK, Skaneateles
Jeremy Davidheiser, QPK, Syracuse

Mary Sennett, Village Trustee
Bob Lotkowitz, Director of Municipal Operations
Robert Greene, Skaneateles
Robert Eggleston, Skaneateles

Chairman Kenan opened the informational presentation for the Village Hall at 8:11 pm. Ms. Brace introduced herself and Mr. Davidheiser. She explained that the Trustees and Steering Committee were interested in the Planning Board's input about the proposed future of the site. She commented that she felt the plans were consistent with the unadopted master plan for Fennell Street that was done some years ago. The presentation will begin with the overall concept for the development of the site and then specifically address the work currently underway.

Mr. Davidheiser oriented the board to the site plan, explaining that the current site is a "wide-open expanse of blacktop." The long-term plan proposes a major pedestrian connection up the middle of the site to encourage pedestrian movement from the main sidewalk along Fennell Street. The center would include curbed islands incorporating storm water management, which could be used as a display for options in the treatment of storm water. The concept maintains the same number of parking stalls as are currently on the site.

He continued, explaining that the traffic pattern is being changed to a loop, with one entrance lane and one exit lane, separated by an island that serves to protect the utility pole sitting in the current entrance. The traffic will transition to two-way around the building. Pedestrians will have a defined route across the site, with a ramped connection to the adjacent Tops parking lot.

The central pedestrian connection would be heavily planted in order to use bio-retention to reduce the amount of water being directed to the storm sewer. Since ultimately the existing parking lot will have to be dug up for resurfacing, the opportunity to grade the site inward appropriately is there. Mr. Davidheiser noted that while there would be curbing on the perimeter to provide some pedestrian protection on the corners, the remainder would be 'drop curb' or flush, which protects the edge but allows water to flow over it. Chairman Kenan asked about the material for the pathway. Mr. Davidheiser noted that at the Fennell Street entrance the plan is to continue the Village's preferred concrete sidewalks across the front of the site with brick accents behind. For the pathway between the sidewalk and the entrance, a porous pavement is proposed, so it is permeable. Lighting incorporated into bollards, is planned along the walkway. The electric service into the building will be underground, coming from a new transformer located at the east property line.

The utility pole on Fennell Street that bisects the entry today is to be retained. Member Stokes-Cawley asked if some of the features proposed for the site contribute to the LEED status. Mr. Davidheiser acknowledged that was true, and that the site plan incorporated elements designed to improve the Village's score on LEED qualifications, such as no increase in the number of parking spaces, use of native plant species and the like. Member Roney asked about the retention of the SAVES/Police building. Ms. Brace explained, since the Village is moving into a smaller space, that the retained building may be used for temporary storage, and garaging for police vehicles.

Ms. Brace went on to explain that the remainder of the site plan is somewhat dependent upon the tenant for the former apparatus bays. This could affect the ultimate design for both the back and front sections of this portion of the site. She noted that there is a new entrance addition being built for the building that has a canopy that curves back. This treatment brings the image and identification of the Village Hall toward the street. The building exterior is being painted and a wood cladding product is being installed in some sections. The vestibule punches forward and the existing covered walkway from the east side of the building is retained but enhanced with a 'green screen' in front of it. That is part of a rain garden component that will be incorporated into the front of the building under the current contract -- part of an initial phase of storm water management. There is no curbing going in as part of the first phase.

The second phase, which the Village would like to immediately pursue, is to use both Village DPW employees and assigned contractors. At the edges of the parking lot, with the lighting directed inward, larger light poles are planned, though the final fixture design and specification has not yet been determined, but will take into account the current Village standards. These will be placed during the second phase, and will utilize LED fixtures for reduced energy need. The light will be managed through cut-offs so that none of the light spills beyond the property. The central island work will wait until a later phase. The second phase will include the curbing that runs along the building as well as the curbing out at the main entrance, which will be reconfigured for one-way-in and one-way-out. The parking lot will probably be restriped and the central walkway will be striped.

Member Sutherland asked, "Are you really in a position where you can, not do the parking area now, and come back after it is fully occupied and do a lot of the deep excavation then? It seems

like something that should happen before people move in and have to drive around..." Ms. Brace suggested that there was reluctance on the Village's part about doing too much before the tenant issue is understood and is also considering what to do about reclaiming part of the east portion back to the actual property line. She further explained that the Village would be moving in July, before any of this site work is done. Even the first phase will have to be managed to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian access.

DMO Lotkowitz explained that even in the first phase, QPK will be laying out a design that incorporates the curbs and proper heights, so that when the final grading is done it will be in place and no further disturbance of the perimeter area will be necessary. He said, "We don't know who that tenant is going to be nor their requirements for parking in the front of the building. That's the hesitation." While the village would like to fully develop the phase 2 or phase 3 plan, we don't have the information yet.

Chairman Kenan said, "I don't understand the issue. You have all the land you have got and you're going to provide parking on it. What difference does it make who the tenant is? I don't see how you could develop the front differently from what you have here regardless of who the tenant is." Member Stokes-Cawley said, "It seems to be that if you are going to start digging up the pavement, you'd want to do it all at once, not two times. Especially the difference between Phase 2 and Phase 3. It seems like you are going to dig up parts of it and then come back and dig up more parts of it. It ends up being more expensive in the long run." Member Sutherland agreed, "You'd have to mobilize twice; it seems like it's not the best way to do it." Chairman Kenan, "Unless you're delaying for cash flow reasons. That would be a different issue. Otherwise I think you'd want to get it done before you move in." Member Eberhardt, "Bob, I don't see that changing with different tenants." Ms. Brace thought that only the back would really change; it's a comfort level for the Village Trustees, who prefer to take it one step at a time.

Ms. Brace indicated that she would welcome comments on the master plan, indicating that she will certainly take back a recommendation to the Village Board in terms of doing more now, but would like to know if there are concerns with proceeding toward this end. DMO Lotkowitz echoed this approach. Member Eberhardt asked, "Is there a financial reason not to do that now?" Ms. Brace said, "There might be." Chairman Kenan said, "That's a different subject, then. But absent that, I'd sure want to get it done before you moved in. Well, thank you."

Ms. Brace asked Mr. Davidheiser to point out the wheelchair accessible parking – one would be in front for the tenant and two would be on the east side for the Village Hall, while open access to the mail drop is preserved. Chairman Kenan asked what happened to the proposal that there be electric vehicle charging stations. DMO Lotkowitz indicated that the proposed location is the municipal lot, but that was scrubbed. NYSERDA has asked if three charging stations might be provided in the new lot. The solar system will help during the day. The northeast corner of the parking area is under consideration as a location. Chairman Kenan observed that people park in them regardless because they don't know what they are – based on his experience with those at Destiny USA. Ms. Brace thanked the Board and said that she would take the Planning Board's comments back to the committee.

This matter was concluded at 8:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Boards