

VILLAGE OF CROTON ON HUDSON, NEW YORK
PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES – TUESDAY, January 10, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Luntz, Chairman
 Mark Aarons
 Fran Allen
 Bruce Kauderer
 Steven Krisky

ALSO PRESENT: Daniel O'Connor, Village Engineer

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 8:05 p.m. by Chairman Luntz.

2. PUBLIC HEARING

a) Steel Style Properties, LLC -- 50 Half Moon Bay Drive (Sec. 78.16 Blk. 1 Lot 3) -- Application for an Amended Site Plan, Wetlands Activity Permit, and Steep Slopes permit for new single-family dwelling.

Public hearing has been adjourned until the next meeting. The applicant will be going to the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting on Wednesday, January 11, 2012.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a) Community Markets – 20-40 Maple Street [former Blockbuster Store] (Sec. 79.09 – 1 – 77) – Referral from Village Board for a special permit for indoor farmers market.

Miriam Haas, director of Community Markets and John Zeltsman, also of Community Markets were present to discuss this application. Ms. Haas stated that they had been holding farmers markets at the Briarcliff Congregational Church but were told they could no longer be at this location.

This past Saturday they held the farmers market at an outdoor location in Parking Lot A at the Croton Harmon train station but in the meantime, they want to set up a seasonal indoor farmers market during the months of February through May 2012. The former Blockbuster store site was an option because it is 3000 sq. feet and has no stairs. Community Markets is looking for a permanent site, and it is unlikely that the former Blockbuster store would be a permanent site. However, since it is only one day a week and the former Blockbuster site has no prospects at the present, the owners have been relatively flexible about leasing space to Community Markets. Community Markets would welcome a more permanent site in Croton.

They have looked at Palladino's site, and the former Wondrous Things location. Palladino's site needed work and is located in the Gateway area in which farmers markets are not allowable. Ms. Haas had contacted the owner of the property where Wondrous Things had been, but the price is out of their range. Also, many places do not want to rent just for one day a week.

Chairman Luntz and Mr. Kauderer expressed concerns about how busy the parking lot is on a Saturday morning-- the day the farmers market would take place. Mr. Zeltsman stated that the first two hours of the farmers market are busy, but based on observing the Briarcliff market, the number of customers levels off as the day progresses. He acknowledged that the 11:00 to noon hour is probably the most heavily attended.

Mr. Kauderer stated that he thought a farmers market is a good idea however it is already difficult to find a parking spot on a Saturday without the farmers market. Mr. Kauderer stated that beyond the parking issues, he was very concerned about the impact on Zeytinia's. He stated that Zeytinia has been a big boon to the community and although he is not against competition, it does not seem fair to Zeytinia's to have another market open in direct competition with them. He referred to Section 230-58 of the Village Code that refers to the "compatibility of the location, size and character of the proposed use ...and with that of adjacent properties." He believes the farmers market has an effect on other adjacent businesses.

Mr. Krisky stated that he thought many people would frequent other stores in addition to the farmers market. He stated that the two markets had different constituencies and customers did not get the same product at each market. From his point of view, he would rather have the inconvenience of parking than to give up on the farmers market. Parking was difficult but not insurmountable. Mr. Krisky stated that he would like to make the farmers market work even if it was on a trial basis. He suggested that perhaps the Village could have a way out of the market if the parking was a disaster, but he did not believe this would be the case.

The Village Engineer stated that Zeytinia's does not have an exclusive clause in its lease to sell produce, but in speaking with the owner of Van Wyck 1 (VW1) about the proposed farmers market, the owner said he was concerned about parking and possible business impacts on Zeytinia's due to the competition. The owner would be speaking to the manager of Zeytinia about the proposal. The owner would be notified of date of the public hearing.

Mr. Zeltsman stated that he has found that having a group of stores together usually generates more sales and brings in more customers. He would be willing to do some cross promotion to have customers explore other stores in the shopping center.

Chairman Luntz stated that he thinks the market will be competitive with Zeytinia's since Saturday is probably their busiest day. Both Mr. Kauderer and Chairman Luntz stated they would be concerned if businesses were hurt by the arrival of a farmers market.

There was extensive discussion about parking and traffic analyses for the proposed special permit. The applicant provided an analysis that showed the number of vacant parking spaces in Van Wyck 2 Shopping Plaza (VW2) and Van Wyck 1 Shopping Plaza (VW1) parking lots over a time period of four hours on a recent Saturday. There was also a discussion regarding potential parking spaces that might be available in the adjacent lot of Croton Commons and spaces along South Riverside Avenue (17 spaces) and the possibility of off-site parking for vendors in the municipal lot (summer farmers market site).

The Planning Board reviewed other possible locations, days, and hours for the proposed farmers market but all alternatives were problematic.

Chairman Luntz recommended that the applicant seek consensus from other owners and tenants about the farmers market and potential shared parking..

Although Ms. Allen acknowledged there was a parking problem in the village, she stated she thought an indoors farmers market would be a great idea to get started in Croton, and she would like to see a way to support this venture for a few hours on a Saturday morning.

There was consensus among the Planning Board members that the Board liked the idea of an indoors farmers market and if other tenants were open to the farmers market, the village should grant the special permit for the farmers market at this location.

Mr. Aarons made a motion to move that the Planning Board recommend to the Village Board to grant the applicant a special permit for an indoors farmer market recognizing that other properties will be needed for parking and the possible impact on other local businesses. Therefore the applicants need to seek consensus from other owners and tenants regarding the farmers market's location. He also recommended that the vendors of the farmers market use the Village property on Municipal Place to park their cars. Mr. Krisky seconded the motion. The vote carried 3-2, with Ms. Allen and Mr. Kauderer opposed for the reasons as follows.

Mr. Kauderer opposed the motion because he believes that the parking is legally and practically not adequate and the farmers market should not be allowed without the consent of adjoining property owners and tenants.

Ms. Allen opposed the motion because she believed that this recommendation carries a stigma with it that the space is not usable because of the limited parking and therefore would doom the building from any kind of use.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Aarons made a motion to approve the minutes of Tuesday, November 22, 2011, seconded by Mr. Kauderer, and carried by a vote of 5-0, all in favor.

Ms. Allen made a motion to approve the minutes of Tuesday, December 13, 2011, seconded by Mr. Aarons, and carried by a vote of 5-0, all in favor.

5. ADJOURMENT

There being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was duly adjourned at 10:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronnie Rose
Planning Board Secretary