

Taconic Valley & Central County

Amazon Concerns ... Continued from page 1

Steve Hart discussed setting up approximately 8 acres of the property as conservation land and 30 percent of the 25-acre project for green space.

Neighbors attending the public hearing were appreciative that land had been "addressed properly" for conservation purposes. The project is now awaiting an engineering review. The second public hearing of the night focused on Scannell Properties' proposed distribution center. The presenter from MacFarland-Johnson reviewed the updated plans with the Board noting alterations in lighting, landscaping and improvements in the noise wall. The Board questioned him on courses of action residents could take about noise complaints. He stated that the Town Code Enforcement Officer would need to investigate. If there was merit to the complaint, it should then be reported to Amazon and the facility owner to "take into consideration" for corrective action. He stated that alterations in the traffic flow at the facility "will not work" because of sight lines, but "we plan to meet with DOT" to analyze the issue more closely to see if there is an alternative possibility. The acting Chairperson for the Board said he wanted the Town Engineer and Board members to be involved in that meeting because it is a "critical factor" and would like to see if the possibility of acceleration lanes or speed reduction would assist in "avoiding conflict."

One member of the Board who does landscaping for a living wanted to "pay special attention" to the plant choices, varieties and sizes Amazon chooses to install on the properties since landscaping choices assist with sound control. She noted that many of the choices made on the first Amazon site did not grow well in this zone, and she was planning to "rattle the cage" on this topic because she is concerned for the residents and the impact on nature in the area.

Several members of the public voiced concerns about the differences between the two facilities. Many questioned how a truck terminal and a "middle mile" facility could be classified as the same type of facility. Residents complained about being told one thing, and then something else occurring at the facility. One woman presented 26 letters to the Board requesting a denial of the application.

The attorney retained by the Birchwood Association noted that impacts on traffic would need more analysis in "closer detail" because there will be health, safety and welfare concerns. Approximately 90% of the trucks will be heading toward exit 11, and 40 trucks an hour at peak will be exiting the proposed facility. He also voiced concern about traffic between the facilities. He begged the Board not to "rely on the applicant's promises" but have the Board include a list of mitigation measures be placed in the resolutions.

One final resident discussed concerns about the acoustical study, believing that there was "no meaningful analysis" and it contains assumptions. He noted that HVAC systems, backup alarms and ambient sound levels cause more issues than are described in the studies.

The Board closed the public hearing and requested that the presenter prepare a response to the list of concerns for the June 21 meeting. The Board plans to meet with the applicant's team to vet the discussed issues.

BRUNSWICK

What Should A Tool Store Look Like?

by Doug La Rocque

Harbor Freight has officially filed for a site plan approval as well as a minor subdivision for property located on Hoosick Road (NYS Route 7) between the current Ace Hardware and BMW Motorcycle. The building's storefront will actually face west with a side of the building fronting Hoosick Road. The plans call for that side to be battleship grey with a red marking, and after some initial comments from Board members, some window facades as well. The company's representative indicated to the planners that those are their corporate colors, and something they would like to keep. Several members were still uncomfortable, indicating it would create a out of character look.

The Board normally would be somewhat constrained in dictating just what a building might look like, but not in this case. The property in question was part of a 2010-11 Planned Development District, which specifically gives the Planning Board the authority over architectural design. The color of the building as such will become the subject of further discussion between the planners and Harbor Freight.

All other items on the agenda were adjourned without action.

Following the conclusion of regular business, Board Chair Russ Oster brought forth the idea of an architectural design committee for the town, for such cases where the design might be in question and the board does not have the authority such as it does with Harbor Freight. He indicated such architectural design authority would be specific, such as in commercial corridors and not town wide. Members of the Board seemed to be open to the idea, but the authority to create such a committee would lie with the Town Board, not the planners. The members agreed to discuss chairman Oster's suggestion and its ramifications at a future meeting.

NEWS AND NOTES

Vaccination Clinics

The Berlin Central School District and the Rensselaer County Department of Health will hold two COVID-19 vaccination clinics in the parking lot of the Berlin MS/HS. The first is Wednesday June 16, with the second dose clinic on Thursday, July 8. Both clinics run from 3 to 7 pm.

The vaccine is available to anyone 12 years of age or older. A parent or guardian must accompany anyone under the age of 18 to provide consent.

Individuals receiving the first dose on June 16 will be signed up at that time for the second dose clinic.

Godspell – Presented Outside

The Berlin High School Dramateers will present a Senior Musical "Godspell" outside on the lower soccer field starting Thursday, June 10 through Sunday, June 13. All performances will be at 6 pm. The musical is based on the book by John-Michael Tebelak and music by Stephen Schwartz.

Adult tickets are \$5 and students \$3. All tickets must be ordered in advance as there is a limit of 200 per show. For tickets and more information, please email Dawn Demick at ddpdcd3@gmail.com. Please bring your own lawn chairs/blankets. Upon arrival, guests are asked to proceed to the check-in table for temperature check and health screenings.

Open Mic At PVMCC

The Petersburg Veterans Memorial Community Center will resume Open Mic night on Friday, June 11 at 6 pm. If the weather cooperates it will be held outside in the parking lot, otherwise it will be inside. Bring a picnic supper if you wish. Chairs and tables will be available for your use or you can bring a blanket and sit on the town hall lawn. Call Dave McNally at 613-678-8918 or just show up for an opportunity to play or enjoy the music.

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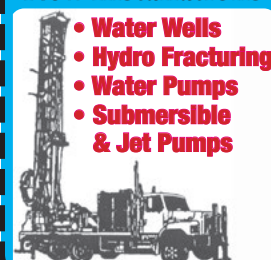
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