

TOWN OF GHENT PLANNING BOARD
Joint Meeting with
TOWN OF CLAVERACK PLANNING BOARD
Meeting Minutes
March 26, 2014

Ghent Planning Board Members Present: Geoff French, Aaron Groom, Larry Machiz, Gary Ocean, Dana Rosenstreich, Martin Silver and Jonathan Walters, Chair.

Ghent, Others: Ray Jurkowski, Engineer; Mike Benvenuto, Town Supervisor; Mallory Mort, Town Board member.

Claverack Planning Board Members Present: Virginia Ambrose; Nathan Chess; Scott Cole; Rick Gerlach; Brian Goodrich, Chair; Judith Zink.

Claverack, Others: Jeff Baker, Attorney; Kip Weigelt, Town Supervisor; and Katy Cashen, Town Board member.

Ginsberg's

Application for Site Plan Review
Tax Parcel ID#

Present on behalf of applicant: Brandee Nelson, Crawford & Associates; John Brusie, Ginsberg's; and Lois Kelly and Mark Moore, CMC Design Build.

Motion made by Claverack Chair Goodrich, seconded by Claverack member Zink to approve minutes from February 19, 2014 minutes. Both boards – unanimously approved.

To open the meeting Claverack attorney Jeff Baker asked for clarity on who he is representing. After a brief conversation it was determined that, essentially, he is representing both Ghent and Claverack.

Ms. Nelson started presentation with a history of this application: Ginsberg's would like to build a new 300,000 sq. ft. facility. At full build-out, this will replace the current Route 66 facility. The new site is zoned as business/commercial and commercial/industrial in the Towns of Ghent and Claverack. The first phase of construction would be a 65,000 sq. ft. freezer. The old site no longer meets Ginsberg's needs. The applicant would like to consolidate all of their business on one site. A height variance will be needed. The Town of Ghent and the Town of Claverack will both require a set-back variance. Neither variance can be obtained from the ZBA of each town until SEQRA is completed before these Planning Boards. Central sewer and water are available on this new site. NYSDOT entrance will be off of Route 66. A traffic study has been completed. Moving traffic north of the Route 9H and Route 66 traffic light eases traffic on both sides of the intersection. NYSDOT has asked for more traffic analysis to help determine if a turn lane will be needed. Ingress and egress points have been agreed on by Ginsberg's and the NYSDOT.

Applicant is not anticipating a traffic light will be needed at this new intersection. Right before the last meeting, a letter from Ghent Engineer Ray Jurkowski was sent to applicant with a list of concerns and areas that needed to be addressed.

Ms. Nelson showed a drawing with new landscaping plan. Explained that the new building will be approximately 55' high, while the current building is approximately 44' high. Explained that construction will necessitate two phases for landscape plantings. There is a space between the building and proposed trees for a fire access road. Phase 2 trees can't be planted right away because of drainage and access issues for equipment needed during construction and fear of damage to trees planted.

Ghent member Ocean asked applicant to consider planting all trees right away in case Phase II does not happen, and/or they would be fairly easy to relocate until the completion of Phase II.

Passed around a sample of the proposed siding showing the color of the new building. Sandstone is the color they would like to use – lighter than white and should blend in to the landscape and sky line when seen from a distance.

Claverack member Chess displayed a web site on his laptop which showed alternative colors which are available for exterior insulating panels.

The west side of the building (Route 66 side) – trying to make as attractive as possible. Removed 75 parking spots on the west side. This enables trees to be planted near the top of the slope, affording more concealment of the building's mass.

Ghent member Groom asked if there will be entrances on the west side.

Ms. Nelson answered that there will only be fire access doors. Lighting changes have been made as well – all outside lighting on and along the west side have been dropped from the plan, with the exception of a motion controlled light directly over each exit door. Poles have been lowered and fewer lights have been proposed. A mixture of conifer trees are proposed.

Ghent member French asked if the Route 66 side is for Phase 1 trees.

Ms. Nelson answered yes.

French stated that these trees should grow fairly quickly and will help visibility issues during Phase 2 of construction.

Ghent member Ocean stated he likes the choices and variety of trees. He would ask for a mixture of sizes so the look is more natural and would ask for bigger starting sizes than has been proposed.

Claverack Chair Goodrich asked to what height the proposed trees usually grow.

Ms. Nelson answered that the mixture of conifers will vary in height, but some will potentially reach 100 feet.

Ms. Nelson continued her presentation, and stated that because they have dropped 75 parking spaces, the applicant may come back at some future time to ask for more parking if it becomes needed.

Ghent member French asked what is proposed in the west side space where the 75 parking spaces were removed.

Ms. Nelson answered that on the fire access road will be located on the west side. The fire access road is 26' wide.

Discussion of using pipes from the water main on the other side of Route 66. Hydrants will be put in also. All pipes will be buried at least 5 ½ to 6 feet below ground level.

Ghent member Machiz asked why if the water line is going in as part of Phase I and if the trees are being located above the water line, which obviously can't be disturbed during construction, why can't the Phase II trees be planted during Phase I of construction.

Ms. Nelson answered that additional drainage work would most likely disturb trees planted close by, but she agreed to look again at the possibility of installing the Phase II trees as part of Phase I.

Ghent member French asked where the 75 extra parking spots would go.

Ms. Nelson answered that there is room for more, but for now the applicant will do without.

Claverack member Chess asked how parking will be affected if the Ryder facility moves to this location and asked if there will be enough room for all of the trucks.

Mr. Brusie answered that there is adequate space for all of the Ginsberg's trucks. Currently, Ginsberg's rents parking spots across the street at the Ryder facility.

Claverack member Chess asked how many trucks Ginsberg's has.

Mr. Brusie answered that Ginsberg's owns about 120 trucks and trailers combined.

Claverack member Chess asked how many could be expected at maximum growth.

Mr. Brusie answered approximately 100 trucks and 150 trailers.

Claverack member Gerlach asked how many loading docks would be at the new location.

Ms. Nelson answered that there will be about 20 at the back of the building.

Ghent member Ocean asked how many employees Ginsberg's would have at full build out.

Mr. Brusie answered that it could vary, but anticipates 250-400. Current employee total is approximately 250. 30% of the workforce are sales reps who are always on the road. There are approximately 30-40 people who work overnight.

Ms. Nelson stated that Ginsberg's employees work three shifts. The overnight shift loads the trucks. There is office staff on site during the day. Most drivers start their day around 5am.

Mr. Brusie stated that the current proposed parking is designed for maximum anticipated parking that will be needed. The numbers vary a little, but they hope no need even more in the future, depending upon business growth.

Lighting – applicant is working with a lighting consultant. They are planning to use a majority of LED lights. All lighting will be dark sky approved. Entrance will be illuminated for safety reasons. Poles need to be 20’ high because of truck heights. They plan to use motion sensitive lights where possible.

Ghent Chair Walters asked how many total outside lights are in the plans.

Ms. Nelson answered 102 total exterior lights at full build out.

Ghent member Ocean asked how many light poles would be on the property.

Ms. Nelson answered 78.

Ghent chair Walters stated that the fewest lights needed is encouraged. Members of both the Ghent and Claverack Planning Boards recently met with internationally known lighting expert Howard Brandston in Claverack to discuss the applicant’s proposed lighting plan. Mr. Brandston said that most sites are over-lit. Chair Walters stated that cutting back the number of lights would also help cut costs.

Ghent member Ocean stated that Ms. Brandston thought proposed plan was designed for a shopping center and thinks there are too many lights. Mr. Brandston thinks 10’ lighting poles can be used, even though there will be large trucks on site.

Ghent chair Walters passed on lighting recommendations received from Mr. Brandston. Mr. Walters provided Crawford & Associates with a copy of the alternative diagram drawn by Howard Brandston, and they agreed to meet to meet with Mr. Brandston to discuss. The applicant will review Mr. Brandston’s recommendations and will incorporate it to the fullest extent possible.

Claverack member Gerlach said that loading dock standards require certain lighting plans.

Claverack chair Goodrich asked if front parking lot lighting could be reduced if it is not being used all night.

Mr. Moore answered that they are in agreement to cut back on lighting as much as possible.

Ghent engineer Jurkowski stated that the County is looking at using a higher water tower – probably 118’ high.

Claverack chair Goodrich asked about the location of the tower.

Ms. Nelson showed tower location on drawings. The 118' tower has been recommended and will help with the entire water district. This district has pressure problems, so this high tower will help the entire district with fire protection.

Ghent chair Walters would like to renderings that show full build out of this site, including the water tower.

Ghent engineer Jurkowski described the line of sight from near Gahbauer Road. From that view, there is an almost 100' high hill in back and a wooded hilltop behind.

Ghent chair Walters asked if a balloon test would be done on this site.

Ghent engineer Jurkowski asked if a balloon test would satisfy everyone.

Ghent member French recommended two (2) balloons in front and one (1) for water tower.

Claverack chair Goodrich asked if the view from Gahbauer Road could be shown in a drawing.

Claverack member Chess stated that a balloon test is not sufficient. Would like a Google type photo – that shows all heights and is in full color.

Claverack chair Goodrich asked what would happen if someone didn't like the picture.

Ghent chair Walters stated that he would like the truest view of the site as possible.

Claverack Chair Goodrich asked if the balloon test would be made public (newspaper) and Ms. Nelson answered that it would not be.

Both board voted on the issue of doing a balloon test or a full color visual. Voting results:

Balloon: Silver, Ocean, French, Ambrose, Cole, Gerlach, Zink, Goodrich, Walters

Visual: Machiz, Ocean, Chess

Balloon test wins.

Mr. Brusie asked why this was not discussed previously.

Ghent chair Walters stated that the visual impact is a major part of the SEQRA process. Attorney Jeff Baker concurred, noting that under SEQR the board is compelled to take a "hard look" at impacts, and visual impacts is one of the key issues related to this project.

Ghent chair Walters stated that this applicant has asked if a public hearing can be scheduled. Stated that Ghent usually moves to public hearing sooner rather than later to get as much information from the public as possible, as early as possible. Asked if the Claverack board would agree with that process. Stated that balloon testing would need to be completed before SEQRA process can begin.

Ms. Nelson stated that balloon testing would be dependent on the weather, but hopes they could have that completed within one (1) to two (2) weeks.

Ghent engineer Jurkowski asked for photo documentation of balloon tests.

Ghent member Groom asked that balloon test photos be taken from all angles/views.

Ms. Nelson agreed.

Claverack chair Goodrich asked if the applicant will need a variance for a 118' high water tower.

Ms. Nelson answered that she wasn't sure, but stated that the tower is necessary for the entire water district.

Ghent member Groom asked how noise and odor for additional phases of construction will impact neighbors, in particular, the nursing home.

Ms. Nelson answered that the nursing home and this site are approximately 1,000' apart. There are woods in between the two (2) sites that will act as buffers.

Mr. Groom stated that construction generates noise.

Ms. Nelson stated that construction hours would be fairly limited. They do not do construction on Sundays or holidays. All construction is temporary. It is estimated that 98% of the trucks leaving this site will make a left hand turn out of the facility, so that noise shall be farther away from the nursing home, and the majority of the trucks will not pass in front of the nursing home.

Ghent member French asked if the applicant has a site chosen for earth being removed from this site.

Ms. Nelson answered that no site has been determined yet.

Mr. French stated that choice of site of will affect direction trucks drive, which could affect noise in front of nursing home.

Estimated earth to be removed from this site: 180,000 yards of material. Phase 1 – approximately 140,000 yards and Phase 2, approximately 40,000 yards. This is approximately 6,000 single trips all together.

Excavation will be done as quickly as possible. Will be done concurrent with construction. Anticipate that construction and excavation for Phase 1 will take approximately eight (8) months.

Ghent member Silver asked if sound testing has been done for neighbors.

Ms. Nelson answered that sound testing has been done for chillers and compressors that will be on the site. Stated that no trucks will idle on the site.

Claverack chair Goodrich asked who is the operator of the maintenance garage.

Ms. Nelson answered that Ginsberg's will own the garage, but Ryder will lease the space. There are four (4) bays total – three (3) to be used and one (1) to be used as office space.

Attorney Baker asked if there will be other trucks on this site.

Mr. Brusie answered that there will be no Ryder signage on this site. Ryder performs maintenance on Ginsberg trucks only. They are a contractor and can be fired if Ginsberg's becomes unhappy with their service.

Claverack member Gerlach stated that a special condition could be to set the number of trucks other than Ginsberg's that can be serviced on this site. Mr. Baker agreed.

There will be a 10,000 gal. diesel storage on site and less than 10,000 gal of ammonia within the plant systems. Mr. Moore stated that no extra ammonia will be stored on this site.

Ms. Nelson showed a colored rendering of the sign that will be by Route 66.

Ghent member Groom asked if there had been any feedback from the Claverack Task Force re: fire protection.

Ms. Nelson answered that Mr. Brusie has been speaking with the Claverack Task Force and that she had passed information on to the West Ghent Fire Department.

Claverack member Cole stated that there will be a meeting held to discuss this on April 7 at the Mellenville Fire Department beginning at 6:30 pm.

Ms. Nelson stated that this building will require a sprinkler system and stated that there are very few refrigerant systems available to use.

Claverack member Chess discussed OSHA guidelines.

Mr. Moore stated that this facility falls below OSHA guidelines. Stated that training will be completed before building starts and an evacuation plan will be put in place.

Ms. Nelson asked the board for their best guess on when SEQRA could be completed.

Ghent chair Walters stated that he likes the amount of progress shown in this application so far. He will discuss this further with Mr. Goodrich and Mr. Jurkowski and will get an answer.

Ghent engineer stated that having the balloon testing completed before the next meeting would be ideal.

Ghent member Machiz looks forward to seeing what applicant can do with lighting recommendations from Mr. Brandston.

Ms. Nelson and Mr. Brusie FOIL requested NYSDOT info on accident data – this could cause delays, depending on how quickly NYSDOT responds.

Ms. Nelson stated that a traffic study of this site has been completed. Turning radius of trucks was taken into consideration. Applicant would like a turning lane to get trucks out of the traffic flow, but that would be up to NYSDOT.

Applicant was informed that a lighting plan and balloon testing need to be completed before a public hearing can be scheduled.

Ghent engineer Jurkowski will be working on a rough draft if SEQRA long from part 2 and narratives.

Claverack member Gerlach asked if there will be elevation drawings presented for the maintenance area at this site.

Ms. Nelson agreed to prepare and present such drawings.

Applicant also agreed to meet with lighting consultant Howard Brandston to discuss both lighting and building color.

Next meeting will be held April 9 at the Ghent Town Hall beginning at 7pm.

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