



Kenneth Kovalchik <kovalchikk@togny.org>

Comment on the DEIS for the proposed development by Pyramid corporation on Rapp Road and surrounding area to build apartments, a Costco plus very large parkinglot and gas station while destroying 46 acres of the Pinebush.

1 message

Mickie Lynn <mesola@earthlink.net>
To: Kovalchikk@togny.org

Mon, May 25, 2020 at 9:04 AM

Dear Kenneth Kovalchik, Guilderland Town Planner,

As a resident of the Capital District since 1982, and a retired environmental educator I'm writing to share my opinion that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed development by Pyramid (Crossgates) on Rapp Road, the Mall Road and Western Avenue to build up to 360 Apartments with up to 3 *five-story apartment buildings, up to 50,000 sq ft of office space and up to 278,900 sq ft commercial expansive retail including a Costco with a 700 car parking lot and a 18 pump gas station* must be rejected because the following *environmental and social effects* have not been adequately addressed: ****{and please note that I've written a couple of paragraphs about the important changes created by the *Novel Coronavirus pandemic***}**

The Pine Bush borders the Crossgates expansion. The Albany Pine Bush is considered the best *example of an inland pine barrens ecosystem in the world*. The Pine Bush contains 78 wildlife Species of *Greatest Conservation Need*, including the federal and state-endangered Karner blue butterfly) and state-threatened frosted elfin butterfly, and the largest inland sand dune system in eastern North America.

The site has been designated a National *Natural Landmark, a National Heritage Area Site, a NYS Bird Conservation Area and a National Audubon Society Important Bird Area*. Appendices F and G in the DEIS are inadequate to evaluate the impact of the proposed development on the plant and animal species in the Pine Bush.

The Pine Bush habitat is threatened by the expansion of this crassly commercial venture, whether it is adjacent to the construction or a few hundred feet away. These species are important not only to the Pine Bush, but to the local ecosystem as well. The *cumulative impact of this development* plus other proposals on the Pine Bush is not adequately addressed.

****In addition to these *limitations of analysis* of environmental effects on the Pinebush ecosystem and its inhabitants -- there is another recent and important crisis facing our communities, and our whole national and world health systems. *That's the Covid-19 pandemic*. It seems as if the virus will most likely be with us well into the future. Or perhaps**

forever if its spread can't be contained sufficiently. In the face of this mortal threat to the human population of the world we are already in the process of drastically changing our ways of living and interacting while trying to re-open our economic and social spheres in a new and more healthy way. As our Governor has said: "*We need to build back better.*" Surely this *isn't the time* to develop a very large project; modeled on what is now becoming an old way of living and engaging in commerce, land use, and use of fossil fuels.

****Why in the world would we need large, densely populated apartment buildings, another gas station, yet another *big box store* and other dinosaurs of an era that really needs to be redesigned, reimagined, and created for more health and environmental safety...including mitigation of the Climate crisis that threatens our entire Planet?**

The world is experiencing the sixth major extinction and we have already lost and are losing vital species. The mitigation measures offered in the DEIS *are inadequate to address the destruction of 46 acres of land*. The proposed development decreases the size of the Pine Bush and the mitigation measures offer no possibility for expanding the habitat. Also some of these species need an *uninterrupted contiguous territory to continue to survive and thrive*. And the humans who gain health and recreational benefits currently have already reduced access to exploring the trails and wild creatures and plants of this *unique and rare ecosystem*. Contrast that to unlimited gas stations, luxury apartment buildings and more than enough big box stores, and parking lots.

As others who have read the entire *Draft Environmental Impact Statement* have said: "*It is woefully incomplete because it does not adequately address the effect this massive development would have on the ecosystem of the Pine Bush, or the effect on plant and animal species.*"

With appreciation to you for reading this comment; and reconsidering this project, *especially in light of our changing social and economic needs during the Coronavirus pandemic,*

Mickie Lynn