



Kenneth Kovalchik <kovalchikk@togny.org>

My letter from the Altamont Enterprise

1 message

Hugh Johnson <239rosewood@gmail.com>
To: Kenneth Kovalchik <kovalchikk@togny.org>

Tue, May 26, 2020 at 4:17 PM

Hi Ken,

I already sent you an email but here is a letter that was printed in the Altamont Enterprise a couple of week back regarding a possible solution to the Costco issue.

I totally oppose the 220+ apartment complex in the Rapp Road side of Crossgates.

Letter below.

Let's
have
Costco
but
without
a new
building

To the
Editor:

In a hurry to get
the Costco
construction
started, the
company that
brought you
Crossgates Mall,
Pyramid, went
ahead and plowed
down a lot of trees
near Lawton
Terrace on the east
side of that mall
during late March

["Protester sits on blade to try to stop tree-cutting for Costco," The Altamont [Enterprise](#), March 27, 2020].

This was done knowing that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, required by state law, had not even been officially reviewed by the town of Guilderland. Steve Wickham, who **chairs the steering committee** of the Guilderland Citizens for Responsible Growth, **was not able** to bring to a halt the operation I **believe to be illegal.. Later that day**, a temporary injunction, issued by the town of Guilderland, has kept any more trees from being taken down for the time being.

Economic growth is often a growing pain. Many do not like seeing it but it does indeed bring jobs and a greater tax base to a community. However, in this case, construction will also invade the precious Pine

Bush, a unique preserved inland pine barren, one of the only 20 in the world.

There had been an understanding that the remainder of the Albany Pine Bush would be left alone. A group called the “Save the Pine Bush” was created as a watchdog team to make sure what was left of the Pine Bush would not get developed. The Guilderland Citizens for Responsible Growth wants to see any growth done in a way that will not negatively impact the town of Guilderland.

To make matters worse, we are currently enduring a pandemic, the likes that we have not seen in over 100 years. The United States has lost as many lives from COVID-19 in a couple of months as we did with the entire Vietnam War, which lasted over a decade! Our booming economy, which many thought was over inflated, like a balloon, has indeed burst as COVID-19

has ravaged many sections of our country.

When we finally claim victory over this nasty virus, it appears likely that many retail stores will not be coming back. JC Penny is one example of one that might not as it is considering filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Even before the pandemic, the Sears retail store went out of business at the Colonie Center and has since been vacant.

Here is an idea. Why not wait until the pandemic is over and see what anchor stores actually vacate at Crossgates? Perhaps, just perhaps, Costco can move into one of these abandoned buildings. Parking should be plentiful and the impact of traffic would be less severe than if it were located in front of the mall, on Western Avenue, near Johnston Road.

The company should *not* proceed with construction during our period of social isolation as an attempt by

the town of
Guilderland to hold
a town board
meeting remotely
has not been
successful. Last but
not least, again,
let's see how much
of Crossgates Mall
comes back to life.

Hugh
Johnson



Kenneth Kovalchik <kovalchikk@togny.org>

Impact on the Environment Comment for DEIS Rapp Road Residential/Western Avenue Mixed Use Redevelopment Projects

1 message

Hugh Johnson <239rosewood@gmail.com>
To: Kovalchikk@togny.org

Mon, May 25, 2020 at 4:33 PM

Attention: Kenneth Kovalchik, Town Planner, Kovalchikk@togny.org

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 including a Costco with a 700 car parking lot and a 18 pump gas station should be rejected because the following are not adequately addressed:

1. 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.

2. The Pine Bush habitat is threatened by the expansion of this 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.

3. The world is experiencing the sixth major extinction. 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.

4. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement 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. Thank you,

5. I am personally OK with waiting to see what abandoned buildings will be available at Crossgates Mall (and there will be some). Then COTSCO could move into one of those buildings and the Town of Guilderland could get their additional tax base without taking land from the Pine Bush.

6. As far as the gas pumps go, WHY not have COTSCO move into the abandoned gas station before the east entrance of Crossgates Mall?

PLEASE do NOT take away any of the Pine Bush.

Thank you

Hugh Johnson
239 Lenox Avenue
Albany NY 12208

Sent from my iPhone