

December 31, 2011—Further comments on Stuyvesant Plaza sign

The adjusted proposal—December 29, 2011—and the other portions of the file contain portions that should be a portion of the comments.

See the papers dated JANUARY 15, 1997----Edward McEwan of Stuyvesant Plaza asking for a variance for a sign. Item 9—“The lighting of the sign will be subtle and tasteful.” Item 10. There will be enough space left under the Fuller Road sign to allow for site distance”. *Site distance is obviously for traffic safety because of the amount of traffic near and in Stuyvesant Plaza. As the brick work for the planters near the signs have become larger and higher over the years, site distance has not become less significant. A question can be raised about whether the expansion of the planters and nearby walls near the Fuller Road sign violates Item 10. As far as I know the Town has not been asked for permission by Stuyvesant as it has changed its walls and planters near the signs.*

There are two maps that I have penciled as **Don 1** and **Don 2**. They are inconsistent. Note that Don 1 contains a section of McKownville property crosshatched “Easement for Parking”—at Stuyvesant Plaza—this is the area being sought by Stuyvesant for parking which the Association has deemed not to be acceptable. It is simply illegal since it is much too near the water and State law does not permit parking areas to be so near that water body. I object to it being shown as a “done deal”. It should be removed from the file by Stuyvesant and the ZBA should note that it is not a valid part of the record. Don 2 does not contain the errors of Don 1.

Page designated **Don 3** contains the phrase “permitted business”----as far as I know the “Christmas carriage ride” is not a permitted business at Stuyvesant Plaza except by temporary permit. Does this mean that temporary activities will be permitted to advertise on the sign, if it is approved? “Special today—happy hour at TGIFs—today—from 4-8pm”—is that what we should be expecting to see?

The requested sign---346sf---is much too large. Stuyvesant Plaza appears in large letters and lighted on the top of Executive Tower, for example. The Plaza and its shops are easily visible from the Northway, from Western and from Fuller. The Town permits 50sf of sign size—a 700 percent variance is excessive.

The requested sign is much too near the sidewalk and bike lane. Pedestrians have to little space for walking near the sign and the bike lane is at best confusing.

But mostly the requested sign is unsafe because of its size and its lighting.

Its size makes it hard for drivers to see the cars lined up that are ready to exit from Stuyvesant and the lined up cars exiting from Stuyvesant have a hard time seeing oncoming traffic.

The proposed lighting is unacceptable for that location—too distracting in a space that is already overcrowded by pedestrians, bicycles riders and cars entering and leaving Stuyvesant-----and for through traffic as well.

No hardship for Stuyvesant has been demonstrated.

The McKownville Improvement Association objects to the proposed sign.

The center panel of the present Western Avenue sign is proposed to be enlarged to 10 feet by 16 feet---from 8 feet by 16 feet----this will be accomplished by lowering the center panel towards the ground by 2 feet. This will interfere with the ability of drivers exiting Stuyvesant to see oncoming traffic.

The opening between the bottom of the new sign and ground would be but 16 inches. The large pillars holding the sign also block visibility for the drivers exiting Stuyvesant as well as the built-up brick work at the base of the present sign.

The Fuller Road intersection is over loaded with traffic—any interference in sight lines will reduce driver safety for both Western Avenue traffic and that exiting Stuyvesant Plaza.

The changing information on the proposed sign is supposed to attract attention and will

divert attention from driving--that is--the proposed sign will make this section of Western Avenue even more dangerous for drivers--and this is in addition to the driving safety problem caused by the reduction in sight lines.

The recent addition of two businesses---TCBY and 5 Guys--in the area has increased left and right hand turns along that stretch of Western Avenue. Moreover the Northway entrance lane which begins near the Stuyvesant Plaza exit means that drivers heading for the Northway will have their attention diverted by the new sign.

The Western Avenue Corridor study for McKownville that was paid for by the Town recognized that McKownville was over developed--the commercial activity in McKownville is enormous--along with Westmere we are the commercial center for Guilderland and beyond---and the McKownville area is quite small----only one square mile for 3,000 people living in about 1,000 homes. The Corridor Study emphasized the need to enhance the residential character of the hamlet.

The proposed sign adds to the commercial appearance of the hamlet, thereby reducing its residential quality--a residential quality that the Town has invested in with several new sidewalks, a new park, zoning enforcement, and improvements to reduce storm water caused flooding—with more improvements slated for the next few years.

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