

Crossgates foes seek to reopen hearings

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GUILDERLAND — Opponents of the \$85 million Crossgates Mall are asking the state Department of Environmental Conservation to reopen environmental hearings on the proposal.

After reviewing new data submitted by the developer, the opponents said in a letter to EnCon, "It is clear that there are substantial and significant issues remaining."

EnCon also received a letter from Carl Walters, Guilderland supervisor, expressing concern about traffic in the eastern section of the town as a result of Crossgates.

Pyramid Crossgates Co., developer of the mall, is awaiting EnCon action on its request for 11 environmental permits. EnCon Commissioner Robert Flacke, unsatisfied with evidence gathered during several months of public hearings, asked the developer for additional information.

Flacke has until April 28 to reconvene public hearings on the proposal, close the record to public comment and render a decision within 60 days, or ask for more information.

Mary C. Phillips, secretary-treasurer of the Concerned Citizens Against Crossgates, said residents should be allowed to cross-examine Crossgates representatives on the new information submitted to Flacke.

Walters said after reviewing traffic plans he is concerned about the impact

of Crossgates traffic on Western Avenue. He said the proposed pattern for traffic to enter the mall from the west "is not acceptable."

"We must do all in our power to ensure that the citizens of Guilderland are properly protected at all times. Western Avenue is the main artery that our people travel. It is, therefore, imperative that the flow of traffic is maintained at no more than its present level," Walters wrote.

Town Board members believe now-discarded proposal for access to the mall from the Northway would "at least avoid infusion on Western Avenue," Walters wrote.

That plan was scrapped by the Department of Transportation because it would conflict with plans to build a new Thruway interchange in the area.

Also opposing traffic plans for the mall, which would include the widening of Western Avenue, was John Shea, attorney for the McKownville Improvement Association.

In a letter to EnCon, Shea said if hearings were reopened, the association would call witnesses who would testify that the widening of Western Avenue would "have a detrimental effect on the safety, health and welfare of the community."

Bruce Kenan, managing partner of the Pyramid Crossgates Co., said he could not comment until he had a chance to read the opponents' submissions.