

Pyramid, Foe Offer Varied Crossgates Traffic Changes

By CARLO WOLFF
Gazette Reporter

GUILDERLAND — An environmental consultant for Pyramid Crossgates Corp. has suggested traffic changes designed to ease concerns over air pollution the proposed Crossgates Mall might generate along Western Avenue.

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But an opponent of the \$85-million mall said yesterday he plans to submit arguments aimed at forcing Pyramid to fundamentally revise its traffic plans. Those arguments will be delivered to the state Department of Environmental Conservation today in order to satisfy a DEC deadline.

DEC Commissioner Robert F. Flacke has given parties to the issue until today to provide information on air quality data. Flacke closed hearings on the mall at the end of last month, and plans to make a decision on 11 environmental permits Pyramid needs by the end of June.

If Pyramid wins the permits, the company will still have to approach the Guilderland Zoning Board of Appeals for special use permits linked to highway setbacks and variances.

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Steven C. Davis, vice president of technical operations for Jason M. Cortell and Associates of Waltham, Mass., wrote Environmental Conservation Commissioner Robert M. Flacke this week that Pyramid could shift its main "traffic queue" from the Schoolhouse Road-Western Avenue intersection east to the Northway exit ramp-Western Avenue intersection, thereby reducing the likelihood of air pollution Pyramid has all along maintained would be minimal.

Pyramid spokesmen have said the air quality data DEC generated were based on readings taken at sites east of the proposed mall. Those sites were atypical of areas near traffic the mall would generate, Pyra-

mid has said.

DEC has acknowledged that even if computations weren't changed, Pyramid could satisfy state air pollution requirements by 1985.

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But Lindsay Childs said yesterday he will argue that DEC has understated the carbon monoxide level along Western, and has ignored bases of the computations generated during Crossgates hearings last summer.

In addition, Concerned Citizens Against Crossgates spokesman Childs said, "I'm going to argue that the calibration factor used by EnCon and the applicant to compute the carbon monoxide level was unrealistically high."

Pyramid's air quality consultant was never able to reconcile a computer model with actual measured data at the site, making the computations Pyramid has supplied DEC unrealistic, Childs said. "Because they weren't able to make this relationship between the model and reality, Pyramid air consultants and EnCon's airnsultants agreed they would take the computer estimates and multiply them by .65 to get the estimates they would use for deciding whether or not Pyramid would meet air quality standards."

Now Pyramid and DEC are suggesting using a .4 factor, and Childs said reducing the factor is arbitrary, and there's no basis to use a correction factor of anything but .65.

If DEC agrees to continue using the .65 factor, Pyramid will have to make substantial changes in the road network — such as moving Schoolhouse Road — to satisfy air quality requirements, Childs said.

Historic All