

Mall developer set for zoning appeal

By Tom Friedman

Staff Writer

The developer of the proposed \$85 million Crossgates shopping center is scheduled to appear before the Guilderland town zoning board of appeals to seek zoning variances and a special use permit for the mall at 7:30 p.m. July 8.

The announcement of the public hearing comes less than a week after the state Environmental Conservation Commissioner Robert F. Flacke denied developer Pyramid Crossgates Co.'s applications for 11 state environmental permits.

In that decision, Flacke, however, said the developer could gain approval of the permits if it redesigned an intersection near its site in the Pine Bush, just west of the Thruway.

Flacke said the redesign is necessary because computers indicate the present design of the Northway-Western Avenue intersection will congest traffic, resulting in dangerously high levels of carbon monoxide.

The commissioner's decision also opened the way for the developer to seek town approvals of its project. Before the decision, the town was unable to make a ruling because state

law precludes one body from ruling when another has a decision pending on the same project.

According to Paul Empie, town planning and zoning coordinator, the town zoning appeals board is likely to take time to come to its decision since it must make a ruling based on its review, Albany County Planning Board recommendations, and a town planning board's review of the entire project.

The county planning board is scheduled to consider the Pyramid requests Wednesday and the town planning board on July 13.

Empie said Pyramid Crossgates has asked for a special use permit, a routine permit required by every new enterprise, and three zoning variances. They are:

- One to allow fewer parking spaces than allowed by town zoning law in a commercial zone. The developer has asked to reduce the number from 9,927 to 6,550;
- One to decrease in the size of individual parking spaces, from 200 square feet to 171 square feet;
- One to decrease the width of parking driving lanes from 26 feet to 25.

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