

Democratic Council Members Meet With Businessmen Ho

By BOB HAGYARD

Guilderland businessmen gathered again to attack Supervisor Kevin Moss's plan to zone out Crossgates at a breakfast meeting Tuesday, 12 hours before the Town Board killed it by refusing to schedule hearings.

The breakfast was called by Virginia Horan and James Cleary, the Town Board's two Democrats, who fielded questions from the 75 in the audience. Most—but not all—of those who spoke opposed the plan. Among the opponents were two members of the Guilderland Republican Committee and the unsuccessful Democratic candidate for councilman in the November election.

The subject of their ire, Councilman James noted, amounts to 1½ pages of a 34-page proposed local law. The rest concerns other yet-to-be-established zoning classifications which allow residential development on smaller parcels of land than permitted at present.

"There are lots of fine ideas here," said Cleary, a longtime town resident and Guilderland school administrator. "The present zoning regulations were written at a time when everyone had their own water well and septic tank.

"The master plan review was long overdue," he added. "But Mr. Moss's proposal addresses only six of the review committee's eight

recommendations."

One businessman, developer Angelo Serafini, suggested the clauses referring to the \$85 million mall project be deleted so the remainder of the measure could be considered on its merits.

Details of the entire 34-page proposal were discussed at length in last week's "McKownville: News And Comment" column by Lindsay Childs.

The zone-out-the-mall clause, however, drew the most comment. Among the speakers Tuesday morning and what they had to say:

—Mary Ellen Adams, Guilderland businesswoman and town GOP committeewoman: "This matter supersedes all political allegiances. . . . The proposal to rezone is morally and ethically incorrect. The developer spent years going through the necessary permits and approvals. Must we deny them their rights as acquired through the proper channels? I believe the Town Board will vote to uphold principle and live up to its motto, "Prospice Gelria"—"Look Forward, Guilderland."

—Bob Smith, Guilderland realtor: "What would be the upset price of legal fees for the town to defend this action? I don't think the town can win. . . . As a real estate broker, I don't see how I could advise a client to go through the zoning process if the Town Board can later rezone and deny."

—Bob Howard of Wellbourne, Howard and Purdy Realty cited the 1978 Northeastern Environmental Development Corp. v. Town of Colonie case, in which a belated town zoning change was nullified.

—Michael Gardineer, Democratic candidate for councilman in 1981: "It is a tenet of the free enterprise system that business competition improves the business climate."

—Jock Farnsworth, owner of Dutcher's Ice Cream Parlor and a town Republican committeeman: "All of us are interested in increasing the town's tax base. Why would we intentionally degrade the value of some lands rather than improve the value of others? The lands proposed for 'light-industrial' zoning—the 169-acre Crossgates site, the State Farm Road parcel—av-

Guilderland

HAMILTON UNION
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Thomas L. Duncan
Sunday, Jan. 31:

10 a.m. Worship service.

11 a.m. Church school.

11:15 a.m. Session on peacemaking.

7:30 p.m. Group I.

Monday, Feb. 1:

7:30 p.m. Session.

Wednesday, Feb. 3:

10:30 a.m. Group II.

7 p.m. Old Testament group.

Hours Before Rezoning Plan Vote

erage \$49,000 to \$50,000 per acre. This isn't California where the machinery inside a high-technology plant can be taxed. Only the exterior—the land and warehouse-type building can be. But if the town would step further to the east or west to vacant lands worth \$2,000 to \$4,000 per acre, it could rezone them 'light-industrial' and raise their value."

—Paul Empie, town planning and zoning coordinator: "If the Crossgates site were to be rezoned 'light-industrial,' it would be developed piecemeal, like Railroad Ave."

—Leonard Tucker, owner of The Casual Set and president of the Stuyvesant Plaza Merchants' Association: "I would like to draw your attention to the many empty stores at Northway Mall, at Twenty Mall, at Grand Way in Albany, at Westgate, and tell me that is not a sad sight. If Crossgates drives them out, Crossgates may charge rentals no store can afford. Sure, they'll make a 'sweetheart deal' with Sears. But what about smaller storeowners like me who may get into an agreement they don't know they can't afford?"

—John Purtell, Westmere engineer who testified against Crossgates at last year's Zoning Board of Appeals hearings: "Supervisor Moss said 'light-industry' would be similar to the park proposed by RPI. If Crossgates is built, that site will be closed to that opportunity forever. As it is, no jobs are available to professional people in Guilderland—my son graduated from engineering school and had to go to California. . . . Kids will benefit by Crossgates (employment) but not professional people."

—An unidentified man retorted: "What will happen to Western Ave. without the \$10 million in improvements Crossgates proposes to construct? There's no way an industrial park would compete with RPI—they offer in-kind services and tax incentives Guilderland can't match."

—Tim Burke, former Guilderland businessman: "Crossgates has come up here going on four years. Why didn't the town come up with rezoning the site four years ago? I've been two years out of work because of things like this."

—Barry Richman, owner of Pearl Grant-Richman's: "I believe the reason it is being proposed now is because four years ago the town didn't act according to the desires of its residents. Other officials have been elected since, and Kevin Moss for one is addressing the de-

sires of the voters of this community. When you speak of 'lack of integrity,' you're speaking of the Town Board of four years ago. . . . I might add that many people in the Guilderland business community do not live in Guilderland," touching off a general uproar.

—Mrs. Horan: "If that's all you elect an official for—'Crossgates' or 'No Crossgates'—God help you. I was elected not just because of Crossgates but because I went door-to-door discussing issues not covered by the press: assessments, the town's tax base, the lack of public transportation, and future town water supplies. But Crossgates superseded all these in the press because it's the glamor issue. I don't feel I am now in office solely because of one position on one project."

—Antonio Audino, holder of a mall land option agreement: "If this law is passed, can optionholders sue? . . . The town would be making a tough decision since Crossgates has the permits. As Kevin Moss stated twice—first at the July 29 zoning hearing and again before the McKownville Improvement Association just before he was elected—he pledged that if elected he would stand by whatever the Zoning Board of Appeals decides."

—Peter Van Guysling of Dutch Manor Stables, another optionholder: "I consulted an attorney and it was his opinion that an optionholder would have recourse since it would be a restriction of free trade."

Also in the audience were Rhonda Childs, president-founder of Concerned Citizens Against Crossgates, and Robert Ungerer, aide to Bruce Kenan, Crossgates managing partner. Neither spoke.

DAVE ROSS

Author Of
A Book of Hugs
&
A Book of Kisses
on
Sat. Feb. 6, 1982
12-4 p.m.
at

Lincoln
Hill
Books



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