

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING BOARD OF THE
VILLAGE OF BRONXVILLE HELD ON MARCH 12, 2014 AT THE VILLAGE HALL,
200 PONDFIELD ROAD, BRONXVILLE, N.Y.**

* * * * *

PRESENT:	Eric Blessing	Chairman
	Anna Longobardo	Vice Chair
	Adrienne Smith	Member
	James Murray	Member
	Gary Reetz	Member
	Rene Atayan	Alternate
	Vincent Pici	Superintendent of Buildings
EXCUSED:	Randolph Mayer	Alternate

* * * * *

Chairman Blessing called to order the regular meeting at 7:35PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion of Mr. Reetz, second by Mr. Murray, the Board approved the minutes of the Regular Meeting on January 8, 2014.

**SITE DEVELOPMENT – 182 WHITE PLAINS ROAD – CONCORDIA COLLEGE
ATHLETIC – (wind screen installation)**

Ms. Geraldine Tortorella, representative for Concordia College, reviewed the project and said the applicant was seeking approval of windscreens for the baseball field and for the left tall black chain link fence along the softball field. The public hearing notice stated that a special permit was required for this project and in fact, this is incorrect. The windscreens will be placed on the home run fence on the softball field and on the entire perimeter of the baseball field. They will be 4.5 – 6 feet tall. A windscreen will be placed on the lower field by the tennis courts. The screens on Rose Avenue have been there for 20 – 30 years and are not subject to this application. The color selected, blue, is Concordia's color. Originally, windscreens were installed on the baseball field but were taken down. The College owns the windscreens. The color is not as bright as previously shown. It is similar to the blue color of Bronxville High School. The material is ultra-mesh and it does not prohibit air flow. The edges are reinforced and the windscreen is attached to the interior of the fence. These screens will create a contrast that currently does not exist and will provide a collegiate feel. They will also create a barrier so that if two events are taking place at the same time there is no interference. The benefits to having these windscreens are: they improve the player's experience and gives the College a better recruiting experience – first impressions are lasting impressions. Maintenance will be done with routine inspections conducted and repairs made in a timely fashion. There is no construction required, no land disturbance required, no trees removed and no change in the fencing location.

Mr. Reetz inquired if these screens will be up all year.

Ms. Tortorella responded that they would be due to the fact that they are labor intensive to put up. They are bulky and require a large area for storage.

Ms. Smith asked if the color blue is that important more than something more realistic like green. She drove by the College today and she felt the screens looked brighter in person.

Ms. Tortorella answered that the blue is important for recruiting purposes and for identity. The College already owns these and does not want to incur any additional costs.

Ms. Longobardo commented that she did not remember the initial presentation by the applicant.

Village Engineer Pici said that the Planning Board had approved a safety netting in 2009.

Mr. Murray said he did not remember the initial presentation either. He asked the applicant why they did not select green.

Ms. Atayan commented that she understands there is a safety issue that the windscreens provide with regard to the players. She wanted to know if the NCAA mandates these screens.

Ms. Kathy Laoutaris, Associate Athletic Director at Concordia College, responded that there are no mandates specific to the material of the screens. However, the NCAA does require fencing and safety measures. Windscreens are required by home plate. The color blue is to enhance school spirit and for visibility for recruiting. The softball field screen is lime green.

Ms. Atayan commented that green windscreens would not enhance visibility.

Ms. Smith felt that the neighbors should be considered and that the bright blue is obviously more noticeable.

Ms. Longobardo said that the school colors are important but that the fences do not have to be blue. The sample provided does not fairly represent the color of a large area.

Ms. Atayan said that there may be a reflective issue here.

Mr. John Colquhoun, Chairman of the Design Review Committee, reported that the Design Review Committee felt more comfortable with the sample and that it was darker than the pictures originally provided. The applicant could soften the look of these screens with plantings on the outside. It is hard to see the volume of the fencing. It might be good for all to see a schematic drawing in place. The darker blue is not as garish as some of the other colors.

Ms. Longobardo inquired if anyone looked at the existing windscreens. She has some discomfort with the color. She realizes the college is in the middle of a residential area.

Mr. Colquhoun replied that no one had gone to see the screens.

Chairman Blessing opened the public hearing at 8:06PM.

Mr. Robert O'Hara, resident, reported that he made a submission to the Planning Board. He feels this is an enormous undertaking. The campus was clothed in that windscreen and it was shocking. He feels it is an unbelievable sight when you drive down Route 22. The fence line is not straight. The windscreens highlight a crooked fence in the outfield. There needs to be more detailed planning. The field should be leveled and uniform fencing installed. This is an inappropriate attempt to make this something it is not. He does not feel this will enhance the play of the players.

Mr. Robert Bisconti, resident, read a letter that he submitted to the Planning Board. It stated: "I am a resident of Bronxville and live at 48 Edgewood Lane, which is located near the gymnasium of Concordia College."

"Over the years I have had issues of what is not being done by the College to be a good neighbor. The last couple of years we have had to endure the look of a used car parking lot with the lights that have been put up next to the gymnasium in the name of security. I can understand that however I believe that they went over the top and have been on record with the Mayor and the appropriate individuals."

"I have asked that the lights be turned off or down to an acceptable level at the time the gymnasium is not being used. I see no reason that the lights need to be on all night when the gym is not in use. Also the atrium of the gym is illuminated all night long with the bright lights of the vending machines. This is not a pretty sight from the second level of my home and certainly takes away from our neighborhood."

"Whatever happened to conservation that it is often talked about? Wouldn't you think with the cost of power today that they would want to conserve?"

"As we are not being asked as Bronxville residents to tolerate the acres and acres of blue tarp that will be erected along the wire fencing around the property of the baseball and softball fields is totally unacceptable to the residents that have to endure the look outside their windows of plastic blue tarping."

"I would like to look outside and see nature at her best with trees and not plastic waving in the wind as this becomes untied with any inclement weather."

"I do not understand how this is even on the table for consideration. Any Bronxville resident that would have to look at this would find it to be unacceptable."

"What is happening to our community? It looks as if we will be dumming down to conform to a lesser code in order to appease a certain group. What happened to the gold standards of the Bronxville community that at one time was the envy of everyone?"

"I believe that the College and the Planning Board needs to address the concerns of the residents that will be affected by this action."

Mr. Bisconti said he feels to leave this up all year long would be terrible. When light hits the tarp it will take on a very different view and it is not a pleasant one for residents.

Another resident said that he was disappointed with the College. There have been several issues over the years – parking lots, lighting, etc. He was hoping that there would be an on-going dialogue. The neighbors found out about the project from the receipt of certified letters that were sent a few weeks ago. He feels that plantings would be a help. All this for a small number of home games. It should be of a temporary nature.

Ms. Smith commented that the College is not taking into consideration those residents on the Tuckahoe side.

Mr. Richard Szypula, resident, endorsed the comments made by the neighbors.

Chairman Blessing closed the public hearing at 8:19PM.

Ms. Longobardo asked the Design Review Committee about their sense of the color. She would like to be helpful to the College but cares deeply about Bronxville and its environs.

Mr. Colquhoun said that maybe a large section could be put up and various members could go and see it.

Ms. Smith asked if the applicant could get a sample of another color.

Mr. Reetz commented that the Planning Board questions the color of signage for other applications in the Village and that this is a large project that has not been thought out. He would like to see more of it. The Field Club specifically made their screens green and listened to neighbors. He would like to take a closer look at this. He would like to maintain the character of the Village.

Mr. Murray said he is a big proponent of sports. He feels something should be done with the landscaping to camouflage the screens. He does not understand why green was not used.

Mr. Colquhoun responded that he felt the same way.

Ms. Longobardo said she is not ready to vote on this.

Ms. Smith said that it is hard to ask the Planning Board to vote on this when the material has already been bought.

Chairman Blessing commented that both parties need to come to something that will work for everyone. Items for discussion are the color, seasonal removal of the screens, landscaping around the screens, a sloping outfield – leveling the fence, and Village character. He suggested that Village representatives meet with Concordia to see if some of these issues can be talked through. He suggested that maybe the applicant bring a panel and an alternative panel for the Planning Board to see. He would like the College to think about storage, etc. He would like all to come out of this process as winners.

Ms. Tortorella responded that the applicant would have to re-group. They would like to see about putting up a piece of the windscreens for the Planning Board to see. She was not sure if the fencing could be changed on the baseball field due to cost. The College is not intending to put up plastic construction tarps. It was not the College's intention to have no regard for the neighbors. She will report back on the College's progress.

Chairman Blessing stated that something that is acceptable to a broader group of Bronxville will be voted on by the Planning Board.

Ms. Longobardo said the trouble is the practicality, the cost, etc.

Mr. Murray said it might be possible to do landscaping to hide the windscreens.

Ms. Smith would like to have people talk to each other.

Ms. Atayan commented that the College should put something up that helps with team identity during play and then be taken down. They are missing the boat on that if they are not willing to remove the screens when the season is over. Even if they go green, the screens may have to come down in the winter. She felt that reflectivity is an issue.

Ms. Tortorella said that the College did not anticipate that people would view this as garish. She feels they add to the College's character. They will need to re-consider this. The windscreens are strongly recommended by the NCAA.

Mr. Szypula recommended that when the swatch is placed up that it be placed on the highest portion of the fence so that the true impact can be seen.

Ms. Tortorella said that the highest point would be no higher than 6 feet.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

NEXT MEETING

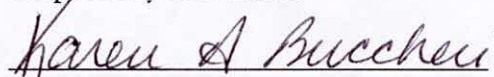
The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning will be on Wednesday, April 9, 2014.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Planning Board, a motion was then adopted by unanimous vote to adjourn the meeting at 8:40PM.

* * * * *

Respectfully submitted,



Karen A. Buccheri

Secretary to the Mayor & Village Administrator