

December 20, 2018

Town of Dryden Board
93 East Main Street
Dryden, NY 13053

Re: Fairview Drive TC3 Multi-unit Housing SUP

I am writing to support an amendment to the Special Use Permit that would permit pedestrian access to Lee Road from the Tompkins Cortland Community College dormitories. I am a member of the Village of Dryden Board of Trustees and cannot attend tonight's hearing because it conflicts with our regular monthly meeting.

I understand that some Village residents on Lee Road have long opposed pedestrian access, and the Village Board originally supported the Special Use Permit when the apartments were built. Those concerns were based upon fear that the residential character of Lee Road would be harmed if the apartments' residents were able to walk to the Village. The conversion of the apartments to dormitories did not soften that opposition. However, it is far past time to reconsider this misguided policy.

Lee Road residents' concerns must be weighed against the very real safety issues that confront TC3 students when they walk to the Village. In response to a request from the Village Public Safety Committee, the Dryden Police Department compared the safety of pedestrians along the 2.9 mile route from Bahar Drive and North Street with the 0.9 mile route down Lee Road. The report found that there is no street lighting, traffic on North Street averages 50-55 miles per hour and there are no sidewalks to separate pedestrians from traffic. In fact, in 2015 a young woman was killed after being struck by a car on North Street on a dark and rainy night. (Exhibits attached). I would ask opponents of the amendment whether they would want their own children to be exposed to such risk when a much safer alternative exists.

I have just learned that the physical fence on Lee Road is located on Village of Dryden property. If the Town acts to amend the SUP, I will fully support inserting a pedestrian gate to enable access between the Village and the TC3 campus because the fence represents an unhealthy symbolic barrier between the Village of Dryden and TC3. Students from TC3 volunteered to help build Montgomery Park's playground, rake leaves for Village residents, and plant trees on our streets, and they could do more. Many of the students who live in these dormitories continue their education in elite universities like Cornell and Binghamton. They eat in Village restaurants and shop in our stores. The fence on Lee Road and the rhetoric that defends it project a message that says, "You do not belong here; you are not welcome." How much more prosperous could our community be if we found more ways to connect with TC3 and support the students who are here to pursue an education to better themselves?

Despite my strong support for creating a pedestrian access between TC3 and Lee Road, I am disappointed in the process that the Town has adopted to consider this matter. Town officials have not formally consulted with the Village of Dryden Board of Trustees to permit us to develop plans to alleviate residents' concerns. Given the timing of the Town's hearing, the Village Board cannot even hear our residents' concerns and respond to them in time to have constructive input on the decision. For example, would enhanced police patrols in the neighborhood ease their fears? Are sidewalks necessary?

Would it be possible to delay a decision until the Village Board of Trustees has also had the opportunity to consider, and respond to residents' issues?

Finally, a vitally important group of stakeholders will be absent from these deliberations. TC3 students are on semester break until classes begin on January 23, 2019, and the Town Board could make its decision without any opportunity for them to participate in the decision-making process. Of course this is extraordinarily unfair as students should be given an opportunity to voice their opinions about the Lee Road fence and respond to objections that residents have raised about them. In my time on the Village Board, I have learned how decisions made by a process that is not transparent to affected constituents can generate unnecessary and hard to resolve mistrust. Again, the wisest course of action may be to give the process a little more time so that all perspectives can be heard.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Tom Sinclair, Village of Dryden Trustee
19 Union Street
Dryden, NY 13053

cc: Village of Dryden Board of Trustees
Orinthia Montague, President, Tompkins Cortland Community College
Deborah Mohlenhoff, Tompkins Cortland Community College
Katherine Borgella, Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability

Attachments



Village of Dryden Police Department

Non-Emergency (607) 844-8118
Administrative (607) 844-8119
Fax (607) 844-8120

16 South Street
P.O. Box 820
Dryden, NY 13045

Emergency Dial 911

OIC- Sergeant Josh Tagliavento

TO: Public Safety Committee

FROM: OIC Sergeant Tagliavento

Date: 11/06/2018

RE: Police Activity on Lee Rd from 2015-present

This is an official report of all suspicious activity incidents reported on Lee Rd from 2015 to present, pertaining to TC3 students accessing the Village from said location. This report also provides a pedestrian public safety assessment at various locations in the Village. (Total of 4)

Suspicious/Trespassing calls for 2015

- 0

Suspicious/Trespassing calls for 2016

- 3

Suspicious/Trespassing calls for 2017

- 0

Suspicious/Trespassing calls thus far in 2018

- 1

In the event another agency might have handled a suspicious incident call on Lee Rd if the DPD unit was on another call or unavailable, I compiled the same report ranging back to 2015.

Total number of calls on Lee Rd handled by outside agencies (TCSO, NYSP)

- 0

I conducted a pedestrian public safety assessment at various locations in the Village at which time I looked for the following:

1. Lighting Conditions
2. Sidewalk accessibility
3. Shoulder width for pedestrians/bicyclists
4. Speed travelled by motorists vs. posted MPH zones
5. Blind spots
6. Travel distance

My assessment was conducted at the following locations for a 30 minute time period from 1800-1830 hrs.

- Bahar Drive
- North Street
- Lee Rd

The results of my findings: pros & cons

Bahar Drive

1. Offers no sidewalk for students/residents to access the Village.
2. Shoulder width for pedestrian travel was minimal, and was estimated at approximately 24" wide.
3. No street lights on the entire road, pitch black conditions and poor visibility, especially on the curves.
4. As we begin the winter months and snowy conditions, this creates serious safety concerns for the student/pedestrian travel. The shoulders of the road will become banked with snow and slippery/icy conditions will exist.
5. Light to moderate traffic flow
6. Posted speed limit of 30 mph, average speed observed was 30-35 mph

North Street

1. Offers wider shoulder for pedestrian traffic, but will shorten with inclement weather approaching.
2. Heavy Traffic flow
3. No Street lights from Bahar Drive to the intersection with Queen Diner.
4. Very poor visibility, pitch black travel conditions. (See pictures from fatal PI)
5. Posted speed limit of 45 mph, average speed observed was 50-55 mph
6. With inclement weather approaching, these conditions naturally will create a dangerous atmosphere for pedestrian traffic along the roadway.

Lee Road

1. From North Street to the top of Lee Road, I observed 11 Street light poles in the area, 9 of which were on Lee Road. (1 on Ray Pl, 1 on Hill Pl)
2. Visibility was greatly enhanced due to Street lighting; a pedestrian could easily walk without the use of a flashlight.
3. Traffic flow was very light to almost not existent during the observed times.
4. Posted speed of 30 MPH, average speed observed was 20-25 mph
5. In my opinion this offers the safest rout of travel for student/pedestrians attempting to access the village.
6. Shortest distance of travel

Travel Distance from the College Dorms (Quad) to the Expressmart on North Street.

1. Bahar Drive access = 2.9 miles (Quad, Panther Drive, Bahar Drive, North Street)
2. Lee Road access = .9 of a mile (Quad, access Road, North Street)

Conclusion:

Our number one priority is not just for Public Safety, but the safety of the community and the residence in which reside and visit the community. In reviewing all suspicious incident cases ranging back to 2015, pertaining to the additional pedestrian traffic on Lee Road, I find this to be unfounded. The positive engagement this will create with the college and its students, greatly out ways the risk of a personal injury accident or worse, a loss of life, which considering the above data, is high during the inclement weather season that is inevitably approaching.

THE Cortland Voice

[FEATURED, NEWS](#)

JULY 6, 2015

BY [PETER BLANCHARD](#)

Update 11:39 a.m. –

Authorities have identified the woman who was killed in a car-pedestrian accident Sunday night.

Kaila Mae Baraby, 20, of Dryden, was walking on North Street when she was struck by a vehicle, sheriff's deputies said.

Baraby was taken to Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse by Dryden Ambulance, where she was pronounced dead.

Police say no charges have been filed.

Earlier –

DRYDEN, N.Y. – A woman was killed after she was struck by a vehicle Sunday night, according to the Tompkins County Sheriff's Office.

Shortly before 11 p.m. Sunday, sheriff's deputies and officers from the Dryden Police Department responded to the intersection of Route 13 and Quounist Road for a car-pedestrian accident.

A sedan traveling north on Rt. 13 struck a female pedestrian near the entrance to a mobile home park, the sheriff's office said.

The woman was later pronounced dead after being transported to Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse.

The New York State Police Accident Reconstruction Team is assisting the sheriff's office in the investigation. No charges have been filed against the driver.

The woman's identity has not been released. More information is expected to be released later today.
