



Allegrone seeks to buy building

Jan. 11--LENOX -- Allegrone Construction of Pittsfield has plans to purchase the former Leaning Institute complex at 150 Pittsfield Road, using a portion of the main building for its own office space and leasing the remainder.

The Conservation Commission last week reviewed plans by Allegrone to demolish an existing 3,745-square-foot addition at the rear of the main building and construct a 10,000-square-foot, two-story addition. Allegrone is also planning to build a turnaround and add about 53 more parking spaces at the rear of the property.

The Commission approved the drainage plan submitted on behalf of Allegrone by SK Design. Engineer Robert Fournier, representing SK, explained to the members of the commission that the new plan will improve the drainage on the site.

Commission member Vincent Ammendola observed that SK's plan showed there would not be an increase in water discharge and that, "if their calculations are correct, there will actually be a decrease."

Allegrone will be going before the Zoning Board of Appeals on Jan. 20 to obtain site plan approval.

The Pittsfield Road locale is the site of the former Leaning Center of America. The Limited Liability Company that operates the Leaning Center purchased the six-acre property in 2007 for \$1.3 million. The Leaning Center had planned to provide life-coaching classes and seminars, but never opened.

Following the purchase, Leaning Center founder John Sarvis expended about \$250,000

on renovations to the structure. The building itself was constructed in 1959. Previous businesses at that site were the Edgewood Inn and Berkshire Information Systems.

In September of last year, the Leaning Center filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection after defaulting on its financial commitment to Legacy Bank. Legacy purchased the parcel at auction for \$990,000 to protect its investment. The entire site is assessed at \$1.3 million. Allegrone has a purchase-and-sale agreement that will hinge on whether the company can obtain the necessary permits for the conversion.

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