

MINUTES - PLANNING BOARD

Meeting of April 6, 2016

WORKSHOP PORTION. Ms. Anderson called workshop portion of the meeting to order at 7:40 PM.

1. COMMUNICATIONS:

None

2. MINUTES:

Motion to adopt the minutes of March 16, 2016 (as amended) was made by Ms. Pedde, seconded by Ms. Steinbach and passed on voice vote.

3. RESOLUTIONS OF MEMORIALIZATION

None

4. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Township Committee Resolution #2016-133 – sustainable and items that should be considered whenever deliberating applications. Ask that all review and think wisely when making decisions.

Workshop portion adjourned at 7:42 P.M.

PUBLIC HEARING - ROOM 107

1. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Ms. Anderson called a public meeting of the Cranford Planning Board to order on April 6, 2016 at 8:02 P.M. In Room 107 of the Municipal Building, 8 Springfield Avenue, Cranford, New Jersey. Ms. Della Serra announced that this meeting is a regularly scheduled meeting as contained in its annual schedule adopted by the Planning Board and published in the designated newspaper as soon as possible after the Board's reorganization meeting. In accordance with the terms and conditions of the Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice of this meeting's agenda has been provided through publication specifying the time, place and matters to be discussed/heard with the agenda having been filed with the Township Clerk and posted on the municipal bulletin board where such notices are normally posted as required. Formal action may be taken.

2. FLAG SALUTE

3. ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Ms. Anderson

Ms. Murray
Mr. Aschenbach
Deputy Mayor O'Connor
Mayor Kalnins
Ms. Pedde
Ms. Steinbach
Mr. Taylor

Members Absent:

Ms. Feder

Alternates Present:

Mr. Petrucci
Ms. Didzbalis

Alternates Absent:

None

Also present:

Nicholas Giuditta, Esquire; Ruthanne Della Serra, Administrator, Robert Hudak, PP, AICP/
Zoning Officer.

1. **Applicant #PBA-15-00010**
RCL Properties, LLC
27 South Avenue West, Block 473 lot 9, ORC Zone
Applicant is seeking Preliminary Site Plan approval to construct a
two-story commercial building with various variances and waivers.

Reports from the following municipal professionals were received and reviewed by the applicant who waived formal reading: DRC, Traffic and Safety, Environmental Commission, Engineering Department, Fire Department, Heath Department and Robert Hudak, PP, AICP.

Joseph Triarsi, Esquire appeared on behalf of the applicant. He explained he represents Dr. Lukenda. List of requested relief read into the record, with list taken from an earlier review letter. Site plan has since been revised twice with most recent site plan removing most if not all of the relief cited. Drawing dated February 22, 2016 - construction of 3400 square feet net floor area office building; mostly occupied by physician; purchased the property and bringing in another physician into the practice. Small area on second floor may be leased to second party.

Parking variance - unique ordinance that requires 4 spaces for each professional plus one space for every 250 square feet equaling 22 spaces required on site while

proposing 19. Believes parking is adequate with on-street parking available and also parking garage is short walk away.

Robert Lukenda, Applicant, appeared and was sworn in. Is a family physician as well as resident of Cranford. Relocating practice that is currently located on North Avenue due expanding practice and need for another physician. From community perspective, will be keeping primary care facility in town.

Proposes building for practice which will double the current space to 6-7 exam rooms. Employees consist of himself and 5 medical staff. He is only physician, however, intends to bring in another physician who is presently a resident at Overlook Hospital. He explained history of searching for property, exploring potential development, to being here this evening before the Board. Architect prepared plans dated October 14, 2015 consisting of 4 sheets and marked as Exhibit A-1. Originally too large and was thereafter reduced to 3,400 square feet of floor area and will include: 1st floor - office, patient exam rooms, 2nd floor - private office and administrative offices with 750 square foot rental space. Retained services of engineer, Guarriello & Dec who prepared site plan dated October 14, 2015, revised December 14, 2015 and again revised on February 22, 2016 consisting of 6 sheets marked as Exhibit A-2.

Discussed the application with neighbors as soon as he purchased the property and conducted a recent meeting where the application was previewed. Concerns were expressed and he agreed to address. Township Engineer also made recommendations and is willing to comply with those also.

Questions posed by the Board ascertained the following:

Master Plan states ORC zone speaks to conversion of residential structures into offices while maintaining the character of the premises. Structure was knocked down due to safety issues resulting in many leaks, failed structural integrity and break ins. Disagrees with the Historical Preservation Committee's conclusions. It was torn down in February 2016. Property is a double lot but could not convert the house to medical office which requires an elevator. Question posed as to passage of ordinance regulating property tear downs, Mr. Giuditta explained applicant is seeking to convert the property to a permitted use in the zone and regulation would not be applicable.

There were no further questions by members of the Board.

Ms. Anderson opened the application to the public for questions, with no one appearing and the matter was referred back to the Board.

Gary Jumkroft, Appeared and was sworn in. His credentials were presented to the Board and he was accepted as an expert witness in the field of Architecture.

Mr. Triarsi advised applicant is open to some changes to the facade of the building, but not a complete redesign, but understand that Board is seeking a type of character be maintained throughout the town.

Mr. Jumkroft testified to the following referring to Exhibit A-1 through questions posed by Mr. Triarsi. Applicant was seeking a medical office building for his practice with a small rental area, proposal revised over time, the size of the development ultimately was reduced by approximately 1,000 square feet and is building proposed.

Sheet 1 – cover sheet, initially believed property was located in the O-2 zone not the ORC as currently designated. Intent was to make the building have a residential feel.

Sheet 2- intention was to put the parking in the rear of the building, resulting in building being brought forward on the site. Each floor plan explained. 1st floor – medical practice space – lobby, waiting area, reception area, hallway, 6 exam rooms, 2 bathrooms, general area. The basement is divided into storage space for medical records, break room area for staff (in order to reduce the overall size of the building necessary to propose basement space), elevator mechanicals, all barrier free codes for construction were adhered to. 2nd floor – two portions – rear is rental portion without a layout as no tenant at present, front space private doctor's office, and administrative offices.

Sheet 3 – elevation of the building. Architecture consists of a residential feel building, vinyl siding oversized trim work, stone base. Materials chosen are invocative of a residence, double hung windows, decorative moldings, however not Victorian Age. Are no buildings presently in Cranford that depict Victorian Age. Previously an older building that had been modified numerous times, and to rehab would not have been practical or beneficial. Would have been very difficult and expensive to convert to medical office building. Finishes consist of asphalt shingle roof, slate blue siding with white accent trim, brown stone base. Believes would fit into the present architecture in the area. Nearby Walgreens and Bank also do not depict Victorian architecture. Proposal is a suitable design for this use – elements could be changed architecturally slightly to evoke the desired style. Covered porch area on South Avenue depicts residential feel even though it is not the primary entrance, which is in the rear nearest to the parking. No steps within the building, will be an elevator and any disabled individual can access anywhere within the building.

Questions posed by the Board ascertained the following:

Elevators are in the rear of the building, areas marked as exam room is space for the rental. Rental space will not be a doctors as only two physicians are permitted due to the parking requirements, if added another physician would need to return to the Board. Is a sidewalk located from the town sidewalk to the front door. Parking will circulate in a loop and will be further explained by the engineer. There is no entrance from the front door – main entrance is in the rear. Believes the proposed building is set back further than others

in the area. Medical space and rental space will be about 50-50 on second floor. Could call the design Colonial.

Discussion on adding architecture elements that would not necessary compliment the proposed design for sake of making it look Victorian and on-street parking.

Deliveries and pick-ups will have to come to the main office. Front is merely an emergency exit, rear main entrance for convenience to parking and elevator. Doctors will have reserved parking space in the rear – minimum of 1.

There were no further questions by members of the Board.

Ms. Anderson opened the application to the public for questions, with no one appearing and the matter was referred back to the Board.

Ed Dec of Guarriello & Dec, Appeared and was sworn in. His credentials were presented to the Board and he was accepted as an expert witness in the field of engineering.

Variances remaining are as follows per revised plans:

One variance – for parking 19 onsite and two on street for total of 21 stalls, required is 22.

Design waivers that have reduced –

Parking setback to residential zone – proposing 7 feet 10 required – waiver requested.

Parking areas should be screened in ORC from view of adjacent residential zone by landscaping or fencing creating a 5-foot buffer. Proposing arbor vitae and a 6-foot white vinyl fence at rear of property - met.

Size of stalls and wheel stops – proposing curb acts as wheel stops – met

Planting of trees – proposing two trees – met

Loading and unloading area – waiver remains as required area for a professional use, however type of deliveries for proposed use do not need such a zone.

Granite block curb – is being installed – met

Bicycle rack – does not really serve benefits of use of the building – waiver requested

Wall in front yard – retaining wall has been reduced to front of building - met

Landscaping proposed – met

Vinyl fence proposed from front of building and therefore requesting waiver from landscaping in that area.

Front yard waiver for parking in that area – less than half of two parking stalls on ingress and egress extend beyond front of the building – no significant impact, but waiver required.

Light poles required to be no more than 8 feet – proposing 10 feet, exception in the ordinance that allows even a higher pole (Section 136-33.9a requirements not be higher than 16 feet) and is conflict with the ORC requirements of not exceeding 8 feet. Shoe box shielding and foot candles explained. There will be no spill over to any adjoining property owners. Property owner in rear expressed concern and asked that the type of lighting and possible disturbing effect on other electrical features. No objection to use of LED as proposed by resident and is a greener type of lighting. Other accommodations for benefit of the neighbor – pleased with fencing as well as the Arbor Vitae. Poles are 10 feet with 2-foot station for total of 12 feet – waiver required.

Sidewalk is proposed for circulation within the site. From street is almost equal to distance of going around the sidewalk. Has ADA compliant parking stalls and ramps.

Parking drawing on sheet 3 of 6. Off-street parking locations explained in depth consisting of 19 spaces. Fire lanes – fire official requested designated lane along both sides of the building and will be delineated. Loop driveway one way in and one way out with access of 12 feet as required. Wheel stops shown at three stalls facing the building as well as granite block. Rear parking will have bollards to prevent cars from accidentally going over the curb. On-street parking is located directly in front of the site and in between the two driveways as exists today. Also additional parking available at present to the right and left of the site.

Drainage - property is naturally quite flat, but has a tendency to drain to the south. The parking area is designed to drain towards South Avenue and eliminates any run off to neighboring properties. Able to collect run off by use of curbing and drains into 4 separate underground collection areas to meet the storm water management requirements. Also two areas of rain gardens which are depressed areas with engineered soil underneath that will transmit the water to a lower elevation and acts as collection point/recharging area. Could not run analysis for multi-year storms, but showed the area created by the 4 management systems can manage a 7-inch storm and has reduced the amount of run-off to adjoining properties.

Would request final review of the plan by the Township Engineer and incorporate any additional comments to be addressed in final site plan approval.

Bulk requirements explained:
Front yard setback - met
Tract area - met

Lot width - met
Side setback - met
Combined setback - met
FAR - met
Height - met
Impervious coverage – met as below maximum
Building coverage - met as below maximum
Distance to residential zone - met
Parking requirement is only variance being sought

Questions posed by the Board ascertained the following:

Variances/waivers clarified. Buffer requirement believe is eliminated, but distance is 7.5 feet not 10 feet, loading/unloading area not provided, bicycle rack and are design waiver. Clarified variances – less than the required parking spaces provided, parking in front yard, less than the distance from light poles to property line, less than required side yard buffer = 4 variances and 3 waivers:

Confirmed fence will be in front of the retaining wall and when standing on the site will only see small portion of the fence and from adjacent properties will only see fence. Lights will be on a timer to turn off when offices close or no later than 8:00 PM. Will add trees to the front yard to replace the 2 trees that are being removed.

Bollards were add-on from first edition of the plans in trying to compliment the curb replacing the wheel stops. Block wall detail does not show driveway, manufacturer may have additional details, exist and will provide for final approval. Does not show proposed signage and will be in compliance with sign ordinance. He designed the rain gardens and could incorporate compliance regulations. Will be using state manual to design and maintain the rain garden. Storm water calculations are contained on the sheet, and need to be confirmed by the Engineering Department.

There were no further questions by members of the Board.

Ms. Anderson opened the application to the public for questions, with the following appearing:

George Bird – asked to clarify/describe whether motion sensors will be used in the lighting. The security lighting will be motion at front and rear door. Changes in lighting summarized - will be 8-feet above grade, with possibly two more added to meet proper foot candles, and will be of LED.

No one else appeared and the matter was referred back to the Board.

Jackie Dirmann, Mazur Consultant, Township Engineer, appeared and was sworn in. Wrote report dated February 11, 2016 with plans were revised thereafter, reviewed

briefly but not thoroughly. One item – is increasing impervious by more than 1,000 square feet and is considered a “major” development. Not certain if management requirements are being met, would have to do further review and any requirements would need to be incorporated and thereby met. Grades of the adjoining property drains away from their property, therefore lifting in rear will not impact the neighboring properties.

Ms. Anderson opened the application to the public for comments with the following appearing:

George Bird, appeared and was sworn in. He stated because of his property being to the rear, he has a deck and distributed photos from his point of view that he took two weeks ago. Marked into evidence – Exhibit O-1 depicts deck as looking across the property; Exhibit O-2 another photo of deck overlooking barbecue; Exhibit O-3 is inside the house looking out sliding glass door; Exhibit O-4 is duplicate of Exhibit O-2. Did have opportunity to speak with the applicant and professionals. Brief comments as most concerns have been addressed through the meetings. Concerned with view from his deck which is at 9-foot, even if plantings are at 8 feet will take several years. Likes the reduction in lighting pole height, would want tight schedule on the light so as not to impact with his family’s use of the deck, concerned with motion sensor due to small critters in the area. Realize something will be developed on the property and is zoned for commercial use, realize will take a hit on view, but likes the arbor vitae. Biggest concern is with the lighting, saw two lights against the building, would like the height and wattage to be reduced.

Question posed by board – confirmed distance from deck to property line. Suggestion made to plant 16 feet evergreens, comment made that although planted at 8 feet will in reality be 10 feet.

No one else appeared and the matter was referred back to the Board.

Mr. Triarsi presented his summation.

DELIBERATION OF Applicant #PBA-15-00010

RCL Properties, LLC

27 South Avenue West, Block 473 lot 9, ORC Zone

Applicant is seeking Preliminary Site Plan approval to construct a two-story commercial building with various variances and waivers.

Ms. Anderson reviewed the testimony presented.

Board comments consisted of the following:

Proposed has many benefits, and wonderful young physician, demolished structure was unsound and being replaced, appreciates use of raingardens, disappointment is that it is being so built out. Understands building is within the requirements, but would wish for other opportunities to maximize the impervious surface. Overall agree, looks good, in style

of residential house, close to downtown which is more modern, fits in with area. Not certain what balance is between parking stalls and reduction in impervious surface. Great improvement to area. Concern about impervious surface, neighbor in the back and view of the building. Same thoughts as to impervious surface, meets requirements so not really on the table for discussion, aside from that, understand neighbors' point of view, does not believe given the office hours that the lighting will be an issue except for the motion sensors which is in main doorways. This is a gateway into the town that has gone through a lot of great improvements in the area, will defer to experts, would request that if property was to turn over to another use bike rack and loading zone will be addressed as matter of law.

Motion to grant preliminary site plan approval Application PBA-15-00010 was made by Ms. Anderson with the following conditions:

1. Will comply with all recommendations in the Township Engineering report including storm water calculations, and any additional recommendations that may be made after that departments review;
2. Lighting type will be LED;
3. Will reduce light pole height to 8 feet and add two additional poles;
4. Include two additional trees in the front yard to replace those being removed or contribute to fund;
5. Will comply with fire lane request from Fire Department;
6. Proposed signage will be in compliance with sign ordinance.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Murray with the following voting in favor of the motion: Ms. Anderson, Ms. Murray, Mr. Aschenbach, Deputy Mayor O'Connor, Mayor Kalnins, Ms. Pedde, Ms. Steinbach, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Petrucci.

5. PUBLIC PORTION

NONE

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was regularly made, seconded and passed. The meeting concluded at 10:50 P.M.

Kathleen Murray, Secretary