

## **MINUTES - PLANNING BOARD**

### **Workshop meeting of April 4, 2018**

**WORKSHOP PORTION.** Ms. Murray called workshop portion of the meeting to order at 7:32 PM.

**1. COMMUNICATIONS**

Email from Susan Wilson regarding driveway ordinance

**2. RESOLUTIONS OF MEMORIALIZATION**

None

**3. MINUTES**

Motion to adopt minutes of the February 7, 2018 meeting was made by Ms. Pedde and seconded by Dr. Chapman and passed on unanimous voice vote

Motion to adopt minutes of the February 21, 2018 meeting was made by Ms. Pedde and seconded by Dr. Chapman and passed on unanimous voice vote.

**4. OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Susan Wilson, a real estate agent came to Workshop meeting to address Cranford's driveway ordinance. Stated the 3 foot setback has been an issue for some of her clients. Stated that when residents need to repave their driveways some have issues with the setback and width specified in the ordinance. Also spoke about the time and cost of getting permits for repaving. Feels it is a hardship to homeowners. Board asked Mr. Johnson, Zoning Officer, to research and will discuss further at next Planning Board Workshop. Stated that the path would be to make a recommendation to the Township Committee and to also include any changes in the Master Plan.

### **PUBLIC HEARING - ROOM 107**

**1. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT**

Ms. Murray called a public meeting of the Cranford Planning Board to order on April 4, 2018 at 8:03 p.m. In Room 107 of the Municipal Building, 8 Springfield Avenue, Cranford, New Jersey. Ms. Lenahan announced this meeting is in compliance with the "Open Public Meetings Act" as adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by publishing of the Board's annual schedule of meetings in the Westfield Leader and the Star Ledger with the agenda specifying the time, place and matters to be heard having been posted on a bulletin Board in the Town Hall reserved for such announcements and the filing of said agenda with the Township Clerk of Cranford. Formal action may be taken at this meeting.

**2. FLAG SALUTE**

**3. ROLL CALL:**

**Members Present:**

Ms. Murray  
Ms. Anderson  
Dr. Chapman  
Mr. Cossa

Ms. Feder  
Mayor Hannen  
Ms. Pedde

**Members Absent:**

Deputy Mayor Dooley  
Mr. Taylor

**Alternates Present:**

None

**Alternates Absent:**

Mr. Aschenbach  
Ms. Didzbalis

**Also present:**

Mark Rothman, Esquire; Ron Johnson, Zoning Officer; Kathy Lenahan, Administrator/Scribe, Bill Masol, Engineer

Ms. Murray announced the Application #PBA17-00013 was adjourned until the April 18, 2018 meeting.

4.     **Application # PB-17-00013**  
          **Wells Fargo Bank, NA**  
          **107 Miln Street**  
          **Block: 187, Lot: 17, Zone: D-B**

**The applicant is seeking minor site plan approval to remove existing pneumatic tube system within one lane of drive-thru and replace with new ATM machine. Also requesting to remove and replace existing concrete island in drive-thru area.**

5.     **Application #PBA-18-00003**  
          **Birchwood Developers Associates, LLC**  
          **215 & 235 Birchwood Avenue**  
          **Block 292 Lot 2, & Block 291 Lot 15.01, IMR Zone**

**The applicant in this matter is seeking preliminary and final site plan approval for a proposed multi-family residential redevelopment with no variances and one design waiver.**

Gary Goodman, Esq. appeared on behalf of the applicant. Explained the application's history from 2011 until now. Stated that the Township purchased the property from the original developer who wanted to building 360 units and a parking garage. Stated that the Township has put forth a redevelopment plan that reduces the size of the

development from 360 units to 225 units and eliminates the parking garage. Discussed the amenities that would be included in the development and provides an affordable housing component. No variances are requested and only one design wavier that is cosmetic in nature. Stated that the applicant is asking for preliminary and final site plan approval.

Introduced Tony DiGiovanni who appeared and was sworn in.

Mr. Michael Dipple, appeared and was sworn in. His credentials were presented and he was accepted as an expert witness in the field of engineering. Stated that he is familiar with the redevelopment project and has been working on it since 2017. Presented drawing of a comparison of the two projects, marked Exhibit A-1. Drawing shows the location of the project as 215-235 Birchwood Avenue. Stated that the rear of project is facing Wadsworth Terrace and Orange Avenue is to the west. To the east is an elderly care facility. Opposite side of Birchwood is the Verizon building. Stated that the property is encumbered by a tributary of the Rahway River number 1024. At the southwest is a large area of fresh water wetlands which is undeveloped. Described the blue photo which was the former development and the yellow photo is the new development which includes three buildings. The new development will have parking underneath. Buildings will be A, B & C. Building A will have 66 units, building B will have 105 units and building C will have 54 units. Access will be off Birchwood Avenue with two access drives and an emergency egress.

Stated one of the highlights is the number of mature trees that are preserved along Birchwood Avenue. Also reduces the impervious coverage and increases the landscaping. There will be a reduction of 26,700 sq. ft. of pavement which will be removed from the site. Parking will be podium parking, which is parking underneath the buildings.

Presented a colorized version of the site plan (19 pages) of proposed development. Marked Exhibit A-2. Described various colors on the plan. Dark green areas are wooded areas which will remain untouched. Light green area is lawn area. Tan color are buildings and the grey areas are parking and access drive aisles.

Stated that half of the site is in the floodplain but the buildings will not be in the floodplain. Buildings are set three feet above the flood hazard area. The developer has applied to the DEP for a modification to the flood hazard permit. They have met the DEP requirements and the applicant has actually required additional flood storage. Applicant will provide an addition acre foot of storage along the walking path. An acre foot is a volume calculation. Applicant's engineer has been working with the Township engineer regarding his comments.

The development is a walkable development. There will be a walk-bike path and some parking by the path.

Stated that per the Fire Department's request, they have removed the center island from the project. Site plan set page #14 is marked Exhibit A-3 which describes the vehicle circulation.

Discussed the signage Exhibit which was marked A-4 dated 4.4.18. The signage will be 10 to 15 feet back from the property line. It will be made of stone with two pillars with the words "Birchwood at Cranford" with two small lamps and will be located east of the driveway.

Discussed snow storage plan. Described the sewer study that was done with the previous developer and found no issue with 360 units. Feels they will not have a problem with sewer capacity with 225 units.

Questions posed by the Board ascertained the following:

Sign will be located on the east side of the development and will be visible from Orange Avenue. Applicant is working with Township engineer regarding his five concerns that need to be resolved to his satisfaction. A condition of the application is the merger of the lots. Parking requirements are 1.85 parking spaces per resident x 225 units = 416 spaces. Applicant is proposing 436 spaces. 317 podium parking and 119 on site. Handicapped parking will be at each area located in blue on the plan. There will be ADA spaces spread throughout the project.

Ms. Murray opened the application to the public for questions of this witness, with the following appearing:

Frank Krause – 20 Pittsfield Street - Requested to see the slide with the detention basin. Stated he likes the location and asked why the basin is that way and how effective will it be.

Mr. Dipple stated there have been improvements in the design plan. Applicant is providing additional flood storage in the flood plan.

Rita LaBrutto – 104 Arlington Road – Stated that she has an agreement between Mr. Dipple when he was a consultant at CDA, and Mr. Marsden the previous township engineer, to reline 1300 linear feet of sewer. Asked Mr. Dipple if he felt the engineering on the site is pretty much the same. Stated that there was an issue found with regard to the sewer and handed the document to the Planning Board attorney. The cost was \$96,000 to reline the 1300 linear feet. Stated that even though it will be 225 units instead of 360 units, she would not want to see a breakdown in the sewer line. Report was marked Exhibit LaBrutto 1.

Mr. Dipple stated that there were some negotiations with the previous developer with the settlement agreement. Stated that when they did the capacity study they found it was more than adequate to handle the flow going through. Ms. LaBrutto stated it was for slip lining.

Mr. Goodman stated that Ms. LaBrutto should give the report to the Township engineer to study, but it is not part of the site plan which has been put forward. Maybe Township's responsibility to deal with.

Ms. LaBrutto asked if they are still elevating 300 linear feet on Birchwood Avenue. List various roadways that will need to be replaced. Asked about three new storm sewer drains along Birchwood Avenue.

Mr. Dipple stated yes, they are elevating the road. It will be a foot at the highest point. DEP requires the road be raised to provide emergency egress. They will also be replacing the three storm sewers along Birchwood Avenue.

Joe LoGiudice - 25 Wadsworth Terrace – Asked if it possible to move the entire development toward Birchwood Avenue and where will the bike path and roadways be located.

Mr. Dipple stated that they comply exactly with the redevelopment plan. Indicated on the plan where the paths would be.

Loretta Young – 34 Wadsworth Terrace – Asked if North Union will stay a dead end as it is today and is Building B's footprint bigger than the parking lot that was Schering's.

Mr. Dipple stated North Union will stay a dead end and Building B is same size as the Schering parking lot.

Mr. Rothman questioned Mr. Dipple about the February review letter from the Township engineer. Asked if under D item 1, the paver stop bar would be 24 inches with a white stripe.

Mr. Dipple stated that yes the engineer is correct, it will be 24 inches with a white stripe.

Christopher Karach appeared and was sworn in. His credentials were presented and he was accepted as an expert witness in the field of landscape architecture. Described that the concept was to enhance the existing mature canopy onsite. Stated the concept is to use shade trees and ornamental plantings by main entrance on Birchwood Avenue. Courtyard and interior areas of the building would be ornamental plantings and around the bike path native trees along edge of wood line. Stated that there is an opportunity to use evergreens at southern and eastern edges of property line. Plantings will be deer resistant and the southern exposure for the evergreens will help them thrive in those areas. Stated there will be 277 trees planted, but is asking for flexibility for placement of 66 of those trees. Stated that the arborvitae is a tree not a shrub. The one that he is proposing is a Green Giant arborvitae and over time it will grow to 30-40 feet. Planting that tree on the northern side which is full shade will not thrive and over time will thin out.

Avelino Martinez appeared and was sworn in. His credentials were presented and he was accepted as an expert witness in the field of architecture. Described a drawing marked Exhibit A-5 of a wooded area. Described the site lines and landscaping.

Mr. Karach stated where the new plantings will be. They will be Green Giant arborvitae, 6 feet when installed. He will work with the Township engineer on the plan. Stated that the monitoring plan is a 2 year agreement to maintain the trees. The Green Giant is a deer resistant tree and will grow 12-24 inches per year once established. Stated it can get to 30 plus feet.

Ms. Murray opened the application to the public for questions of this witness, with the following appearing:

Jane Smith – 33 Wadsworth Terrace - Stated they have had trees come down in the storms. Asked if the wetlands will be cleaned up in area of woodlands. Asked if trees will be replaced. There was a barrier of trees by nursing home but a lot of trees have come down. Asked what will the maintenance plan be.

Mr. DiGiovanni stated there will be a maintenance bond with Township for two years to maintain the trees. He explained the drawing of 150 feet of wooded area. Stated that planting in the existing woodland will not grow. Placing the evergreens which can grow to 30 feet at the site triangle line will cover the screening instead of planting in the existing woods. Establishing the trees to survive and once they are established they do not need a maintenance plan. It is not a long term bond beyond two years. Some of the properties have a licensing agreement. Stated that they can work with the 3 or 4 residences in back to continue a licensing agreement and after agreement ends, they could maintain them.

Mayor Hannen suggested speaking to the neighbors for an access agreement to do the plantings.

Rita LaBrutto – 104 Arlington Road – Stated she feels that the arborvitae is a poor quality plant. In winter they turn brown and fall over. Stated if you look around town the arborvitaes do not do well. Has a drawing of a group of trees on Birchwood which was marked Exhibit LaBrutto 2. Asked if those trees will remain and if a 6 foot tree covers a 50 foot building. Asked if the trees along front of Birchwood would be the same height. Feels that shade trees such as oaks and maples will not cover the buildings from the street.

Mr. Karach stated that the one they will use is a single leader. It does not split and is a robust tree. Feels it is the best one to thrive. State that yes, the trees in her photo will stay. Stated the trees will grow 2 feet a year so it will take time for the trees to cover the building. Stated that the trees in front will be shade trees, i.e. Oaks and Maples, and will not cover the buildings from the street. Stated that there could be a mixture of trees in the front of the building.

Mr. DiGiovanni again explained the diagram of the existed wooded area. Stated they will be planting on the property line in rear of the property. Benefit of giant tree, is that it grows high but not wide. Stated that they can switch trees in front based on the Planning Board or Township Engineer's recommendation.

Board member stated that the nice thing about the trees is that they change color and would prefer deciduous trees that turn in the fall.

Joe LoGiudice - 25 Wadsworth Terrace - Asked what happens after 2 years if the trees die. Asked about plans for irrigation in the wooded area. Why are they limiting the trees to 6 feet. Asked if Cranford has put in trees anywhere that were larger. He is requesting the Planning Board consider putting in larger trees and after the 2 year agreement to require developer to replace trees that die.

Mr. Goodman described the maintenance bond for the two years. That after the two years, he stated you are dealing with the property owner. Discussed the maintenance code in Cranford.

Ryan LoForte – 35 Wadsworth Terrace – His is one of homes that has a licensing agreement. Asked if there could be a fence put up on building side to provide additional screening. Stated that some of the trees in the wooded area are hanging over his fence.

Mr. DiGiovanni stated that Mr. LoForte's pool is on the property line. Stated that the landscape plan will start at next home and need to rely on the Township engineer to locate how many trees and the spacing. Confirmed that 277 will be planted onsite. Only thing they could do for Mr. LoForte is to put 3 panels on his property. To put a 6 foot fence up would cover the first level of decorative stone on the building.

Mr. LoForte was asked what type of fence was on his property now. He stated it was chain link.

Mayor Hannen asked Mr. LoForte if he was interested in arborvitae in his yard. Mr. Loforte stated yes to arborvitae.

Questions posed by the Board ascertained the following:

There is no lighting plan for garage but there is a lighting plan for the site. The green features include parking under building, recycled concrete, 6 inch walls for energy efficiency along with all the appliances that are energy star rated. There is a cost difference between cultured stone and Hardy Plank. Possible to extend cultured stone up to break up the horizontal siding on building A. There is one elevator in each building A & C and two elevators in building B. Elevators are also for freight. There are trash recycling bins. Some things are a matter of taste and preference. Some board members stated they like the look of the buildings with the stone and Hardy Plank as depicted.

There were no further questions by members of the Board

Avelino Martinez described the project. It is a 225 unit residential development consistent with the redevelopment plan. Introduced Exhibit A-6 which is an artist render of the project showing building A where the entrance will be. Introduced Exhibit A-7 which is the 14 sheets that were submitted with the application. Described the development as 4 stories: 3 story residential over 1 story parking.

Described sheet A-1.0 It is Building A. On ground floor there is a trash room, mail room, lobby, and elevator. Parking is tandem and conventional parking. There are 92 parking spots for 66 units.

Described sheet A1.1 – Typical floor plan. Most units have balconies. There are 22 units per floor. Building B is the southernmost and has 105 units, 35 per floor. There are 152 parking spaces. This building houses the amenities. Such as: club house, fitness area, meeting room, and common lounge. The Leasing Office is also in this building.

Building C has 54 units, 18 per floor and 18 COAH units. It is the northeasterly building.

There are a total of 225 units: 191 market rate and 34 are affordable units which is 15%.

Drawing A-A.21 is exterior elevation. Materials are a combination of cultured stone and siding (Harvey plank). Introduced a number of different colors and elements. Described the building height with a flat roof is 46 ½ feet and corners have accent roof up to 50 feet. Introduced Exhibit A-8 as a sample of the materials being used. Introduced Exhibit A-9 which is a colorized version of elevation dated 3.15.18. Discussed the design wavier. First floor is stone base, and other floors are different color siding. Described the technical aspects of the building. Stated the building sprinklers are commercial grade. All buildings are fully accessible, elevators, lighting in garage, electric generators. Every building has a trash chute.

Ms. Murray opened the application to the public for questions of this witness, with the following appearing:

Loretta Young - 34 Wadsworth Terrace – Asked what is the protection against fire spreading in these apartments.

Mr. Martinez stated that the walls have a one hour fire resistant rating. The attics are filled with noncombustible insulation and all the apartments have sprinkler systems.

Ms. LaBrutto – 104 Arlington Road – Stated she is concerned about the amount of Hardy Plank in one spot. Would like to see cultured stone up the middle. Asked if there a way to break up the Hardy Plank and can you see it from Orange Avenue. Stated possibility of larger trees in that area to soften the look.



Mr. Martinez – Described the philosophy of the design of the building.

Mr. DiGiovanni stated that the location of rear building has almost an acre of mature trees that are 45 to 70 feet in height. Stated they could add more cultured stone but wanted to keep upper stories one solid color. Stated that they could add 25 feet more of cultured stone in the center up to second story on Building A on Birchwood elevation.

Elizabeth Dolan appeared and was sworn in. Her credentials were presented and she was accepted as an expert witness in the field of traffic engineering. Stated she has visited the site and was also involved in the 2012 application. Stated she has prepared a traffic impact assessment dated 1-24-18. She performed updated traffic counts at the intersections of Birchwood and Orange and Birchwood and Cranford. Counts were done on January 3, 2018 and January 9, 2018 at 7 am to 9 am and 4 pm to 6:30 pm. Peak hours were

7:45 am to 8:45 am and 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm. Compared results with 2012 counts and numbers were consistent. Classified as multi-family housing. Estimated 81 morning driveway movements and 99 evening movements. Based on 225 units. Stated that Orange Avenue had more site traffic. There were 52 trips in morning and 65 during evening. Cranford intersection was 29 trips in morning and 34 during evening. Stated that these numbers are not considered significant. At most would add 8 seconds of delay. Described levels of service scale from an A to F and stated that scale was at a D at morning peak. Does not warrant a traffic signal or any improvements. Discussed various comments from the Police and Engineering regarding traffic studies.

Bill Masol appeared and was sworn in. Stated that he is the Township Engineer. Asked Ms. Dolan to correct the street names in the traffic report. Asked if there was any pedestrian traffic studies done. Ms. Dolan stated yes, there were some counts but not very high. Mr. Masol asked why even under 100 trips there was not a study done at the unsignalized intersection. Ms. Dolan stated that having a level of service as a D and a 5 second delay. Stated they are well below the thresholds. Discussed striping of lanes. Stated that a traffic signal is not warranted.

Mr. Masol feels adding left and right turn lanes should be looked at.

Mr. DiGiovanni stated that the applicant would be willing to restripe the area.

Ms. Murray opened the application to the public for questions of this witness, with the following appearing:

Ms. LaButto – 104 Arlington Road - Stated that there is no parking on Birchwood. Has the 2012 study and area was noted as a level E. Minimum level of acceptability. Ms. Dolan stated she has traffic study from June 14, 2012 and has a level of service table which has a level D. Asked Ms. Dolan if she had traffic counts on the following: between 2 pm and 3:30 pm between schools, on Saturdays, and on Bloomingdale Avenue. Asked questions regarding office traffic. Feels residents are more active on a Saturday. Questioned the amount of trips in the study

Ms. Dolan stated that not all families have 2 cars, people leave at different times and some units only have one car. Also there are different schedules and traffic patterns.

Kristen Russell - Maser Consulting appeared and was sworn in. Stated she is the Planner to the Board. Prepared the Planning Review for the Board. Feels that many issues that she had have been addressed, but would like to state that the Plan complies with all the zoning and bulk standards along with the affordable housing, parking, and open space. Is satisfied with all goals and objectives in the redevelopment plan. Two things that stand out to her are:

- Idea of green building technology – feels has been addressed
- Request in plan for vegetation as it backs up to the residential homes. Feels putting in the arborvitaes in rear of the property will accomplish that goal.

One item she had not seen before tonight, was the plan for the monument sign. Her suggestion was that it should be formally incorporated into the set of plans that are approved. Stated that maximum height is four feet in the ordinance and feels this should be a point of guidance. Application does meet the requirements of the redevelopment plan and the design wavier is reasonable and is comfortable with it.

Ms. Murray opened the application to the public for questions of this witness, with no one appearing the matter was referred back to the Board.

Mr. DiGiovanni stated that the sign was to be 4 feet in height but would be putting a cultured stone base of 2 feet for a total of 6 feet, but will remove the stone for a total height of 4 feet if that is what the Board requires.

Public comments:

Rita LaBrutto appeared and was sworn in. Stated over all the project is a good project, a big improvement over what was to be there. However she still has an issue with the height of the tress. Was not sure about the green buildings. Feels traffic study is lacking, stated that Police and Engineer noted that in their reports. Thinks the Township should hire a traffic engineer. Developer should escrow money in case there is a need for improvements at a later time.

**DELIBERATION OF Application # PBA-18-00003**  
**Birchwood Developers Associates, LLC**  
**215 & 235 Birchwood Avenue**  
**Block 292 Lot 2, & Block 291 Lot 15.01, IMR Zone**

Ms. Murray reviewed the testimony presented.

Board comments consisted of the following:

Development looks great. Commend the developer on what they have come up with. Feels traffic study is lacking. One Board member drives on Birchwood many times a day, feels it was a mistake not to do the study on Bloomingdale. However, may not be enough traffic to warrant a signal. Thanked everyone for their patience. Terrific improvement to the area. A very thorough and well-presented application. Beautiful development. Should go over the list of conditions.

Mayor Hannen asked Mr. Goodman if his applicant would be agreeable to a 5 year bond on the vegetation in the rear of the property.

Mr. DiGiovanni agreed to a 5 year maintenance bond on the rear screening only

Board went over the conditions of the application: 5 year maintenance bond on Green Giants in rear of property only, lot merger, sanitary sewer easement, additional stone work on the Building A in the center two columns. Up to Board regarding height for sign of either 4 or 6 feet.

Mr. Johnson stated that 4 feet is the maximum height of a ground sign. However, the redevelopment plan is silent on this issue so Board can impose what they want. Board agreed to a sign 4 foot high with a 2 foot platform and that landscaping is done to approval of Township engineer.

Board had a question about the integrity of the 1300 feet of pipes. Mr. Masol stated that he has paperwork that Ms. Labutto gave him however, since he just received it this evening the Board does not want Mr. Masol to make a decision before being able to further review it.

Board determined that a 6 foot sign is acceptable.

Motion to grant approval for Application **PBA18-0003** with conditions, was made by Ms. Anderson the motion was seconded by Ms. Pedde with the following voting in favor of the motion: Ms. Murray, Ms. Anderson, Dr. Chapman, Mr. Cossa, Ms. Feder, Mayor Hannen and Ms. Pedde.

Ms. Murray announced the Application #PBA17-00012 was adjourned with the consent of Mr. Pyfer until the April 18, 2018 meeting.

**6. Application # PBA-17-00012**  
**SCODEE Properties, LLC**  
**112 Park Drive**  
**Block: 198, Lot: 1, Zone: R-1**

**The applicant in this matter is seeking site plan approval for a subdivision of a single lot into two fully conforming lots with no variances and no design waivers.**

**5. PUBLIC PORTION**

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was regularly made, seconded and passed. The meeting concluded at 11:45 P.M.

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Donna Pedde, Secretary