

## **MINUTES - PLANNING BOARD**

### **Workshop meeting of November 28, 2018**

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

1.     **COMMUNICATIONS**  
      None
2.     **RESOLUTIONS OF MEMORIALIZATION**  
      None
3.     **MINUTES**  
      None
4.     **OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS**  
      None

### **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 November 28, 2018 at 8:17 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  
Ms. Feder  
Mayor Hannen  
Ms. Pedde  
Mr. Taylor

##### **Members Absent:**

Mr. Cossa  
Deputy Mayor Dooley

**Alternates Present:**

Ms. Didzbalis

**Alternates Absent:**

Mr. Aschenbach

**Also present:**

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

**4. Application # PBA-17-00004- Continued from October 17, 2018**

**Hartz Mountain Industries**

**750 Walnut Avenue**

**Block: 541, Lot: 2, C-3 Zone**

**Applicant is seeking to rezone the subject property to eliminate the office and warehousing uses in favor of multi-family residential use (§136-13).**

Mr. James Rhatican, appeared on behalf of the applicant.

Stated they brought the revised site plans, the EIS and the Storm Water Report.

Mr. Martell will be back next Wednesday to testify to the documents they have provided.

Mayor Hannen asked for the documents to be also provided in electronic form.

Mr. Rothman asked about witnesses for the next scheduled meeting.

Mr. Rhatican stated Mr. Martell would be there to explain the EIS and the revisions to the plans. Stated the Traffic Engineer is not available that evening. Tonight, there will be two witnesses, Mr. Reese who was before the Board in May, who will authenticate some documents and Mr. Englebaugh, the Architect, who will explain the renderings he prepared at the request of the Board. Mr. Reese's documents were finalized this morning.

Mr. Rothman stated the documents will be marked Reese 1.

Mr. Reese appeared and was reminded that he is still under oath.

He testified to the following through questions posed by Mr. Rhatican:

Hartz has continued to try and market the space since the last time he was here in May. Explained some of the materials they are using to market the space, including a listing on CoStar and LoopNet. Also showed an email blast they sent to over 500 brokers and the dates those emails were sent out. Listings are still active on CoStar and LoopNet and the last email blast was sent out on 10/31/18 to 503 brokers.

Questions posed by the Board ascertained the following:

The brokers are industrial, retail and office brokers. Brokers stay on the list unless they contact Hartz to say they are no longer interested. Terms for leasing will vary from deal to deal. It is deal specific. They try to tailor any deal to each individual interested in the property. The CoStar listing which shows "rent withheld" means they don't list a number, so they do not eliminate any interested parties. Stated they do that with all properties they list on CoStar. The monthly email blast is specific to 750 Walnut Avenue. Pages 2, 3, & 4 are what is sent out via email blast and page 5 is what is on the website. They do this for other properties on a monthly basis. They don't advertise building square footage. In 2016, 28,000 square feet for 5 years, if they just painted and carpeted, would have been \$12 per sq. ft. on a net basis. For 2018, the price would be probably the same. Not aware of what comps would be in the area. Each deal is different. They do have conversations with brokers they send the emails to. There may have been changes to the email, such as a different photo or updating the information as to what amount of space is available and when it is available. He is not sure if there is a way to tell how many people have clicked on the emails. The leased comps are showing the space in the buildings at 750 Walnut Avenue. The Walk Score number on the document is CoStar's data. There is a trucking company currently at 750 Walnut Avenue.

Ms. Murray opened the application to the public for questions of the witness and the following appearing:

Mark Zucker – 19 Pershing Avenue – Asked about the CoStar and LoopNet sites being subscription only. Did not see the 750 Walnut lease on LoopNet.

Mr. Reese stated that CoStar and LoopNet are subscription only.

Frank Krause - 20 Pittsfield Street – Asked about the tenants and if they are aware that Hartz is looking to rezone the property. Also asked about the existing tenants and why they left. Asked about PSE&G and the amount of vehicles located there and if they offered to buy their space. Asked about the trucking business and LabCorp and their status. Asked why all the companies are leaving at the same time.

Mr. Rhatican objected to the question.

Mr. Reese stated that PSE&G has not expressed an interest in buying the space that they are in and they have notified Hartz that they are leaving. Stated the trucking company's lease is up next year and LabCorp's lease expires in July 2019 and they are vacating the property. Stated that the leases are all expiring at the same time.

Mr. Rhatican stated these questions are going beyond the scope of what Mr. Reese has testified to.

Rita LaBrutto – 104 Arlington Road – Asked about the classification of Class B for the office space on a website called Commercial Café. Asked if someone called about the space, are they told there are ongoing planning board meetings regarding a rezoning. Asked how long he has been marketing the property.

Mr. Reese stated he is not familiar with the site Commercial Café. He does not tell interested parties that they are in the process of requesting the property be rezoned. Stated they have been marketing the property since March 2016 and he has worked for Hartz for 31 years. Discussed the efforts made for Bank of America and LabCorp to stay.

Tom Roettker – 347 Union Ave S. – Asked if Mr. Reese would be the broker if the property went to a residential development.

Mr. Reese stated he is not a licensed broker. His position does not required him to have a license.

Board member asked if it is legal not to disclose that the property is in the process of possible redevelopment.

Mr. Reese stated if someone was interested in leasing a significant amount of the property with fair terms, they would do it.

Kathy Allegro – 17 Shetland Drive – Asked about the inquiries and if they track them. Asked how many inquiries have they received who were seriously interested in the space.

Mr. Reese stated they do track the inquiries and there have been 3 or 4 serious inquiries since 2016.

Board member asked about the email blasts and Clark Commons being across the street from 750 Walnut Avenue. Stated the aerial view does not show Clark Commons. Asked about changing the email to show the Clark Commons.

Mr. Reese stated he feels their efforts are where they should be.

Brett Dreryer – 12 Hampton Street – Asked about marketing the property and possible incentives.

Mr. Reese stated the property needs to be renovated and is on a case by case basis for doing renovations.

Laurie Jackson – 8 Samoset Road – Asked about PSE&G expressing an interest in buying any other part of the property.

Mr. Reese stated there have been discussions, but he has not been part of those discussions.

Rita LaBrutto - 104 Arlington Road – Asked about the broker's commission. Asked about when it was put onto LoopNet and history of any changes.

Mr. Reese stated the commission is the standard 5% of industrial net rent vs 5% of office gross rent. Stated they have not taken it off of LoopNet since 2016.

Board Member asked why he was not involved in the negotiations for PSE&G.

Mr. Reese stated he is not the only one who works on 750 Walnut. He was however involved in the 3 or 4 potential lease inquiries in the last few years.

Frank Krause – 20 Pittsfield Street – Asked if the Bank of America space is occupied. Has not seen any signs out front.

Mr. Reese stated it is not leased but it has been advertised.

Board Member asked what is the minimum square footage they are willing to lease. Asked about possibly leasing 3754 sq. ft. or 7044 sq. ft.

Mr. Reese stated it would depend upon the price and the term. Stated they tried to get BOA to stay. They were willing to lease only one of the floors at 30,000 sq. ft. for BOA. Stated they would show the property at 30,000 square feet.

Don Smith – 21 Oneida Place – Asked what date and time Hartz decided to change to residential units.

Mr. Reese stated they continue to show and market the property at this time. If someone where interested in leasing a significant portion, they would be interested in doing so.

Gerry Grillo – 4 Seneca Place – Asked about leasing and if it is imperative or legal to disclose to a prospective tenant that there is a pending application for a residential project at that site. Asked if Mr. Reese is a licensed realtor.

Mr. Reese stated he will show the property and if someone wanted to lease the property he would lease it. Stated he is not a licensed realtor.

Mr. Englebaugh appeared and was reminded he is still under oath.

Questions posed by Mr. Rhatican ascertained the following:

He is back to describe the renderings he was requested to prepare for the Board. Explained the first one as the landscape architecture drawing by Stonefield Engineering. Stated they are going to try and maintain the existing berm as much as possible. Described Exhibit marked Englebaugh 1 dated 11/28/18, as a rendering showing several vantage points - north of Lexington Avenue, then looking at Building B, then view of Mitchell Place, then of Braemar Court, also looking over railroad tracks showing Building #5 next to golf course.

Second sheet in Exhibit shows view from Walnut Avenue. Rendering is prepared by going to the site and taking a photo then cutting it out and building a 3-D model and adding landscaping.

Other views are driving south on Walnut Avenue, view from Mitchell Place and main entrance with 5 story building. Another view is of Braemar Court, parking deck is in the background. Red line shows 4 story and 5 story buildings.

Board member asked what types of trees are in the landscape plan. Also asked about the view with the hump in driveway and is that the berm. Also asked about proposed traffic light.

Mr. Englebaugh did not know what type of trees they were. Stated that would be a question for the landscape architect and the civil engineer would need to answer question about topography.

Board Member asked about what landscaping was used and how tall the trees are on the rendering. Also asked about contrast of the trees. Asked when he started the renderings and why a berm was not shown in the renderings.

Mr. Englebaugh stated that a generic tree was used and they are approximately 25 to 30 feet. Was not sure about contrast but stated that renderings start with a photograph.

Mr. Rhatican stated that the concept plan showing the berm was only finalized this morning.

Board member asked how tall is the 5-story building.

Mr. Englebaugh stated it is 66 feet 8 inches.

Board member asked about the maturity of the trees.

Mr. Englebaugh stated that is not his expertise, would be a question for the landscape architect.

Described Exhibit marked Englebaugh 2 as two sheets, first page shows fire truck and drive aisle. Stated they will come 15 feet off the building face and have a 26-foot drive lane and 9 feet to property line. Shows a typical ladder truck which extends to 100 feet. Described the amenity deck with seating looking to golf course. Concept plan was done to modify the fire lanes to rear of buildings.

Questions by Board Members ascertained the following:

The drawings are to scale. Used same ladder truck image that they used from a job in Florham Park. Does not know what the angle is that is next to the ladder on the fire truck. Ladder can go down to 7 degrees and almost all the way vertical. Would need to find out what type of ladder truck Cranford has. Trees are for illustration purposes.

There were no further questions by the Board.

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

(Inaudible) - Asked about rendering in winter time.

Mr. Englebaugh stated he does not have a rendering of the winter.

Frank Krause – 20 Pittsfield Street – Asked about the front view of Walnut Avenue with the high berm and the canal.

Mr. Englebaugh stated that question would be for the civil engineer.

Don Smith – 21 Oneida Place – Asked about date and time that this rendering was started and if this is the only rendering for this property.

Mr. Englebaugh stated he did not know the date.

Marlena Schmid – 20 Georgia Street - Asked about underground parking and if there is adequate clearance for an ambulance to get into the garage. Asked about room for additional fire trucks to get by.

Mr. Englebaugh – Stated the code is 8' 2" clearance for wheelchair accessible vans. Garage is designed to code. Stated the civil engineer will address the issue about trucks being able to pass.

Angela Leary – 4 Behnert Place – Asked why there is no architectural rendering looking down Behnert Place to the property and if that was where the traffic light was going to go. Asked about the lanes on Walnut Avenue.

Mr. Englebaugh stated they were not asked to do a rendering of that area. Stated he was looking at the 5 story building closest to the Walnut Avenue property line for the renderings.

Mr. Rhatican stated the changing of the lanes is on the concept plan not the renderings. Will be on the revised plans to be shown next Wednesday.

Board member asked about rendering from Behnert to driveway and if you would see the building.

Mr. Englebaugh stated whatever street trees are proposed you will see the building, but the view line will be obstructed by the trees.

Leon Sevigny – 452 Orchard Street– Asked about average occupancy and the why 905 units.

Mr. Rhatican stated that is testimony for the planner.

Mark Zucker – 19 Pershing Avenue – Asked about Building B and the angular view.

Mr. Englebaugh stated that is the angular view.

Christine Esposito - 11 Behnert Place – Asked about the 905 units.

Mr. Englebaugh stated Hartz wanted to see something that would fit 30 dwelling units per acre.

No one else appeared and this portion of the hearing was closed with the matter referred back to the Board.

Mr. Rhatican stated they will be back next Wednesday with Mr. Martell to discuss the EIS, revised

concept plans and the Storm Water Report. Also, Mr. Penke and Mr. Hughes will both be back, but not sure of their schedules. Mr. Penke cannot come back on December 5<sup>th</sup>. He will check with the planner and get back to Mr. Rothman.

## **8. PUBLIC PORTION**

Mark Zucker – 19 Pershing Avenue– Asked if the EIS included impact on air pollution, etc.

Ms. Murray stated it was just delivered today and no one has seen it. It will be put up on the website for everyone to view.

Rita LaBrutto – 104 Arlington Road – Asked about upcoming meeting dates and who will be testifying. Also asked about the meeting for the Affordable Housing Plan.

Mr. Rothman stated the Engineer will be here on Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>. The Board will be hearing two applications at the meeting on December 19<sup>th</sup>. The Board is trying to schedule a special meeting the week before the 19<sup>th</sup> depending upon availability, to discuss an amendment to the Master Plan regarding the housing element.

Motion was made by Mayor Hannen and seconded by Ms. Pedde to return to workshop and executive session.

There being no further business, this portion of the meeting concluded at 10:23 pm.

---

Donna Pedde, Secretary