

## MINUTES – PLANNING BOARD

### Workshop Meeting of November 3, 2021

A public meeting of the Cranford Planning Board was called to order by Ms. Murray on November 3, 2021, at 7:30 p.m. Ms. Lenahan announced in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Open Public Meetings Act, the Westfield Leader and the Star Ledger have been notified and the agenda posted in the municipal building as required.

#### 1. ROLL CALL

**Members Present:**

Ms. Murray  
Ms. Kellett  
Ms. Didzbalis  
Commissioner Gareis  
Mr. Nordelo  
Ms. Pedde  
Mayor Prunty  
Ms. Rappa  
Mr. Taylor – Recused himself from discussion on TC Ordinance 2021-17

**Members Absent:**

None

**Alternates Present:**

Mr. Walton

**Alternates Absent:**

Ms. Sen

**Also present:**

Jonathan Drill Esq., Board Attorney, Kathy Lenahan, Board Administrator, Nick Dickerson, Board Planner, Jacqueline Dirmann, Board Engineer

#### 2. RESOLUTIONS

None

#### 3. MINUTES

Motion to adopt the minutes of the October 6, 2021 meeting was made by Mr. Nordelo, seconded by Ms. Pedde and passed on roll call vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Kellett, Commissioner Gareis, Mr. Nordelo, Ms. Pedde, Mayor Prunty, Ms. Rappa, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Walton

Opposed: None

Motion to adopt the minutes of the October 20, 2021 meeting was made by Ms. Didzbalis, seconded by Ms. Kellett and passed on roll call vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Murray, Ms. Kellett, Ms. Didzbalis, Mr. Nordelo

Opposed: None

#### **4. COMMUNICATIONS**

Ms. Murray read into the record, a letter from Russ Finestein, Esq. requesting an Extension of Time till June 6, 2022, related to Planning Board application #PB-18-00006.

#### **5. OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Nick Dickerson, Board Planner appeared to discuss a consistency review of Township Ordinance No. 2021-17 – Elevation of Buildings in the Floodplain Overlay District.

Mr. Dickerson reviewed the ordinance and stated the amendment is only related to the Flood Plan overlay district. He reviewed the following items in the ordinance:

- Height
- Design Requirements
- Encroachment Provisions
- Standards
- Decks in Floodplain

Stated the floodplain was addressed in the 2009 Master Plan. It talked about the National Flood Insurance program and discounts on flood premiums. Feels it advances the residential goal in the Master Plan and believes this ordinance is consistent with the Master Plan. The purpose of the amendment in the ordinance, is to streamline the process. If all items are complied with, there is no need for variance relief.

There was discussion about Section 2 Number 3a in the ordinance with regard to the "breakaway wall".

Board asked Ms. Dirmann, Board Engineer, where the four-foot number came from in the proposed revision.

Ms. Dirmann stated the 18 homes already raised where calculated for the level of Irene plus five, this revision is the 100 year plus four. Is not sure where the four-foot came from.

Motion was made by Ms. Kellett, seconded by Ms. Pedde, that TC ordinance 2021-17 is consistent with the Master Plan and made one recommendation to change Section 2 number 3a to read “Below the first-floor level **which contains** a habitable room, a wall ~~surface~~ or breakaway wall shall be provided and **the exterior shall be** finished with one of the following materials:”

**(bold print is to be added, strikethrough word is to be deleted)**

Motion was passed on roll call vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Murray, Ms. Kellett, Ms. Didzbalis, Commissioner Gareis,  
Mr. Nordelo, Ms. Pedde, Mayor Prunty, Ms. Rappa

Opposed: None

Ms. Lenahan stated Steve Saltzman from the HPAB sent in the revisions to the Historic Element from the last workshop and would like to review with the Board at its next meeting.

Board agreed that the HPAB should return to review the revised Historic Element with all the Planning Board members. Ms. Murray asked that the Planning Board members provide any additional comments on the revised Historic Element by November 17<sup>th</sup> to Ms. Lenahan.

## **PUBLIC HEARING - ROOM 107 – COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

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

Ms. Murray called a public meeting of the Cranford Planning Board to order on November 3, 2021 at 8:16 p.m. Ms. Lenahan announced this meeting is in compliance with the “Open Public Meetings Act” as adequate notice of this meeting has been provided to 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. Kellett  
Ms. Didzbalis  
Commissioner Gareis  
Mr. Nordelo

Ms. Pedde  
Mayor Prunty  
Ms. Rappa  
Mr. Taylor

**Members Absent:**  
None

**Alternates Present:**  
Mr. Walton

**Alternates Absent:**  
Ms. Sen

**Also present:**

Jonathan Drill Esq., Board Attorney, Kathy Lenahan, Board Administrator, Jacqueline Dirmann, Board Engineer, Nick Dickerson, Board Planner

4. Application #PB-18-00006  
National Christmas Products, LLC  
70 Jackson Drive  
Block 637 Lot 6.01 C-1 Zone

Request for an Extension of Time to complete Condition No. 3 relating to Site Lighting Fixture Changes and obtain certificate of approval per Condition No. 9 of Amended Final Site Plan Approval for Application No. PB-18-00006 (National Christmas Products, LLC d/b/a National Tree Company).

Russ Finestein, Esq. appeared. Read a letter requesting an Extension of Time till June 6, 2022 on application #PB -18-00006.

Mr. Drill summarized the letter from Mr. Finestein and stated traditional extensions can be granted due to economic and market conditions.

A motion to approve the request for an Extension of Time was made by Ms. Kellett, seconded by Ms. Pedde and passed on roll call vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Murray, Ms. Kellett, Ms. Didzbalis, Commissioner Gareis, Mr. Nordelo, Ms. Pedde, Mayor Prunty, Ms. Rappa, Mr. Taylor

Opposed: None

5. Application # PB- 21-006  
Applicant: Cranford Senior Housing  
40 Meeker Avenue  
Block 532, Lot 8 R-SC- Zone

The applicant in this matter is seeking Amended Preliminary and Final Site Plan approval as well as “c” variances for the installation of a generator and related equipment in a front yard. The “c” variances are requested for an accessory structure that is not allowed in a front or required side yard §255-38A.1 and §255-35D.4.

Susan Rubright, Esq. appeared and explained the application. Stated this is an application to install an emergency generator to power the Gill apartment building during power outages.

The following witnesses for the Applicant and the Board were sworn in:

Cindy Rabinowitz – Executive Director  
Michael Fowler – Applicant’s Site Engineer  
Robert Cioffi – Applicant’s Electrical Engineer  
Sean Moronski – Applicant’s Planner  
Nicholas Dickerson – Board Planner  
Jacqueline Dirmann - Board Engineer

Ms. Rabinowitz appeared and provided information on her position at Cranford Housing.

Questions from Ms. Rubright to Ms. Rabinowitz ascertained the following:

Cranford Housing Associates is the owner of the Edward K. Gill apartments. The apartments house residents 62 years and older. It is a Section 8 building funded by HUD. She is the Executive Director since 2013. The current generator is old and does not support the entire building and only powers life safety. The current generator only allows one elevator to be used and there is no heat or air conditioning during a power outage.

Ms. Rabinowitz gave the following statistics regard the Edward K. apartments: there are 141 residents; 41% of residents above the first floor have mobility issues; 4% use oxygen, and a portable oxygen tank only lasts four to six hours; 4% are visually impaired; 5% have cognitive issues; and 16% have a language barrier. Stated the negative effects of losing power include loss of refrigeration for medications, loss of personal medical devices, getting stuck in a powered chair and loss of food due to lack of refrigeration. Believes this generator is urgently needed for the residents to survive during a power outage. There are about 100 residents who signed a petition and there were no residents opposed to the generator application. Ms. Rabinowitz stated she took the photos that were submitted in mid-September 2021.

Questions from the Board ascertained the following:

The Fire Department has told her they prefer the elevators not be used during a power outage. With a generator, the elevators could be used. The new generator would be a full-service generator similar to the one at the Lincoln Avenue apartments.

No members of the Public had questions for this witness.

Michael Fowler appeared. He presented his qualifications and was accepted as an expert in the field of Engineering.

Questions from Ms. Rubright to Mr. Fowler ascertained the following:

He was responsible for this project. Presented Exhibit A-1 as an ariel photo of site, labeled VA101 with a date of 10-27-21. Reviewed the site on Exhibit A-1. Stated there are several front yards on the site. There are no wetlands on site. There are multifamily and single-family residences around the site. Presented Exhibit A-2 as Site Plan labeled CS101, original date was 5-20-21, this Exhibit is Revision #1 dated 9-19-2021. Described the generator proposed as a 1000-kilowatt, with a 3060-gallon fuel tank. It is double wall construction and is 29 feet long, 9 feet wide and 13 feet high. The setback is 53 feet from Winans, 40 ½ feet from Meeker and 25 feet from the existing apartment building, but is still in the front yard. Generator will work with transformer by second driveway off of Meeker. Chose this location because its proximity to the transformer is important. It does not face windows in the Gill apartments. For refueling, it is in range of a hose for a refueling truck. They are removing a shuffle board court, so there is no increase in impervious coverage. Reviewed the variances they are requesting. Presented Exhibit A-3 as the Landscape Plan labeled LP101 dated 7-28-21. Reviewed both the landscaping, which includes planting 14 trees and 27 Evergreen shrubs and the photos taken by Ms. Rabinowitz. It is a diesel fueled generator. Reviewed the town engineer's report dated 10-27-21. Item #2 will be provided if required by the DEP. Discussed item # 6 which requires a grading plan. Applicant is asking for a waiver since changes are *de minimis*. There will be excavation for a slab and the soil will be taken off site.

Ms. Dirmann, Township Engineer, stated the topography submitted looks like it will be three feet, and they will need to level it off, requests they submit a grading plan.

Ms. Rubright stated the applicant will submit a grading plan.

Mr. Drill stated they may want to orally amend the application to include a variance for the generator in each of the front yards and a variance for the two electrical cabinets in the front yard.

Questions from the Board for this witness ascertained the following:

The existing generator is inside. The generator is the accessory structure and will be landscaped. There will be a grass area where the shuffleboard court was. The electrical cabinet is in the front yard and the electrical conduit will be underground. The plantings will be 6-7 feet high and usually grow a foot a year. There is parking along Meeker and Winans, and the fueling truck will be in a parking space. They would be willing to do larger plantings.

Ms. Rubright stated the 6-7 feet would be the height at planting.

Ms. Rabinowitz stated the generator will be screened and the applicant is willing to do 13-foot-high plantings.

No members of Public had questions for this witness.

Robert Cioffi appeared. He presented his qualifications and was accepted as an expert in the field of Electrical Engineering.

Questions from Ms. Rubright to Mr. Cioffi ascertained the following:

Existing generator is original and small. Generator only provides 400 amps of power. Will replace with a new generator that can support the building in a "business as usual" atmosphere. Generator will have a subbase fuel tank. The location is based on efficiency and for the least amount of disturbance. The existing transformer will stay and they will modify the electrical service. Equipment will be within 10 to 15 feet of that transformer. The generator will only run during a power outage and will be programmed to test on a Wednesday for 15 minutes. It is in a sound attenuated enclosure and would produce 65 dB. Presented Exhibit A-4 as the color chart for the generator. The color of generator will be Desert Tan.

Board requested that the testing be done between 10am and 5pm only.

Questions from the Board for this witness ascertained the following:

The generator will power the entire building. There are two elevators in the building and it would power both. The site has no issues with flooding. The existing transformer is green and the new ATS cabinet will be Battleship Gray.

Mr. Dickerson, Board Planner appeared. Stated all the comments from his review letter have been addressed.

No members of the Public had questions for this witness.

Sean Moronski appeared. He presented his qualifications and was accepted as an expert in the field of Planning.

Questions from Ms. Rubright to Mr. Moronski ascertained the following:

He reviewed the site along with the Township's Land Development ordinance and the Reexamination Report. Referred to Exhibit A-2 and reviewed the ordinance for a front yard setback. Described reasons for requested location of the generator. Stated it needs to be near existing equipment for a more efficient connection. This limits the location of generator. Feels benefits outweigh the detriments. Stated the granting of this variance will further Purpose A, B and C of Zoning. Discussed the negative criteria and that the generator will only be tested during certain hours and that the aesthetic impact is limited since there will be landscaping that will screen the visual impact. There is no substantial detriment to the zoning ordinance or zone plan.

Questions from the Board for this witness ascertained the following:

The PSE&G cabinet and ATS are both 87 inches wide x 59 ½ inches deep and 91 ½ inches high. The old generator will be removed.

No members of the Public had questions for this witness.

Ms. Rubright summarized the application. Thanked the Board and stated the generator will allow the residents of the building to live normally during a power outage. It is the best location taken into consideration all the factors. Two front yards requires a variance. The current generator is obsolete. This generator will only operate during emergencies. There will be shielding of generator with landscaping.

There were no comments from the Public on this application.

**5. DELIBRATION** of Application # PB- 21-006  
Applicant: Cranford Senior Housing  
40 Meeker Avenue  
Block 532, Lot 8 R-SC- Zone

The applicant in this matter is seeking Amended Preliminary and Final Site Plan approval as well as “c” variances for the installation of a generator and related equipment in a front yard. The “c” variances are requested for an accessory structure that is not allowed in a front or required side yard §255-38A.1 and §255-35D.4.

Board comments consist of the following:

If screening is the same as with the existing generator, it will not be seen. It is an important improvement. Applicant is being proactive. It is a vulnerable population, and should have safeguards in place.

A motion to approve the application was made by Mayor Prunty, seconded by Ms. Kellett, and passed on roll call vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Murray, Ms. Kellett, Ms. Didzbalis, Commissioner Gareis, Mr. Nordelo, Ms. Pedde, Mayor Prunty, Ms. Rappa, Mr. Taylor

Opposed: None

A resident requested to provide public comment.

Mr. Drill stated there is no public comment at a Planning Board meeting, unless there is a public hearing.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was regularly made, seconded and passed. The meeting concluded at 10:13 p.m.

---

Kathleen Murray, Chair