

MINUTES - PLANNING BOARD

Meeting of March 15, 2023

A public meeting of the Cranford Planning Board was called to order by Ms. Kellett on March 15, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. Ms. Kellett 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. Kellett
Mr. Nordelo
Mayor Andrews
Ms. Didzbalis
Deputy Mayor Gareis
Ms. Pedde
Ms. Rappa
Ms. Sen
Mr. Taylor

Members Absent:

None

Alternates Present:

Mr. Pistol

Alternates Absent:

Mr. Leber

Also present:

Jonathan Drill Esq., Board Attorney, Kathy Lenahan, Board Administrator

2. MINUTES

A motion to adopt the closed session minutes of January 18, 2023 was made by Mr. Nordelo, seconded by Ms. Didzbalis and passed on roll call vote:

Affirmative: Mr. Nordelo, Ms. Didzbalis, Deputy Mayor Gareis, Ms. Pedde, Ms. Rappa, Ms. Sen, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Pistol

Opposed: None

A motion to adopt the official minutes of January 18, 2023 was made by Ms. Didzbalis, seconded by Mr. Nordelo and passed on roll call vote:

Affirmative: Mr. Nordelo, Ms. Didzbalis, Deputy Mayor Gareis, Ms. Pedde, Ms. Rappa, Ms. Sen, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Pistol

Opposed: None

3. RESOLUTIONS:

A motion to adopt Resolution No. 2023-09 (2023 Revised Rules & Regulations) was made by Mr. Nordelo, seconded by Ms. Rappa, and passed roll call vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Kellett, Mr. Nordelo, Mayor Andrews, Ms. Didzbalis, Ms. Rappa,
Ms. Sen, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Pistol

Opposed: None

4. COMMUNICATIONS

None

5. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Discussion was held to see if there would be a quorum for the scheduled April 12th meeting. There were not enough members who could be present on April 12th for a quorum, so the meeting was cancelled.

PUBLIC MEETING – Immediately following the Workshop – Council Chambers

1. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Ms. Kellett called a public meeting of the Cranford Planning Board to order on March 15, 2023, at 7:47 p.m. Ms. Kellett 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. ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Ms. Kellett
Mr. Nordelo
Mayor Andrews
Ms. Didzbalis
Deputy Mayor Gareis
Ms. Pedde
Ms. Rappa
Ms. Sen
Mr. Taylor

Members Absent:

None

Alternates Present:

Mr. Pistol

Alternates Absent:

Mr. Leber

Also present:

Jonathan Drill Esq., Board Attorney, Kathy Lenahan, Board Administrator, Nicholas Dickerson, Board Planner, Kevin Boyer, Board Engineer, Kevin Nollstadt, Board Stormwater Engineer

3. Application: #PB 23-001
Applicant: 108 South Ave E. LLC, 112 South Ave East LLC,
Boffard Holdings LLC, VIBO Holdings LLC, 2 Chestnut St. LLC,
& Iron Ore Properties LLC
108-126 South Avenue East, 32 & 41 High Street & 2 Chestnut Street
Block: 478 Lots: 2-6 & Block: 483 Lots: 17.01 & 18, D-C, D-B & D-T Zones

The applicant in this matter is seeking Preliminary and Final Site Plan Approval to construct a four (4) story mixed-use building containing 55 residential units (9 affordable & 46 market rate), retail space on the first floor and parking within the South Avenue & Chestnut Street Redevelopment Area. The application is also for the expansion of Municipal Parking Lot #6, which is also within the South Avenue & Chestnut Street Redevelopment Area.

Jason Tuvel, Esq. appeared. Stated there are noncontiguous parcels with this application. Reviewed his witnesses for the evening and how they would proceed. This is a variance free project, but has an exception for the tree placement and a *de minimis* exception from RSIS for parking.

All witnesses were sworn in at the same time:

For the Applicant:

Architect – Avelino Martinez
Civil Engineer – William Masol
Traffic Engineer – Nicholas Verderese
Stormwater Engineer – Bahram Farzaneh

For the Board: were not on the mic

Board Engineer – Kevin Boyer
Board Planner – Nicholas Dickerson
Board Stormwater Engineer – Kevin Nollstadt

Avelino Martinez appeared and presented his qualifications. He was accepted by the Board as an expert in architecture.

Questions from Mr. Tuvel to Mr. Martinez ascertained the following:

Presented six marked Exhibits A-1 through A-6. Identified each as: Exhibit. A-1 Existing Conditions Plan (color ariel rendered 3-14-23), A-2 Landscaping Plan (color rendered 3-14-23), A-3 Exterior Building View from South Ave (color rendering, no date), Exhibit A-4 Rear of Building (color rendering, no date), Exhibit A-5 Building Section (color rendering 3-14-23) and Exhibit A-6 Enlarged Elevations (A09) (3-13-23).

Described the site and the overall floor plan of building. Vehicles will access the building from South Avenue with a one-way in. The parking and a two way in and out driveway will be on High Street. The front of building will be retail, with the residential lobby in the middle. Rear would have access from the parking garage with handicap access. It will be a four-story building with retail on ground floor on South Avenue. There will be three stories of residential and the fourth story is set back. Flood storage is below the parking garage. Flood vents are along the rear of property. This is in Subdistrict 1.

Questions from the Board for this witness ascertained the following:

Retail is at a slightly different level from parking garage. Retail is elevated above the street level. There is a handicap accessible ramp on High Street. The lobby is at a slightly lower elevation.

William Masol appeared and presented his qualifications. He was accepted by the Board as an expert in civil engineer.

Questions from Mr. Tuvel to Mr. Masol ascertained the following:

Reviewed Exhibit A-1, stated the site is .83 acres with South Avenue to the north and High Street to the east. It is currently occupied with four separate buildings and the remainder is paved parking. Access is one way in, off of South Avenue, one way out on South Avenue, and a two-way driveway on the corner of South & High. There are also two separate driveways on High Street. Existing impervious coverage at the site is 33,580 sq. ft. with a minimal amount of stormwater. Similar to 201 Walnut, in that, it is partially in the flood hazard area. Reviewed Exhibit A-2 as the Site Plan. Solid to dash line is property boundary and solid bold line is building footprint. Proposing four story building with retail space on ground level fronting on South Avenue along with a lobby area. Trash rooms will be in NW and SE corners. Second through fourth floors contains 55 residential units. Impervious coverage will go down by 60 sq. ft. which will be 96% impervious coverage, which meets the redevelopment requirements. Access will be from two driveways. One way in from South Avenue and a two-way driveway on High Street. The one on South Avenue will be 24 feet wide. Parking will be 57 spaces with two ADA and 12 EV charging stations. Spaces will be 9 x 18, except for spaces for compact cars and ADA will be sized at 8 x 18. Showed parking spaces on Sheet 3 of Site Plan. There will also be 15 reserved parking spaces at 2 Chestnut Street with the expansion of Municipal Lot #6. Reviewed Sheet 5 of Site Plan. The 15 spaces will be signed and reserved for use by the main building and there is a reconfiguration of three public spots.

There will be 16 covered bicycle parking spots (14 are required) in the east end of parking area. There will also be nine outdoor bike spaces located at the southeast corner of building (6 are required). All paver sidewalks will be replaced. There is a loading zone proposed on High Street.

Referred to the Lighting Plan on Sheet 12. Parking area will have overhead down lighting and along building frontages there will be wall fixtures. No lights are proposed on the southerly side of the building. Existing street lights along the frontage of the property will not be impacted by the development.

Mr. Dickerson stated the Redevelopment Plan allows a maximum of 20% of the total provided for compact cars.

Reviewed the Landscaping Plan. There will be street trees, shrubbery along frontage, and the southerly property line will have grass with additional trees. Required that street trees are spaced at 30 feet for smaller trees and 40 feet for larger trees. Due to restrictions with intersections and light poles, they will also be adding trees to the southerly property line to make a total of 10 trees at the site. Reviewed landscaping for the 2 Chestnut property. Parking area will be paved. Areas outside of the parking area will be sodded lawn. Between the Chestnut right-of-way and parking lot, will be additional plantings. The lighting fixtures will meet the ordinance requirements. The public open space was addressed at the 201 Walnut application and there is no additional public open space on this application.

Discussed flooding for the site. Presented Exhibit A-7 as a color rendering of Grading and Drainage Plan Sheet 4 of plan set. Reviewed the flood storage at the site. Required to have zero net fill at the site. Created a void space underneath the parking deck, which will be the flood storage. There will be a net gain 5230 cubic feet of flood storage at the site. The finished floor will be one foot above the flood hazard elevation. The lobby area has step down for ADA accessibility. There will be a flood barrier to prevent flood waters from entering into the lobby.

Questions from the Board for this witness ascertained the following:

There will a total of 57 on-site parking spaces, which are for residents only. There will also be 5 on-street parking spaces (net gain of 3). A regular car could fit in the compact space, but it would be tight. The ADA spaces have an accessible aisle in the middle. There are two ADA spaces and 12 compact spaces. They are restricted as to where the compact spaces can be located. There will be columns next to the compact spaces. The existing large tree being removed on South Avenue was requested to be removed by the Township and will be swapped out for a new tree. The Landscape Plan states the trees will be a 3-inch caliber and be 8 to 10 feet high at planting. There will also be tree pits; not bioretention boxes, since those would need to discharge the excess stormwater to the flood portion of the site. There will be an irrigation system for the building. There would still be ADA access through the back of the building in the event of a flood. The NJ Flood Hazard area is the FEMA elevation plus one. This application must comply with the FEMA plus one. DEP has reviewed all the flood mitigation controls for this project. Will provide hatches in floor area to do necessary cleaning. Flood vents will keep most of debris out during a flood. The only time it would need to be cleaned, would be when there was a flood and there will be periodic inspections. Flood vents direct water through the flood storage area beneath the parking garage. South Avenue work will consist of curbing and sidewalk replacement. On High Street, patching will be done for any trenches for connections. There is no stormwater storage under the building. The dumpster will be fully enclosed.

Mr. Tuvel stated they would look into the bioretention boxes and have an answer at the next meeting.

Questions from Kevin Boyer, Board Engineer, for this witness ascertained the following: Based on the report from Colliers date 3-13-23, applicant agrees to comments except for: #10 regarding the ADA accessible parking spaces. This applies to the residential component only, and requires 2% set aside and they do comply. For #11, they will relocate the parking meter. Other items will be reviewed by the Traffic Engineer.

Questions from Nick Dickerson, Board Planner, for this witness ascertained the following: Based on his report dated 3-10-23, applicant will agree to the comments.

Ms. Kellett asked if anyone from the Public had questions for this witness, the following appeared:

Rita LaBrutto – 104 Arlington Road appeared. Asked about street parking on South Avenue along with the six spots on Chestnut. Asked about planting trees in front of six spots on Chestnut. Asked about the garbage truck entry and loading zone. Asked about High Street and street lights. Asked about new flood regulations. Asked about maintaining the Chestnut Street lot and are the six spaces on Township property in the right-of-way.

Mr. Masol stated there is a provision in Township Code for parking. For the property on Chestnut, they are not adding additional spots for public; they are reinstalling the three spots within the expanded parking area. The 15 spots between Chestnut and the expanded parking area are reserved spaces for the property. The Town is not losing any metered spaces. Will have alternative landscaping, not sure a tree could fit. The garbage truck will access from the loading zone on High Street or will pull into the driveway area off South Avenue. Not changing the street lighting on High Street. The applicant will maintain their portion of the lot. The six spaces are on Township property.

Mr. Boyer stated there are local flooding ordinances that are pending, but have not been adopted and the applicant is not required to follow them.

Finnegan Sezer - 8 Roger Avenue appeared. Asked about bike parking and about bike locks with the racks. Asked about the spaces in the Redevelopment Plan. Asked about the screened area in the upper corner of main building. Asked about bus stop for South Ave & High Street and covering of the bench. Asked about improvements for pedestrians by the train station.

Mr. Masol stated there would be bike racks. There are 77 spaces required in the Redevelopment Plan. The screened area by the garage is for adjacent properties. The bus area with bench is not proposed to be covered. The signal at intersection by the train station is controlled by the County.

Mr. Drill stated this hearing will be continued to April 19th and May 3rd at 7:30 p.m., without the need for further notice.

Mr. Tuvel stated the Traffic Engineer cannot appear on April 19th.

Ms. Kellett made an announcement that the April 12th meeting is being cancelled, due to a lack of a quorum.

Mr. Drill asked for the applicant to provide an extension until June 30, 2023.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was regularly made seconded and passed. The meeting concluded at 10:41 p.m.

Molly Hurley Kellett, Chair