

MINUTES

PLANNING BOARD

TOWNSHIP OF BERKELEY HEIGHTS, NEW JERSEY

Virtual Online Public Meeting

February 17, 2021

The Regular Meeting of the Planning Board was called to order at 7:30 PM by Craig Johnson via Zoom virtual meeting service.

Mr. Johnson confirmed that the meeting was being held in conformance with all regulations of the SUNSHINE LAW and proper notice had been given to the Courier News; also, the Agenda had been posted on the Township website. The Agenda for the meeting, as well as instructions for public participation in the meeting, have also been posted on the Township website and sent to the newspaper of record. The Agenda items will not necessarily be heard in the order listed and the meeting will not continue significantly past 10:30 PM.

Roll Call:

Members present were Mr. Johnson, Mr. Hall, Mr. Mangold, Mr. Monaco, Ms. Schwarz, Ms. Kingsley, Ms. Greenwald, Mr. Cunningham and Ms. Poage. Mr. Robertson, Board Attorney, Mr. Warner, Conflict Attorney, Mr. Solfaro, Board Engineer, Mr. Hughes, Township Planner, and Ms. Chen were also present.

Adoption of Minutes:

February 3, 2021 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Hall, seconded by Ms. Kingsley, to adopt the Minutes of the February 3, 2021 Regular Meeting as presented. The voice vote was unanimous.

Referral

Ordinance introduced by the Township Council at the Public Meeting on February 2, 2021 regarding the rezoning of the Connell property. There have been no changes to the ordinance previously reviewed by the Planning Board on December 9, 2020. The Board is asked to review the ordinance again to cure an ordinance adoption issue.

Mr. Robertson reviewed the ordinance and stated that the Board previously recommended to the Township Council that the ordinance be adopted as consistent with the Master Plan.

A motion was made by Mr. Cunningham, seconded by Ms. Kingsley, to authorize the submission to the Township Council of the Planning Board's finding that the proposed ordinance is consistent with the Master Plan and to adopt a Resolution memorializing the Board's action. The roll call vote was 9-0 with Mr. Johnson, Mr. Hall, Mr. Mangold, Mr.

Monaco, Ms. Schwartz, Ms. Kingsley, Ms. Greenwald, Mr. Cunningham and Ms. Poage voting in favor. There were none opposed.

Mr. Robertson left the meeting.

Application for Review:

App.SP-10-20: Berkeley Crossing Urban Renewal, L.L.C., 88 River Road, Block 502, Lot 1; 663 & 655 Springfield Avenue, Block 502, Lots 2, 4 & 5; 123 Passaic Avenue, Block 502, Lot 3 (HB-3 Zone) / former Berkeley Florist site

Applicant is seeking preliminary and final site plan approval to construct a mixed-use building with 53 residential units and 4,800 square feet of ground floor commercial space. This application amends the previously approved site plan for a mixed-use development with 45 units which was approved by Planning Board Resolution adopted August 14, 2019.

Robert Simon, attorney for the applicant, stated that the applicant previously obtained approval for a mixed-use development and the project has now been modified to incorporate an additional lot. The proposed project now would have 53 residential units, 10 of which will be affordable units, and 4,800 square feet of ground floor commercial space. There will be a total of 98 parking spaces with 30 spaces to be banked and reserved for future use if needed. The project has been designed in accordance with the Redevelopment Agreement between the applicant and the Township.

Lee Titus, Engineer and Planner, was sworn, gave his educational and professional background and was accepted as an expert witness. Mr. Titus reviewed the site plan, existing conditions and proposed conditions. He indicated the access locations to the residential units and the retail area from River Road and Washington Street and described the proposed parking areas. Mr. Titus also reviewed the proposed storm water management, streetscape improvements, sidewalks, lighting, and landscaping. He stated that he has reviewed Mr. Solfaro's report and will work with him regarding drainage. The applicant will comply with the recommendations made by the Fire Department.

Discussion took place regarding the proposed banked parking spaces and how the determination would be made as to when they are needed. Mr. Warner advised that the Board would retain jurisdiction with respect to this issue.

With regard to maintenance of the unimproved portion of Washington Street, Mr. Hughes advised that the Board could impose a condition regarding maintenance of the landscaping. Mr. Simon stated that the applicant will work with the Township to resolve the issue.

In response to questions from the Board and the Board Professionals, Mr. Titus stated that the proposed monument sign will not be illuminated, the existing house on Lot 1 will be demolished and landscaping will be added for buffering.

Open to the Public

The hearing was opened to the public for questions regarding Mr. Titus' testimony.

Mary Ann Kitchell, owner of Lot 6, raised questions regarding noise from the air conditioning units, proposed plantings between the project and her property, replacement of trees on River Road and improvement to her property to replace the driveway.

Mr. Titus stated that the air conditioning units will conform to the noise ordinance, some additional plantings can be added between the properties, there are no plans to replace trees on River Road, and the applicant will improve her driveway to her satisfaction.

John Saracco, architect, was sworn, gave his educational and professional background and was accepted as an expert witness. Mr. Saracco reviewed the architectural plans, the elevations and the location of the building on the property. He reviewed the floor plans and indicated the location of the retail space, residential lobby, gym, mechanical room, parking for retail and for tenants, bike parking, trash chutes and trash room on the ground floor, the residential units, stairway, lounge area, elevator and business center on the second floor, and the residential units and amenity space on the third floor.

Mr. Saracco presented Exhibit A-1 – colored rendering of the building elevation, Exhibit A-2 - monument sign detail, Exhibit A-3 – south elevation, Exhibit A-4 – retail sign detail and lighting, Exhibit A-5 – gooseneck lighting details, Exhibit A-6 – lighting for residential unit entrance, and Exhibit A-7 - egress door lighting detail.

Mr. Saracco stated that the applicant will comply with the Redevelopment Plan as to signage and streetscape improvements but is seeking relief as to the streetscape improvements on Passaic Avenue and Washington Street. He reviewed the parking garage and stated that more charging stations can be added if needed and there will be at least one assigned parking space for each apartment.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Saracco reviewed the exterior materials of the building and stated that the electric wiring will be run so that additional charging stations can be added. He stated that the balcony dimensions will be 5' x 8', they will just be sitting balconies and barbeques will be prohibited.

Open to the Public

The hearing was opened to the public for questions regarding Mr. Saracco’s testimony. There were no members of the public who had questions.

Corey Chase, traffic engineer, was sworn, gave his educational and professional background and was accepted as an expert witness. Mr. Chase reviewed the traffic impact study for the project and stated that the project will not substantially impact the traffic generation and the intersections will operate at acceptable levels. He further stated that this will be a good utilization of shared parking for residential and retail and in his opinion the 98 parking spaces will be adequate to serve the building.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Chase stated the opinion that a follow up study should be done to ensure that there is sufficient parking and that the parking be unrestricted to take advantage of the shared parking opportunity.

Discussion took place regarding the banked parking spaces and what would be an appropriate trigger to consider whether or not those spaces should be constructed. It was suggested that the issue be revisited one year after the retail space has reached full occupancy. Mr. Warner advised that if the applicant and the Township cannot reach agreement as to the implementation of the banked parking the Board would retain jurisdiction on this issue.

Open to the Public

The hearing was opened to the public for questions regarding Mr. Chase’s testimony.

Lisa Bond asked if the traffic study included any impact on Washington Street.

Mr. Chase stated that in view of the acceptable levels of service he does not anticipate any problem.

Open to the Public

The hearing was opened to the public for questions or comments with regard to the application. There were no members of the public who had questions or comments.

Board Discussion

Board members expressed their opinions with regard to the application and the consensus was in favor of granting approval.

A motion was made by Mr. Cunningham, seconded by Mr. Hall, to approve App.# SP-10-20: Berkeley Crossing Urban Renewal, L.L.C., 88 River Road, Block 502, Lot 1; 663 & 655 Springfield Avenue, Block 502, Lots 2, 4 & 5; 123 Passaic Avenue, Block 502, Lot 3 (HB-3 Zone) / former Berkeley Florist site subject to the conditions discussed and further subject to the requirements, restrictions and limitations that shall be set forth in a Resolution of Memorialization to be adopted by the Board at a future meeting. The roll call vote was 9-0 with Mr. Johnson, Mr. Hall, Mr. Mangold, Mr. Monaco, Ms. Schwarz, Ms. Kingsley, Ms. Greenwald, Mr. Cunningham and Ms. Poage voting in favor. There were none opposed.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Ms. Kingsley, seconded by Ms. Poage, to adjourn the meeting. The voice vote was unanimous and the meeting adjourned at 10:43 p.m.

Regina Giardina, Secretary Pro-Tem