

MINUTES

PLANNING BOARD

TOWNSHIP OF BERKELEY HEIGHTS, NEW JERSEY

Virtual Online Public Meeting

September 23, 2020

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. Niceforo, Ms. Schwarz, Mr. Mangold, Ms. Greenwald, Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Monaco. Mr. Robertson, Board Attorney, Mr. Solfaro, Township Engineer, and Mr. Hughes, Township Planner, were also present.

Adoption of Minutes:

September 9, 2020

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Monaco, to adopt the Minutes of the September 9, 2020 as presented. The voice vote was unanimous.

Adoption of Resolutions:

App. SP-4-20 : 528 Springfield Ave, LLC, 528 Springfield Ave., Bl. 612, L. 4 (DD-Zone)

Applicant is seeking preliminary and final site plan approval and variances for a two-story building to be used as an allergy friendly bakery business. The bakery would be on the first floor with storage on the second floor. The plans have been revised to eliminate the residential units. The existing structure will remain and be renovated, and there will be no basement.

Mr. Robertson reviewed the Resolution.

A motion was made by Ms. Greenwald, seconded by Mr. Cunningham, to adopt the above Resolution. The roll call vote was 4-0 with Mr. Johnson, Ms. Schwarz, Ms. Greenwald and Mr. Cunningham voting in favor. There were none opposed.

App.#SP-7-20: Lone Pine Drive Urban Renewal LLC, Block 703, Lots 3, 4 & 8

Application for amended preliminary and final site plan approval. By resolution memorialized on November 6, 2019, the Planning Board approved a development consisting of a 3-story, 170-unit apartment building with a 4-level parking garage. The proposed, modified project consists of a 4-story apartment building containing a total of 173 residential units, including 26 affordable housing units, with a 4-level parking garage. (DH-24 Zone Redevelopment Area)

Mr. Robertson reviewed the Resolution.

A motion was made by Ms. Greenwald, seconded by Mr. Mangold, to adopt the above Resolution. The roll call vote was 4-0 with Mr. Mangold, Ms. Greenwald, Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Monaco voting in favor. There were none opposed.

App.#SP-6-20: Chemtrade Solutions LLC, 235 Snyder Avenue, Block 703, Lot 6

Applicant is seeking minor site plan approval pertaining to the replacement of the existing wastewater storage and discharge improvements at their site. (DMX Zone)

Mr. Robertson reviewed the Resolution.

A motion was made by Ms. Greenwald, seconded by Mr. Cunningham, to adopt the above Resolution. The roll call vote was 4-0 with Mr. Mangold, Ms. Greenwald, Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Monaco voting in favor. There were none opposed.

Application for Review:

App.#SP-5-20: Lockhern Property Urban Renewal, LLC, 450 Springfield Avenue, Block 702, Lot 13 (DD-Zone)

Lockhern received preliminary and final major site plan approval by Planning Board resolution adopted September 17, 2018 authorizing construction of a three-story residential building with 20 apartment units and various amenities. Applicant is now seeking amendments to the previously approved site plan including the elimination of the previously proposed walkable alley which would be replaced with landscaping.

Patrick McAuley, attorney for the applicant, stated that the application involves a project known as The Terrace at Berkeley Heights located on the former movie theater redevelopment area for which approval was granted in September 2018. The applicant is

now requesting approval for some changes to the project that would involve removal of the walkable alley and replacement with landscaping.

Mr. McAuley presented Exhibits A1-4 – architectural drawings and Exhibits A-5-6 – before and after plans.

Eric Keller, engineer, was sworn and accepted as an expert witness. Mr. Keller reviewed the proposed changes to the walkway area along the side of the building as shown on Exhibits A-5 and A-6. The walkway area will be removed and replaced with a seat wall and landscaping which will result in a 2% decrease in impervious coverage.

Mr. Keller stated that he has reviewed the reports from the Township Planner, Township Engineer and the Downtown Beautification Committee and he believes all their comments can be appropriately addressed.

Mr. Robertson advised that none of the proposed changes would require any change to the conditions of the prior approval.

In response to a question from the Board, Mr. Keller advised that the nature of the landscape area will be taken into consideration in selecting the plant species to be used.

Open to the Public

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

Lance Blake, architect, was sworn and accepted as an expert witness.

Mr. Blake reviewed the proposed changes to the elevations of the project as shown on Exhibits A-1 – A-4. He stated the opinion that the proposed window configuration will look great on this building and he indicated the location of the community area and exercise area.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Blake stated that the window change is on the north elevation only, the casement windows on the ground level will not interfere with the sidewalk, he does not think grills on the windows would be appropriate and there will be a stair from the garage and a second means of egress for retail.

Open to the Public

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

Open to Public

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

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

Mr. Robertson reviewed the application and the conditions of approval.

A motion was made by Mr. Niceforo, seconded by Mr. Cunningham, to approve App. # SP-5-20: Lockhern Property Urban Renewal, LLC, 450 Springfield Avenue, Block 702, Lot 13 (DD-Zone) for amendments to the previously approved site plan 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 Motion was carried 7-0 with Mr. Johnson, Mr. Niceforo, Ms. Schwarz, Mr. Mangold, Ms. Greenwald, Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Monaco voting in favor. There were none opposed.

App.#M-2-20 : Jerry Cheng, 110 Circleview Ave., Block 3401, Lot 48 (R-20 Zone)

Applicant is seeking approval for a proposed minor subdivision and preliminary and final site plan approval. The two existing homes on the lot will be removed, two new lots will be created, and a new home will be constructed on each lot.

August Santore, attorney for the applicant, reviewed the application.

Christopher Nusser, engineer, was sworn, gave his educational and professional background and was accepted as an expert witness. Mr. Nusser reviewed the existing site conditions and the proposed changes to the site. He stated that there currently are two dwellings, a number of sheds, a well house and a basketball court that will be removed. The proposal is to subdivide the existing property into two conforming lots for which no variances will be required.

Mr. Nusser further stated that the proposal is to construct two homes with access off of Circlevue Avenue and the size of the homes will be decided by the purchaser of the lots. Impervious coverage will be reduced, the current grading will remain the same and the existing drainage patterns will be maintained. The access for emergency vehicles is sufficient, the homes will each have a well and will be connected to the sanitary sewer system. An easement has been negotiated for access to the sanitary sewer system. Discussions were held about providing public water to the site but there is not enough pressure to provide it. Gas and electricity will be underground.

Mr. Nusser reviewed the report from the Township Engineer and stated that the applicant will comply with most of the items in the report. With regard to the houses to be constructed the proposal is just representative but the homes will comply with ordinance requirements and the existing wells will be capped and replaced. Mr. Nusser further stated that tree replacement will be as required.

Mr. Solfaro stated that the majority of his comments will be addressed in the future plans.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Nusser stated that the impervious coverage on the site will be reduced, the applicant will comply with tree replacement requirements, and the sewer easement will be granted by the homeowners' association not one homeowner.

Jerry Cheng, applicant, was sworn, and stated that the existing buildings will be demolished after the subdivision if approved.

Open to the Public

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

Arlene Vezza, 140 Circlevue Avenue, asked about drainage and traffic. She brought to the Board's attention the poor condition of Watchung Way.

Mr. Nusser stated that the increase in traffic will be de minimis and suggested that the road condition should be brought to the attention of the Township. He stated that the amount of impervious coverage is being reduced and a drainage plan will be reviewed by the Township Engineer to make sure there is no negative impact on the neighbors.

Open to Public

The hearing was opened to the public for questions or comments regarding the application.

Amy Coviello, 150 Circleview Avenue, was sworn and expressed concern regarding condition of Watchung Way and safety. She said she is in favor of the property being developed but wanted to state her concerns about the road.

It was suggested that the neighbors contact the Township Council with regard to the road condition.

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

Mr. Robertson reviewed the application and the conditions of approval.

A motion was made by Mr. Niceforo, seconded by Mr. Cunningham, to approve App. # M-2-20 : Jerry Cheng, 110 Circleview Ave., Block 3401, Lot 48 (R-20 Zone) for minor subdivision and preliminary and final site plan approval 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 Motion was carried 7-0 with Mr. Johnson, Mr. Niceforo, Ms. Schwarz, Mr. Mangold, Ms. Greenwald, Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Monaco voting in favor. There were none opposed.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Mr. Niceforo, seconded by Mr. Cunningham, to adjourn the meeting. The voice vote was unanimous and the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Regina Giardina, Secretary Pro-Tem