

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Present: Joseph Blaney
Olga Dember
Joseph Forte, Alternate #2
Sheila Grant
Christina Hultholm, Chairperson
Jeffrey Johnson
Peter Kremer
Charles Lavine, Vice Chairperson

Absent: None

Excused Absence: Bruce Kmosko, Alternate #1
Brian Slaugh, Planning Consultant

Also Present: Kendra Lelie, Planning Consultant
Edwin Schmierer, Zoning Board Attorney
William Day, Traffic Consultant
Brenda Kraemer, P.E., Assistant Municipal Engineer
Susan Snook, Recording Secretary

Statement of Adequate Notice:

Adequate notice of this meeting of the Lawrence Township Zoning Board has been provided by filing the annual meeting schedule with the Municipal Clerk as required by law; by filing the agenda and notice with the Municipal Clerk, posting prominently in the Municipal Building and mailing to the Trenton Times newspaper. The meeting was held through the internet at Zoom Webinar.

Resolutions:

None

Public Participation (for items not on agenda):

None

Applications:

Continued from February 17, 2021 Meeting:

Bulk and Use Variance Application No. ZB-3/19; Major Site Plan – Preliminary & Final Approval Application No. SP-5/20; Major Subdivision – Preliminary and Final Approval Application No. S-2/20; **RPM Development**; 2495 Brunswick Pike; Tax Map Page 20.021, Block 2001, Lots 2, 3, 5, 60 – 66 and 68

Mr. Kennedy stated it was published in the newspaper and notices were sent out to the property people on the property owners list.

Carol Graff, Licensed Geologist stated she reviewed aerial photographs, communications with New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Dry Cleaners and the land fill and it affected the property. It was a porcelain dump and it will be dealt with if it occurs on the property and will get rid of it the proper way. The ground water has been contaminated and it is not flowing onto this property; vapor intrusion has not been found in any of the stores in the vicinity of the dry cleaner.

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Public Questions (summarized):

Greg Puliti submitted a letter dated March 6, 2021, with backup information concerning environmental concerns such as wetlands, porcelain tile landfill, drainage and water retention, dog park in the flood storage area, parking concerns, fire access restrictions for fire truck access, the species of trees that are being proposed in the area median behind Buildings A and B and the utility poles in the proximity of the proposed buffer area behind Buildings A and B, copy is attached.

There were numerous public participates and their concerns were regarding Mr. Kennedy being a member of the Growth & Redevelopment Committee and it is not a conflict per Mr. Schmierer; buffer and heights of trees up to the second floor and not reaching the third floor; number of variances; another site for this project; traffic study was performed during Co-vid, contamination of site and how it will impact this site; completed projects and number of units that are affordable; complete streets based on a resolution adopted March 5, 2019; children playing in the loading dock area; diesel fumes going into the homes; noise pollution; how will it affect the Texas Avenue mini park; no left turn at the Lawrence Shopping exit on Texas Avenue, street parking on Texas Avenue be eliminated; widening Texas Avenue; effect on house value prices from this project; speeding on Texas Avenue and how it will be worked out with safety measures; consideration of speed humps be installed and the increase of children that will attend the schools.

Professional Answers to Questions:

Mr. Kavanaugh commented it was identified by the Township for affordable housing and is a suitable site which has the zoning linked to the Lawrence Shopping Center; Ms. Graff stated the groundwater is not flowing in the direction of this property and is flowing toward the stream; Mr. Taylor stated supplemental traffic studies were performed on November 20, 2020 and January 29, 2021, copies of reports are in file; there are 4,500 units in New Jersey and 90% of affordable apartments; sidewalks will be added on Texas Avenue where there are none currently; the buffer area will be heavily planted and a curved median between the development and the Lawrence Shopping Center; playground area is in a designated area; there will be striping across the pavement area which will direct pedestrians not to go toward the loading docks; according to School Board the elementary school is within walking distance; wetlands will have to be approved by New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection; the on-street parking was eliminated; this site is part of the Township plan that this site have 70 units; Mr. Kavanaugh stated studies show that affordable housing increases property values; the design will have traffic calming effect because there is less open land and there are allocations to the number of children that will attend the schools.

Public Comments (summarized):

Jasmine Surti, 270 Fieldboro Drive: in support of the application and good for the economy.

Mario Bruno, 159 Gedney Road: not in favor of this project because water issues; extra traffic; view of back of a shopping center and placement because it is a former dump and a traffic study when Lawrence Shopping Center is completed.

Martha Friend, 976 Lawrence Road: in support of the project because there are families in need of housing.

Martha Lumar, 46 Viburnum Court: is in favor of affordable housing; however not at this site because of insufficient area for children to play and it is too dense with the number of units being crammed onto this site.

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Stella Cooper, 101 Harding Avenue: climate change effecting the weather and flooding issues; concerned about the wild life in area; dangerous to children playing by a loading area behind the Shopping Center; area is too small for this type of project and land that is contaminated.

Nicole Mulry, 13 Millbrook Lane: in support of the project; provide diversity and is going to provide jobs.

Thomas Tucker, 78 Ditmars Avenue: not disagreeing with affordable housing just the location, number of variances being requested, to dense for this location and children will be playing in the loading area.

Marian Zelazny, 28 Cliveden Court: in support of project and have concerns about a better livable space with fewer units on the site and look for other site.

Elizabeth Guerriero, 14 Skillman Avenue: in support of the application and the evidence that the community is in need of affordable housing.

John Conroy, 126 Lakedale Drive: in support of the project in the area but not the plan and plan needs to be more pedestrian friendly.

Dave Snedeker, 703 Bunker Hill Avenue: there are too many waivers to accommodate; does support affordable housing but not in such a small area and not to approve just to meet an obligation.

Veronica Bassano, 1017 Lawrence Road: in support of the application; however, there could be some tweaks made as it continues to be developed.

Ashley Layton, 125 Smithfield Avenue: in support of the application because it will benefit people in need.

Mary McKillip, 16 Merritt Drive: in support of the project and feels it is a possible location because access to grocery stores, bus transportation and schools. Instead of a dog park, there should be more play space.

Dawn Guhl, 2320 Princeton Pike: small area for a complex of this size; animals will be misplaced, flooding issues in the area which makes it not a good area.

Deborah Dorner, 807 Lake Drive: in support of this type of housing; however, a safer area would be better.

Nick Sferra, 116 Oaklyn Terrace: in support of affordable housing but this site is to dense of a proposal, children playing area; parking lot not in loading space and feels more profit driven.

Stacy Antler, 47 Fairfield Avenue: in total support of affordable housing and agrees that the area is too dense just to meet a requirement; traffic will affect area; flooding will be impacted; children will not have a safe place to play; the fumes coming from the trucks within the loading area behind shopping center, traffic study is not accurate and should find a better location for people to live and thrive.

Mihai Mos, 145 Gainsboro Road: the issue is definitely having to be resolved properly; area has a high density already; traffic is an issue especially during school hours and the space is being taken away from nature.

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Connie Mercer, 58 Fackler Road/1180 Princeton Avenue: CEO/Founder of Home Front stated there is a need for affordable housing in our Community; however, this plan as presented has some significant problems which makes this site to dense; good portion could be built and some good sites in the Township could be infill housing and hopefully has an alternate plan.

Sharon Hughes, 100 Hughes Avenue: her comments could not be heard.

Board members gave their comments. Mr. Schmierer stated there is no further noticing required for the applicant.

A motion was made by Mr. Kremer and seconded by Mr. Lavine to continue this application to the March 17, 2021 meeting.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Digital audio file of this meeting is available upon request.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan J. Snook
Recording Secretary

Minutes approved: May 19, 2021