

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT  
Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, March 17, 2021

Present: Joseph Blaney  
Olga Dember  
Joseph Forte, Alternate #1  
Sheila Grant  
Christina Hultholm, Chairperson  
Jeffrey Johnson  
Peter Kremer  
Charles Lavine, Vice Chairperson

Absent: None

Excused Absence: Bruce Kmosko, Alternate #2

Also Present: Kendra Lelie, Planning Consultant  
Edwin Schmierer, Zoning Board Attorney  
Jeffrey L'Amoreaux, 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.

**Public Participation (for items not on agenda):**

None

**Applications:**

Continued from March 10, 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 they heard the feedback about density and parking so the applicant went back to the drawing board and reduced the number of units from 70 to 54 units, removed an entire building and removed the need for any type of parking variances.

There is a letter from the Township Attorney on behalf of the governing body dated March 17, 2021, copy attached, as Exhibit A-19. The letter was read in full by Mr. Kennedy on behalf of the public who was on the phone and could not see it.

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Witness #1: Thomas Muller, P.E. referred to Exhibit A-20: Conceptual Site Plan "E", revision dated March 12, 2021 shows the revised site plan layout. It is to maintain the park area, 1 acre, as well as the dog park and remains the same. Building C has been completely removed from the project with a loss of 12 units; Building B has been reduced where the third story has been cut in half with a loss of four units, which reduces the project from 70 units to 54 units; reduction of 20%. The third story of Building B, closest to Harding Avenue is now a two-story. The density has been reduced to 12.6 units per acre as well as the impervious coverage to .39. By removing Building C, the parking increases from 102 to 109 spaces which requires no variances. Snow storage will be where Building C was located.

Witness #2: Charles Latini, P.P. prepared an extensive report in comparison to other housing developments in the area. It was compared in density and massing against Lawrence Plaza (22.3 units per acre), Carriage Park (14.04 units per acre) and Heritage Village (26.4 units per acre) and this project was at 17 units per acre and dropped to 12.5 units per acre. It further outlines the negative detriment and the project is well established to meet the housing plan.

Anthony D'Agosta referred to Exhibit A-21, Sheet A-1.00 that shows the reduction of the density and building height of Building B. The intention was to remove a pair of units and two at the center of the site. Access will be from the rear and front of the buildings from the parking lot. The duplexes that front Texas Avenue are a mix of two bedroom units over three bedroom units and exteriors will be different. The rear unit of Building B will be reduced. Architectural remains the same.

The Board members questioned the presentation and had the following concerns:

Is there a site property manager who will live on site; the total parcel is 4.302 acres and reallocating the space with asphalt and concrete and compared it to which is surrounded by landscaping and grass that separates the parking; turn Building B 90 degrees to improve livability of the site and will give you full circulation; the site plan has not been reconfigured and we should be talking about lighting, trees, etc.; the rear exit is still gated off; the residents have to look at the back of the shopping center; bulk of residents overlooking a loading dock; none of the residents can look at the green space; is there an opportunity to go and think about this and have a different layout of the buildings; storage areas and storage for bicycles; there are still no balconies; no place for the residents to go and sit; what variances are still being requested; is there adequate space if there is an emergency because of the layout of the parking lot by ambulance or fire trucks; residents have to cross a parking lot to get to the play area and what can we do to make it safer by maybe considering adding more landscaping or making a hill to make it higher.

All questions and concerns were responded to by the professionals hired by the applicant, RPM that the rear exit is gated off to keep out the general public, needs and requirements for this development have been met; adjusted duplex layout; meeting the general requisite on these units. Mr. Latini stated this is quality housing for people in our workforce who work at Amazon, or is a fire fighter, could even be a police officer. Mr. Muller commented that it will have to get permits from New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection for the wetlands; snow removal will be put behind the curb line or where Building C was and he will prepare an exhibit, if requested.

Mr. Taylor stated he has been working with the fire departments for circulation requirements through and around the isles and does confirm with RSIS; there are no parking assignments for the units because of the layout; there is also adequate parking spaces for guests. Based on the number of units, there are a total of 109 parking spaces, which is meeting the code.

Renderings were prepared to convey the design intent and not a working document. The rendering is to articulate what an aerial view of the site could look like and helps distinguish the site.

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Mr. Kennedy stated there are interesting things to put there and because of the amount of interest in this project, we have not heard all of the comments. Last time it was density and it was re-done and from a timing perspective we have not received a full set of reactions. One issue is the parking behind the shopping center was from the professionals and if you change one item then it creates another issue.

The Board members presented their concerns to the applicant.

**Public Comments and Questions:**

Did not give name; phone number ending 5895: 70 units at the Lawrence Shopping Center and were not just contained to the 2 acres parcel and to the Catholic Polish Church.

Mr. Schmierer responded that the parcel is under considering is not for this purpose and was included in the fourth round housing plan and the township looked around to see what was vacant and made them for affordable housing plan and only for this parcel only.

Tom Tucker, 78 Ditmars Avenue concern is the children's safety and the site should be made for senior housing and they would not be tempted to play in the parking lot and have the applicant work with the Zoning Board for an adequate site.

Jack Contora, 124 Harding Avenue questioned improved portions of Harding Avenue. Concern is not to connect Foch Avenue with Harding Avenue; how the fire department access the gate; fire hydrants in the development; hydrant on Texas Avenue and water main runs under the site to the rear of the shopping center, 10 or 12" main and do not lose it.

Stella Cooper questioned Building B that is abutting up to Green Acres and if making this building smaller and comparing the Lawrence Plaza to this site is like comparing apples and oranges because it is quite different, there is no traffic going in and out.

John Conroy, 126 Lake Drive stated he has reached out to Mr. Kavanaugh and received no response; no discussion about pedestrian circulation; the shopping center owner has been left out because it directly involves him; appreciates the comments by the Board members and not a well-planned out development with little planning in place; he suggests that RPM takes a second look and redesign it and work with the shopping center, the community and the Board.

Mr. Kavanaugh stated the shopping center owner is on the meeting tonight and very much involved.

Ann Bloomenthal, 21 Dix Lane stated the Township obligation is 700 units and this is 10% of the total and whether there are plans where the other 600 units will be built and should be figuring out the best way to take advantage of this location and how to make it work; it is right next to the Lawrence Shopping Center, a dollar store, grocery store, bus stops nearby and easy walking to schools; but how about the people, where are they living now (car or bad building); might not own a car and will not need the parking space.

Mr. Schmierer stated no additional noticing will be required. A motion was made by Mr. Kremer and seconded by Mr. Lavine to continue this application to a Special Meeting scheduled for April 28, 2021 meeting.

**Minutes:**

January 20, 2021 and February 17, 2021 minutes were approved per unanimous vote.

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**Resolutions:**

Resolution 12-21z approving Planning Consultant was approved per unanimous vote.

Resolution of Memorialization 11-21z; Bulk Variance Application No. ZB-1/21; **Aaron Kibbey**; 2 Chatsworth Court; Tax Map Page 64, Block 6401, Lot 43 was approved per unanimous vote.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:12 p.m.

Digital audio file of this meeting is available upon request.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan J. Snook  
Recording Secretary

Minutes approved: May 19, 2021