

PLANNING BOARD OF THE BOROUGH OF FANWOOD
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 31, 2016

The Regular Meeting of the Planning Board, scheduled by the time, place and date of the meeting, prominently posted on the bulletin board at Borough Hall, mailed to the Times and the Courier, filed with the Borough Clerk, and mailed to any person requesting same in accordance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act is called to order at 7:35 PM.

Present: Mayor Mahr, Blechinger, Flowers, Juckes, Molenaar, Sherry,
Lysicatos, Keeler, Steigerwald, Lee, D'Appolonio, Sullivan,
Bondar, Roberts

Absent: T. Seefeldt

Applications Carried to October 26, 2016

Block 50, Lot 30 (return to PSEG Tower)
55 North Avenue
Verizon

New Business

Block 56, Lot 13, 83 LaGrande Avenue, Carbone (fence)

The board unanimously approved the above-referenced application for a six-foot fence on the north and east property lines of their home. The fence will enclose the rear yard to provide security and privacy. Permission was granted due to the nature of the busy corner. Mr. & Mrs. Carbone have worked with DPW Director Dickson to address the problematic borough shrubbery that would block the fence if left in place.

Motion to approve moved by Mr. Molenaar, seconded by Ms. Keeler

Ayes: Molenaar, Keeler, Mahr, Juckes, Flowers, Blechinger, Lysicatos, Sherry,
Steigerwald

Motion carries

Block 102, Lot 33, 17 Pandick Court, Clarke (bulk)

The board approved the above-referenced application for side yard and improvement coverage variances as well as variances for the pre-existing rear-yard deck setback of 11 feet and side yard setback of 9'7".

Some board members expressed concern about the scope of this project, suggesting that the plan could have been drawn to reduce variances.

Other board members noted the pie-shape size of the lot and placement of the longstanding in-ground pool as impediments to laying out the expansion in another way.

Motion to approve as offered Mr. Molenaar, seconded by Mayor Mahr.

Ayes: Molenaar, Mahr, Jukes, Flowers, Lysicatos,
Nays: Blechinger, Sherry, Keeler, Steigerwald

Motion carries

Block 64, Lots 6.02, 17-21, 225 La Grande Avenue, Station Square (downtown redevelopment)

The applicant was represented by Richard Scholnick, Esq. who presented the project as a 35-unit townhouse development with 28 market value units and the balance of seven being affordable housing units.

Jeff Weinflash spoke on behalf of the developer and offered a history of this project since the 2004 purchase of the property. The developer received approvals in 2006 for a 24-unit townhouse development with no affordable units. Once approved, the developer was faced with a higher level of pollutants than anticipated and began site remediation. The economic downturn of 2008 halted progress entirely. The applicant attempted to sell the project with no luck. Times have changed again, making this project economically feasible.

In addition to an improving economy, regulations governing Affordable Housing obligations have also changed. Borough Attorney Dan McCarthy testified regarding the new regimen which requires all housing development to include 20% affordable housing. Developers can no longer substitute cash for units. In order for this project to be economically feasible for the applicant they require 28 market-rate units.

Sean Savage was offered and accepted as an expert in civil engineering and described this five-building development and infrastructure. Market rate units are all three-story, 2- to 3-bedroom units with rear-entry 2-car garages. There will be no units with a 4th bedroom. The seven affordable units are 1- and 2-bedroom units stacked in a 3-story townhouse-style building with a carport to the rear.

Mr. Savage described the stormwater collection and distribution, utility connections, transformer & A/C pads. It was agreed that the applicant will work with borough officials and the utilities to site the transformer pads in the least obtrusive manner. A/C units will be shielded by shrubbery as will the transformers.

Mr. Savage outlined the private garbage and recycling pickup. Each home will have its own container that will be put out for collection by a private carter contracted by the applicant. Due to the limits of the lot they anticipate the truck to be smaller than the standard garbage truck. Applicant agrees to adhere to Fanwood's residential standards for garbage pickup. There are to be no pickups prior to 6 AM.

The applicant agreed to a four-foot concrete sidewalk and a two-foot paver strip to the curb. No grassy areas will be provided between the sidewalk and curb. Applicant agrees to extend this sidewalk to cross the La Grande Avenue Municipal Lot driveway.

Applicant agrees to include a sidewalk on the northerly end of the affordable housing building in order to promote safe pedestrian access to the front of the building from the carport. The plan currently includes such a walkway on the southerly end of the building.

The buildings will be have sprinklers and are in good proximity to fire hydrants.

Parking was discussed in some detail, demonstrating 64 spots on-site with 16 available from a combination of street and municipal lot parking. The 16 spots are anticipated to be for visitors and are not expected to put undue pressure on shared parking resources.

There was significant discussion regarding pedestrian and traffic safety at the corner of Second and La Grande. It was determined that Mr. Bondar will reach out to Union County to discuss traffic calming devices that may be appropriate for the site. Police Chief Trigo will also be consulted for suggestions on improving traffic flow and safety of this very sensitive area.

All units are to be let for rental, not purchase. This method keeps site management directly in the hands of the owner and should serve as an assurance of responsible site maintenance.

Architect Robert Larsen reviewed site plans and offered sample materials which were of high quality and acceptable earth-tone color families. There was unanimous admiration for the design of the buildings. Mr. Larsen will work on adding more detail to the “ends” of the Affordable Housing building to bring it more in line with the other buildings on site.

The meeting was opened to the public.

Joe Ponzio of 2nd Street questioned the source of off-site contaminants described by Mr. Weinflash. He wanted it understood that his property was not the source of the remaining contaminants identified by DEP. After three appearances at the microphone, Mr. Ponzio appeared to be satisfied that the applicant would follow all DEP requirements to properly clear the site of contaminants. He also recommends that the architect be sure that the sprinklers in the carport be freeze-proof.

Mr. Fugett of 208 LaGrande Avenue, whose home is directly across from Building #2 expressed concerned about parking, traffic and oversized windows. He felt it was inappropriate for a window of great size to allow a view into his own windows. Board members generally expressed that they too, in average neighborhoods, have homes that have windows looking onto their homes as well.

Parking and traffic were both taken very seriously and will be continually studied and modified until the status is satisfactory. Mr. Fugett appreciated the attractiveness of the buildings.

Steve Wherle of 48 Second Street expressed his believe that there were too many units proposed for a site of this size and anticipated parking to be a nightmare.

Wendy Oldham of 16 Saville Row questioned the financial requirements of Affordable Housing. Mr. Weinflash offered that the Affordable Housing standard is 80% of the median income and Low-Income Housing standard is 50% of the median income. Affordable units in this development will be divided 50/50 between affordable and low-income housing. Ms. Oldham pointed out the need for a walkway on the north end of the Affordable Housing building and suggested that the walkway be covered for handicapped residents.

Mr. Jeff Ling of 234 South confirmed that the Second Street entrance to the municipal lot will change from one-way to two-way. He also pointed out that there are South Avenue sewer line problems that the applicant should explore prior to hookup.

Ed Tamianca of Second Street expressed his concern with parking and would like to see the lined parking on La Grande Avenue reduced. He noted the high volume of children in the area.

Harry McNally of 44 Second Street asked for a detailed explanation of capping the lot, discussed snow removal and fears parking will be an issue.

The application was moved by Mayor Mahr and seconded by Jack Molenaar

Ayes: Mahr, Molenaar, Flowers, Jukes, Blechinger, Lysicatos, Sherry, Keeler Steigerwald

Motion carried.

Resolutions

Block 64, Lot 16 (minor site plan), 56 S. Martine Avenue, Frank's Auto

The board unanimously approved the resolution for this application, including the removal of two driveways closest to the intersection of Martine & La Grande Avenues, the creation a one-way traffic flow across the property and a vegetative buffer to be placed on the Southeast corner of the lot. The applicant will construct a 5' sidewalk along the La Grande Avenue side of the property, linking up their newly constructed sidewalk with the recently constructed sidewalk in front of Fanwood Crossing III.

Mr. Constandi will grant a rear yard access easement for the purpose of allowing the Borough to construct, at their own expense, a walkway with vegetative buffers between the rear of this property and the Fanwood Crossing III building.

Adjournment

Motion made and seconded to adjourn at 11:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Pat Hoynes, Planning Board Secretary