

SITE PLAN REVIEW ADVISORY BOARD

NOTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, July 13, 2016

PRINCETON MUNICIPAL BUILDING

Meeting Room A –7:30 P.M.

Princeton, New Jersey

PRESENT: Alyce Bush, Harry Cooke, Lisa Marcus Levine, Holly Nelson, Lydia Robinson, William Wolfe

ABSENT: Robert Cerutti, Robert Freudenberg, Pamela Rew

ALSO PRESENT: Jack West, Municipal Engineer; Kerry A. Philip, Secretary

Chair Wolfe called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. reading the Opening Statement as required by the Open Public Meetings Act, acknowledging that notice of this meeting was issued on the 23rd of November, 2015.

MINUTES

- a) May 11, 2016 – Motion was made by H. Cooke and L. Robinson seconded the motion to approve the minutes as amended. The vote was 4-0 in favor of those eligible to vote. Motion carried.
- b) June 8, 2016 – Motion was made by H. Cooke and L. Robinson seconded the motion to approve the minutes as amended. The vote was 5-0 in favor of those eligible to vote. Motion carried.

APPLICATIONS

- a) 50 North Tulane, LLC
Minor Site Plan
50 North Tulane Street
Block 27.02, Lot 46
File #P1616-371PM
MLUL Deadline: 8/4/16

The applicant is seeking Minor Site Plan approval to renovate the building by constructing a three story addition on the rear façade to accommodate an elevator. A third story dormer addition is proposed on the front elevation to expand the existing two bedroom apartment. A new rear porch is proposed on the first floor and decks are proposed for the second and third floors on the rear elevation. A small kitchenette previously added to the rear of the first floor is proposed to be removed to make room for the new elevator serving all three floors of the building.

Thomas M. Letizia, Esq., attorney for the applicant, stated that this is a minor site plan application for a joint occupancy building. The first presentation before this board in March has been modified and is now a variance free project and a small symmetrical dormer is proposed in the front and an addition is proposed to the rear for the installation of an elevator. He asked Lorine Murray-Mechini, architect for the applicant, to address the board.

Ms. Mechini stated that the project proposes a 257 SF increase. The rear area deck and the stairs will be removed, the rear entry will be reworked and the building line will be expanded for a new elevator. On the third floor a new dormer is proposed and will cover the existing sloped roof to expand the space for the two bedroom apartment. She presented Sheet A-3 and stated that the kitchenette is being removed on the first floor and an elevator installed to serve all three floors. Sheet A-6 shows the 150 sf expansion to the second floor for an expanded bedroom space. Sheet A-7 shows the rear elevation. Ms. Mechini stated that lighting is proposed in the rear by the back door serving both the back door and the elevator and a second light is proposed for the second story deck. The mechanicals for the elevator will be located in the crawl space.

Ms. Mechini stated that landscaping will be removed but will be replanted after construction or something similar will be put in. Mr. West recommended a condition that the landscaping that exists be replaced or replanted after construction. Mr. Letizia stated that a note will be on the plan noting that the sidewalks will be repaired after construction, if needed and that the existing landscaping removed or damaged due to this construction must be replanted or replaced.

Chair Wolfe stated that the applicant did exactly what SPRAB requested when the previous proposal was reviewed in March. He expressed concern that someone will back into the porch and asked how far the bollards are from the structure. Mr. West stated that the bollards are even with the line for the parking area. Chair Wolfe asked that a bollard not be in the area where the space overlaps with the deck.

Ms. Mechini stated that there are two potential areas for a bike rack, in the front by the bench or in the rear by the condensers. The Board members preferred the rear area.

Based upon the foregoing, a motion was made by H. Nelson, seconded by A. Bush and carried by a vote of six ayes to classify this application as a Minor Site Plan, recommend approval of the Minor Site Plan to the Planning Board and endorsing the joint Engineering and Zoning Report dated June 24, 2016 with the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A bike rack for two bikes should be installed in the rear of the property near the air condenser units.
2. The applicant was asked to repair any damage to the sidewalk after construction, if needed. A note should be included on the revised plan.
3. The existing landscaping removed or damaged due to this construction must be replanted or replaced. A note should be included on the revised plan.
4. All the bollards in the rear parking area should be tight to the building.

COMMENT

Chair Wolfe recommended that the applicant consider taking down the second fence in the rear of the property so that the rear yard landscaping can be maintained as this area is currently an eyesore from the public parking deck.

Vote on motion:

For: Bush, Cooke, Marcus-Levine, Nelson, Robinson, Wolfe

Against: None

Abstain: None

Holly Nelson recused herself from the following application:

- b) Charles Yedlin
Prelim/Final Major Site Plan
900 Herrontown Road
Block 901, Lot 21
File #P1616-328P
MLUL Deadline: 9/13/16

Thomas Letizia, Esq., attorney for the applicant, stated that the proposal is for a 25,000 sf office building with parking and landscaping. The project is a permitted use in this zone. He then described the four variances associated with the proposal.

James Chmielak, Engineer for the Applicant, stated that the property is on the corner of Herrontown and Mt. Lucas Roads, the applicant also owns the two office buildings to the north of this property. There are three buildings on this site at this time and an office. H. Cooke asked how much of the existing vegetation against the Old Orchard apartments will remain. Mr. Chmielak responded that some trees are going to be removed but basically the existing vegetation will not be disturbed around the perimeter. For the area next to the residential units, they will leave pockets of existing trees and will supplement the buffer with more landscaping. He advised that compact parking stalls are proposed in a few locations on site, an electric vehicle charging station is proposed for one parking stall and two stalls are provided for low emission vehicles. Two motorcycle stalls are also proposed along the side of the building and a bike rack will be provided for up to six bikes.

Mr. Chmielak stated that two main entrances are proposed into the building. The trash enclosure area and on site electric generator are proposed at the furthest point from the closest residents so they will not be impacted by the noise. The main entry driveway is in alignment with the Princeton House main driveway on Herrontown Road. He stated that only small trucks are anticipated on site. Mr. West stated that the traffic consultant would like a truck to be able to maneuver around the site.

Mr. Chmielak stated that there is an existing five to eight foot tall berm separating this property from the adjacent residential lots to the south with trees on the adjacent property. Within the report from Mr. Dobromilsky he recommended buffering the area so the applicant would like to propose understory plantings to utilize the berm and help screen and fill in the view lines from the one residential unit in proximity to the property line. Mr. Yedlin stated that he has met with resident about the project and the proposed screening. Chair Wolfe advised that the report from Dan Dobromilsky was not attached to the joint Engineering/Zoning report.

Mr. Chmielak advised that a solid wood fence is proposed along the full length of the rear line and with the proposed landscaping the screening should be sufficient. Regarding storm water management, a portion of the drainage is picked up and carried to the regional storm water basin on Herrontown Road and on the southeast side of the property a storm water basin is proposed. Landscaping is proposed as supplemental plantings around the basin along with forging grasses for the wildlife.

Mr. Chmielak advised that low energy LED lighting is proposed, the poles will be 14 feet in height in order to be sensitive to the adjacent residential properties. As a sustainable component, a solar system is proposed on the building which will have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the lighting for the parking lot and the charging station. He stated that a simple free-standing sign is proposed near the entry drive and the applicant is refurbishing the existing bike path along with an overlay. There are no wetlands on the property and the applicant is currently going through the process of obtaining approval from all other governmental agencies. He advised that the Land Use Engineer had requested rehabilitation of the pavement (milling and overlay) along Mt. Lucas Road to the intersection with Herrontown as part of this project. The applicant would like to install curbing along the roadway but approval is needed from the DRCC for this work and if this is approved, the improvement will be done.

H. Cooke asked if the mature trees near the entry drive can be maintained. Mr. Chmielak stated that one tree in the area of the driveway is decaying and the location for the driveway is not flexible. There is a larger tree which is shown to be removed on the plan, they will try to keep the tree because it is a substantial tree.

Chair Wolfe asked about solar. Charles Yedlin, Applicant, stated that solar is a consideration but the site does not lend itself to solar because of the trees on the adjacent property. It can accommodate a system that provides power for site lighting and perhaps a little more.

Mr. Chmielak stated that a bike rack for up to six bikes will be provided on site, the planner had requested one covered bike rack at each entrance but the bike racks at 1000 Herrontown are never used. Mr. Yedlin confirmed this and stated that he contacted Princeton House and was advised that there are no bikers to their facilities and therefore they have no need for a bike rack. Mr. Chmielak stated that only one bike rack is proposed for this project. Mr. Yedlin advised that a bike rack for six bikes is proposed in the rear of the property, the rack will be uncovered. He does not believe having multiple covered racks is unnecessary. L. Marcus Levine asked the applicant to identify on the plan where additional bike racks could be placed. Mr. Chmielak stated that there is space near the location of the proposed bike rack so this area will be marked on the plan as a potential area.

Mr. Yedlin stated that a sidewalk is proposed for the building but it will not surround the structure. He stated that typically people park their vehicles and walk through the parking lot to the entry. He feels that sidewalks around the entire building are unnecessary. Chair Wolfe agreed that sidewalks around the building could be a detriment for employees on the first floor, with the public walking by the people inside the building would have to pull down the shades. Chair Wolfe suggested extending the sidewalk at the corners of the building into the parking lot so the sidewalks will be visible. A. Bush agreed with the proposal to not have a sidewalk around the entire building because having a sidewalk along the front and back of the building is sufficient.

Chairman Wolfe stated that the applicant should not have to produce a traffic report, which was a recommendation from staff. H. Cooke asked if emergency access from Mt. Lucas Road should be considered. Mr. West stated that he did not feel this is necessary based on the size of the building. Parking stalls would have to be removed for an emergency access drive, he advised that he will speak with Emergency Services about this.

Fred Schmitt, Architect for the applicant, stated that an emergency drive is required if this is an institutional use but a general office has a fairly limited impact. Only 250 people are anticipated which is the maximum as per code.

Mr. Yedlin advised that retail is not proposed in the building, the only uses will be general office use and medical office use. The medical use would be the most intensive use.

L. Marcus Levine asked about setting aside space for composting, she has concerns because the trash container is near a picnic area for the adjacent property. Mr. Yedlin stated that he has no concerns about odors and it is very tough to enforce composting. If there are enough organics generated he has no problem putting a container in the enclosure. He advised that he spoke with Diane Landis of Sustainable Princeton about this.

Regarding the parking, Mr. Yedlin stated that compact parking stalls are proposed near the building. There will be a certain percentage of compact cars so preferential parking is offered for those vehicles. Mr. West stated that all the parking stalls at Monument Hall are compact.

Chair Wolfe stated that the signage for the handicapped parking should be moved slightly towards the line of the depressed curb so that they will act as bollards. In addition, a fence is proposed on top of the block wall near the basin so Chair Wolfe asked if someone can view the basin from the corner to see if this area could be made more elegant.

A. Bush asked about tree replacement. Mr. Chmielak stated that the applicant will comply with the ordinance requirement and the recommendations from the landscape architectural consultant. He met with the consultant and the number of trees proposed is higher than what is required and the plantings will be returned when possible. Mr. West stated that the existing ash trees are a concern and asked if all the trees should be removed and replanted with another species or should some remain. Mr. West stated that he wants to look at the trees and treat them for the ash borer. He stated that this can be discussed with the municipal arborist. Mr. Chmielak stated that the tree removal equation formula will be adjusted because there is pro-active activity on site. Some of the trees (Ash) are invasive but the screening may be more important. 100% compensation may not be appropriate. SPRAB recommends removing the non-viable trees without further mitigation requirements. Mr. West advised that the landscape plan will be reviewed by the landscape subcommittee.

Mr. Schmitt presented Sheet A-2 entitled "Elevations" and noted the two story structure is 130' x 96' and the building has an open floor plan. The building will have a steel frame with concrete and brick veneer for the façade. The core of the building is typical with two fire stairs, one stairwell is large enough for emergency access and one elevator is large enough for a gurney. He stated that the building is similar to 1000 Herrontown Road. The applicant wanted to make it a 21st century structure so the veneer is more detailed and the architectural work is more intricate. Mr. Schmitt presented the proposed brick veneer for the façade and identified the color as dusty brown. Tinted

bronze is proposed for the windows. The mechanical equipment will be on the roof and shielded with a perforated metal enclosure centered on the building.

Mr. Schmitt discussed the energy efficient approaches including a 21st century white reflective roof, the skin on the building has a higher insulation value, solar panels for the site lighting, LED wall mounted lights along the walkway and towards Herrontown Road. Low flow toilets are proposed in all the bathrooms and skylights are in the lobby space for daylighting. Mr. Yedlin advised that within the building is an open staircase to encourage people to walk up and down the stairs. All lighting will be on sensors and the heating and A/C units will be energy efficient. Mr. Schmitt stated that the white reflective roof is a more expensive roof system but it helps absorb energy and the brick veneer color is a match to the buildings at 1000 Herrontown.

Mr. Schmitt presented Sheet A-3 "signage" and stated that two color schemes are considered for the entry sign. A light background with dark lettering or dark background with white lettering. The board members favored the sign with the dark background with white lettering. Mr. Yedlin advised that if field stones are found on the property they could be placed on site.

Chair Wolfe felt that the handicapped parking signs as detailed on sheet 20 would detract from the appearance of the building's front entrance façade. To avoid tripping hazards, he recommended replacing the proposed wheel stops with bollards placed along the depressed curb between the handicapped parking and the sidewalk to keep cars off the sidewalk. To minimize clutter, he suggested that sign posts with single signs displaying the minimum required texts utilize these bollards as their bases.

Based upon the foregoing, a motion was made by H. Cooke, seconded by L. Marcus Levine and carried by a vote of five ayes to classify this application as a Major Site Plan, endorsing the joint Engineering and Zoning Report dated June 30, 2016 with the exception of Items 3(2), 3(3), 5(b)1, 5(g)4, 5(h)4, and 5(h)5. Endorsing the report from IH Engineers dated July 5, 2016 with the exception of Items #19 and #20 and the Planning Considerations Items C and E and to recommend approval of the plan to the Planning Board with the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Approval of all required variances for setback, parking stall size and loading area.
2. Bike storage is recommended to be relocated to the rear of the property, and may be uncovered. The revised plan should also show the location for a second bike rack for future installation in this area if needed.
3. SPRAB did not require an emergency access from Mt. Lucas Road. The Land Use Engineer will review with Emergency Services staff whether this is required.
4. All landscaping to be reviewed by the landscape subcommittee. Proposed tree removal and mitigation requirements need special attention.
5. The Board endorses the idea of mitigating the 102 viable trees identified to be removed in accordance with recommendations from the Land Use Engineer and the Municipal Landscape Architect. SPRAB recommends removing the non-viable trees without further mitigation requirements.
6. Additional understory plantings should be planted to maintain and improve the density of foliage screening this property from the townhouses on Old Orchard Lane.

7. SPRAB endorses the landscaping as proposed by the applicant along the two sides of the building, and does not endorse the added sidewalks recommended by staff as they would be uncomfortably close to the windows.

COMMENTS

The applicant should ask their Architect and Landscape Architect to review how the appearance of the view over the detention basin from the corner of Mt. Lucas and Herrontown Roads could be improved. Chair Wolfe asked that they include a review of the block wall, guard rail and fence combination along the western edge of the basin to see if this could be more elegant.

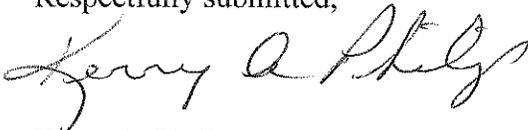
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SPRAB praised the applicant's intention of installing solar panels to the extent feasible on the building's roof.

For: Bush, Cooke, Marcus-Levine, Robinson, Wolfe
Against: None
Abstain: None

With no further business before the Board, motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kerry A. Philip
Secretary