

**FORT LEE PLANNING BOARD**  
**FEBRUARY 13, 2023**

PRESENT: M. Marshall, R. Ferris, B. Suh, M. Sargenti, N. Forshner, M. Kaplan, J. Cooney.

ABSENT: A. Pohan, P. Yoon, R. Kative, H. Greenberg.

ALSO PRESENT: Louis Karp, Esq., Board Attorney; Paul Grygiel of Phillips Preiss Grygiel Leheny Hughes LLC; Alvaro Gonzalez of Boswell Engineering.

**NOTICE OF MEETING:**

Vice Chairwoman Cooney stated: Let the minutes reflect that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in the following manner: On November 28, 2022 this Body, by Resolution, adopted a Schedule of Regular Public Meetings for 2023. The time, date, and location of said schedule was posted on the Bulletin Board at 309 Main Street. A copy of said schedule was mailed to the RECORD, JERSEY JOURNAL, STAR LEDGER, SPECTRUM, posted on the Borough's Website and was filed with the Borough Clerk. A written notice of the time, place and proposed Agenda was posted on the Bulletin Board at 309 Main Street and mailed to the RECORD, JERSEY JOURNAL, STAR LEDGER, SPECTRUM, posted on the Borough's Website and was filed with the Borough Clerk. Copies have been mailed to all persons who have prepaid the \$35.00 fee fixed for the year 2023 to cover the cost of mailing.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 9, 2023:**

Vice Chairwoman Cooney stated: I believe I abstained from the vote for the appointment of the Vice Chair of the Board.

Ms. Trentacosti stated: Yes, I will amend the minutes.

A motion was made by Mr. Kaplan, seconded by Mr. Sargenti, and passed on a vote of 2 to 0 by members Kaplan and Sargenti, to approve the minutes for the meeting of January 9, 2023, as amended. Mr. Marshall, Mr. Ferris, Mr. Suh, Mr. Forshner and Vice Chairwoman Cooney abstained from the vote.

**MEMORIALIZATIONS:**

**DOCKET #3-22      AAM ELC, Inc.**  
**1576 PALISADE AVENUE**  
**APPROVED        BLOCK 3351, LOT 3**  
**MINOR SITE PLAN – SIGNAGE**

A motion was made by Mr. Ferris, seconded by Mr. Kaplan, and passed on a vote of 3 to 0 by members Ferris, Sargenti and Kaplan, to approve the Memorialization of the Resolution of Approval for Minor Site Plan – Signage.

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**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**DOCKET #4-22      458 FORT LEE CARE LLC  
458 WEST STREET  
BLOCK 5053, LOT 3  
MINOR SITE PLAN - SIGNAGE**

Nancy Lottinville, Esq. stated: My firm represents the Applicant. We are here seeking variance relief from signage regulations from the ordinance.

Matthew Seckler, Stonefield Engineering, 94 Park Avenue, Rutherford, was sworn in as an Engineer, Traffic Engineer and Planner.

Mr. Seckler stated: I have submitted a Photo Exhibit. **Exhibit A- 1 – 3 Sheets, dated 2/13/23.** We are here speaking about 458 West Street. It is located at the intersection of West Street and Fletcher Avenue. It is the old Bank of New Jersey. It has four frontages, Edwin, ramp to Route 4, Fletcher and West. There are no other changes being proposed besides signage.

Vice Chairwoman Cooney questioned: Did you receive a letter from the Sign & Façade Committee?

Ms. Lottinville stated: We submitted a package but no.

Vice Chairwoman Cooney questioned: Did you follow up?

Ms. Lottinville stated: I have not received a letter.

Mr. Seckler stated: The Exhibit is from 2019 and shows the old signage. Sheet 1 of Exhibit A-1 shows the view from Fletcher Avenue. Sheet 2 shows the west façade and Sheet 3 shows the south façade. The original signage was about 60 square feet on Fletcher and 120 square feet on Route 4. The previous signage is the entire frontage of the windows. The site plan shows how it relates to the proposed signage. We are only asking for about half of the original signage. We are asking for four signs, and we have four frontages which is consistent with the code as far as number of signs goes. We are exceeding the square footage. We are shrinking about fifty percent from the original signage. There is also a small sign on Edwin. This is an urgent care facility, and the previous use was a bank. We think the signage of this sign is appropriate. The area of 24 square feet is exceeded for the three signs but it is a reduction from the previous signage. The letter heights also require a variance. We also require a variance for how it is mounted. We are mounting them as they did for the Bank of New Jersey. It is a structural adhesive or a similar product. I believe this is a hardship because we cannot mount them the way we usually mount letters because of the glass windows all over the building.

Vice Chairwoman Cooney questioned: How large is the building?

Mr. Seckler stated: It is two floors but a high two floors because of the slope.

Vice Chairwoman Cooney questioned: It is four windows but two floors?

Mr. Seckler stated: Yes.

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Vice Chairwoman Cooney questioned: Is this building only going to be occupied by your tenant?

Mr. Seckler stated: Yes.

Vice Chairwoman Cooney questioned: What are your hours?

Mr. Seckler stated: Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday through Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Vice Chairwoman Cooney questioned: You don't think this amount of signage is over the top?

Mr. Seckler stated: I do not because you have four frontages, and we are shrinking the signage.

Vice Chairwoman Cooney stated: You are not shrinking the signage. You just take up less space than Bank of New Jersey.

Mr. Seckler stated: You are correct, but we are not proposing a monument sign which we are allowed.

Mr. Sargenti questioned: You are at the corner of all of these major highways. That building stands out so you want the sign to be seen from the highway? Not as large as Bank of New Jersey but only because the name is not as long?

Mr. Seckler stated: Yes, the highway system is very complicated around there.

Mr. Sargenti stated: Just so you know with that awning that you are proposing, it is very windy in that area.

Mr. Kaplan questioned: Is there any illumination from the signs? Is there any danger to motorists due to glare?

Mr. Seckler stated: There would be illumination on the letters but there would be no danger to motorists.

Vice Chairwoman Cooney questioned: We usually request signage to be back lit. Is there any reason this cannot be?

Mr. Seckler stated: I believe in order to maintain a thin structure and because of how we have to mount it to the glass, that is the reason they did not look into it.

Ms. Lottinville questioned: MedRite takes up less panels but also the square footage is smaller?

Mr. Seckler stated: Yes, by approximately half.

Mr. Forshner questioned: Is it feasible to have these signs back lit?

Mr. Seckler stated: I am not sure because I am not the vendor. I know the design intent was because of the glass.

Mr. Forshner questioned: Where are the lights located?

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Mr. Seckler stated: Likely pointing over with an arm going over and down.

Mr. Kaplan questioned: Can you give us an idea of how strong the sign adhesive is?

Mr. Seckler stated: It will meet the weight strength requirements of the ordinance.

Mr. Kaplan questioned: Is this a commonly used adhesive to glass mount?

Mr. Seckler stated: Yes.

Mr. Karp stated: You as the Board can agree, that if approved, it is subject to all of the specifications and are subject to our professional's approval and must meet the standards and safety standards.

Mr. Grygiel stated: I concur with the opinion that it is a glass building, and this is usually how they mount to glass buildings. I am sure there is another way to support the sign, but it would be less aesthetically pleasing. I think it achieves the intent.

Mr. Kaplan questioned: Can we in good conscious, approve a variance and expect it to stand up to the strong circumstances?

Mr. Seckler stated: Yes, and you will also have your professionals approving the plans because they will be reviewing them as well. We are seeking c1 variance relief due to the structure of the building. The sign variances are a combination of c1 and c2 variances. The c1 variance can be supported due to the uniqueness of the property and the four frontages. The signage fits in nicely with the building. It is less impactful than the previous signage. It helps with roadway safety because of the number of highways and ramps around the amount of signage is useful. Also, the use is an urgent care which lends itself to the health, safety and welfare of the public.

Vice Chairwoman Cooney questioned: When coming off of Route 80 there is no turn. How does the public know where to go?

Mr. Seckler stated: Hopefully their phones or navigation. As far as the benefits of zoning, it provides a visual benefit, it is properly scaled to the building, they are benign colors and they fit in well with the color of the glass. It helps to promote the development of this site. The heights of the letters and logos variance are due to the size of the signs themselves.

Vice Chairwoman Cooney questioned: The whites of the letters and the teal of the cross are the only two colors?

Mr. Seckler stated: Yes.

Mr. Sargenti questioned: What is your capacity there?

Mr. Seckler stated: Up to twenty.

Mr. Sargenti stated: You can park in the drive thru also, people that work there.

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Vice Chairwoman Cooney questioned: Does this use change the amount of parking needed?

Mr. Grygiel stated: It might.

Mr. Karp stated: They are already operating so they must have satisfied the requirements.

Ms. Lottinville stated: They already have a CO.

Vice Chairwoman Cooney stated: If this is approved, I would like the resolution to state they are the only tenant and there is no other signage allowed.

Mr. Karp stated: The conditions will include a single tenant use, lights on half an hour before opening and half an hour after closing, hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday through Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., the lighting to be approved by the Board and Borough professionals and if the lighting is not acceptable it can be revisited and the attachment devised to be reviewed and approved by the Board and Borough professionals.

Vice Chairwoman Cooney asked for questions and comments from the public.

A motion was made by Mr. Sargenti, seconded by Mr. Forshner, and passed on a vote of 7 to 0 by members Marshall, Ferris, Suh, Sargenti, Forshner, Kaplan and Cooney, to approve the Signage.

**REFERAL FROM THE GOVERNING BODY**

**ORDINANCE #2023-3 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING CHAPTER 261 ENTITLED "LAND USE PROCEDURES", APPENDIX A, ENTITLED "CHECKLISTS FOR DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS" OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF FORT LEE**

Vice Chairwoman Cooney stated: We started this process about a year ago when Mr. Forshner brought up requesting a smaller plan size be submitted to the Board. Thank you, Mr. Forshner. They are looking for an endorsement on the Ordinance.

Mr. Forshner stated: I would like to motion the endorsement.

A motion was made by Mr. Forshner, seconded by Mr. Ferris, and passed on a vote of 7 to 0 by members Marshall, Ferris, Suh, Sargenti, Forshner, Kaplan and Cooney, to endorse this Ordinance.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mr. Sargenti, and passed without objection to adjourn this meeting at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Christen S. Trentacosti*  
Christen S. Trentacosti  
Recording Secretary