

FORT LEE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

April 13, 2021

Present: H. Liapes, J. Nitti, H. Joh, D. Conway, S. Tropea, L. Pacheco, E. Hong, D. Sugarman

Absent:

Present: J. Mariniello, Jr., Esq., M. Jovishoff, Phillips, Preiss, Grygiel, D. Juzmeski, Neglia Eng.

Chairman Sugarman called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

NOTICE OF MEETING: The Chairman states: Let the minutes reflect that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in the following manner: All members of this Body have been advised in writing at least 48 hours prior to this meeting of the time, place, and proposed Agenda of this meeting. A written notice of the time, place, and proposed Agenda was posted on the bulletin board of Municipal Building, 309 Main Street, Fort Lee, New Jersey. On the same date, a copy of said written notice was mailed to the Record, Jersey Journal, Time Warner Cable and Fort Lee Online. A copy was filed with the Borough Clerk and, on the same date, copies were mailed to all persons who have requested copies of such notices and have prepaid the fee fixed for the year 2021.

The meeting was held remotely, by means of communication equipment. The foregoing Electronic Public Meeting is recommended due to the current situation involving COVID-19 Virus and directives of State and County governments. The meeting was conducted using Zoom operating system.

The board stood for a moment of silence in memory of Board Member, George Makroulakis.

Chairman Sugarman stated Mr. Liapes will join him in reviewing the RFQ responses for a Conflict Board Attorney.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Mr. Liapes, seconded by Mr. Conway and passed on a vote of 8-0 by members Liapes, Nitti, Joh, Conway, Tropea, Pacheco, Hong and Sugarman to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 23, 2021.

Memorializations

Docket #2-21, Devdatta Gogate & Qichao Hu, 1588-1590 West Street, Block 4051, Lot 19.01, Proposed Addition of Rear Yard Patios, Spiral Staircases and Amended Landscape Plan of Duplex

It was moved by Mr. Liapes, seconded by Mr. Nitti and approved on a vote of 7-0 by members Liapes, Nitti, Joh, Conway, Tropea, Pacheco, and Sugarman to grant the applicant approval for a proposed addition of the rear yard patios, spiral staircases and amended landscape plan of duplex.

Docket #3-21, 218 Knox Avenue, LLC, 2183 Linwood Avenue, Block 5852, Lot 12, Two Unit Dwelling

It was moved by Mr. Liapes, seconded by Mr. Conway and approved on a vote of 7-0 by members Liapes, Nitti, Joh, Conway, Tropea, Pacheco, and Sugarman to grant the applicant approval to construct a two-unit dwelling.

Acceptance/Completeness

Docket #6-21, Hong Yang, 332 Coolidge Avenue, Block 6056, Lot 2, Addition & Renovation of a Two-Family Dwelling

It was moved by Mr. Joh, seconded by Mr. Tropea and approved on a vote of 7-0 by members Liapes, Nitti, Joh, Conway, Tropea, Pacheco, and Sugarman to deem the application complete. Mr. Capizzi will call the Board office for a hearing date.

Docket #11-21, 2450 Lemoine Realty, LLC, 187 Washington Avenue, Block 7151, Lot 1, Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan – Conversion of Second Floor to Two (2) Residential Units

Chairman Sugarman stated this completeness application will not be presented tonight.

Docket #12-21, A&I Realty, LLC, 825 Palisade Avenue & 2 Cumbermeade Road, Blocks 553 & 552, Lots 6 & 33, Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan – Conversion of Office Space to a Residential Unit

It was moved by Mr. Liapes, seconded by Mr. Conway and approved on a vote of 7-0 by members Liapes, Nitti, Joh, Conway, Tropea, Pacheco, and Sugarman to deem the application complete. Mr. Cereste will call the Board office for a hearing date.

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Docket #13-21, 1424 Fourteenth, LLC, 1424 Fourteenth Street, Block 2251, Lot 11, Two Unit Dwelling

Mr. Jovishoff stated this application for completeness will be approved administratively.

Public Hearings

Docket #33-20, ARS Architectural Design & Trade, LLC, 1637 Maple Street, Block 3554, Lot 3, Two-Unit Dwelling

Mr. Jovishoff stated there is an additional variance for the side street, 12 feet is required and 5 feet is proposed.

Mr. Cereste stated the plans have been revised. The proposal is for a three story, two-family dwelling. A FAR variance and bulk variances are required.

Perry Frenzel, Engineer, 30 Madison Avenue, Paramus was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Mr. Frenzel stated the property is at the NW corner of Maple Street and Christie Street. The lot is rectangular, 50' wide by 100' deep. The lot is flat. The rear of the lot backs up to a parking lot. This is in the R3 zone. The height should've been measured from the grade plain, we are within ¼" of Mr. Jovishoff's calculation. The Stormwater Management system will consist of a seepage pit under each driveway to connect to roof drains at the front and rear corners of the dwelling.

Along the length of the right side of the property, an alternating series of Daylillies, two Boxwood plants, two Pink Heath plants, a Gold Coast Juniper plant are proposed. An alternating series of six Pink Grass plants, eight Bluebeard plants, and three Holly plants are proposed adjacent to the right of the dwelling. Four Skyrocket juniper plants are proposed within the left side yard adjacent to the dwelling.

Mr. Frenzel has reviewed Mr. Jovishoff's report dated April 10, 2021 and the Neglia report and has no issues.

Chairman Quinn asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Jovishoff stated there is one additional variance for the side street, side yard on a street. There is a driveway requirement of 16 feet and two 15 feet driveways are proposed.

Mr. Jovishoff stated regarding the sidewalk on Christie Street – initially the sidewalk which was located on the applicant's property has been eliminated.

Mr. Cereste stated the applicant will be eliminating the sidewalk.

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Mr. Juzmeski stated how do we resolve this. If someone is walking, they will need to cross the street at some point.

Mr. Cereste stated a public access easement could be stipulated and we can work with the Borough for a four foot sidewalk which encroaches onto the applicant's property. This is a condition of approval.

Mr. Jovishoff stated the landscaping on the South side of the property - there is no screening. I would like adequate screening here. This is a condition of approval. We would like to see additional plantings in the front corner with a limited height to soften the pavement.

Mr. Cereste stated we will agree to this.

Mr. Jovishoff stated the HVAC units need some screening around them. This is a condition of approval.

Mr. Frenzel stated we can install a vinyl fence around them to screen the noise.

Mr. Jovishoff stated has the underground connection been approved by the Utility Company.

Mr. Frenzel stated this is pending Utility Company approval.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the public.

James Chen, Architect, 29 Air Pack Road, Princeton was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Mr. Chen stated the building is three stories. The main façade is on Maple Street. We eliminated the enclosed study.

Each ground floor will consist of a recreation room, and a half bathroom. In addition, there is a laundry room, boiler room, and stairs to the upper floors.

The second floor is proposed to have a sunroom and living room with a fireplace at the front of the dwelling; a playroom, powder room, and stairs to the other levels. At the center of the dwelling is an open plan dining room and kitchen.

The third floor will consist of three bedrooms, including two bedrooms each with an ensuite bathroom, at the front of each unit; and a master bedroom with an ensuite bathroom and walk-in closet at the rear of the dwelling. In addition, an area labelled "study area" is proposed at the center of each unit. A laundry room, linen closet, and stairs to the upper levels are at the center of each dwelling.

The applicant is proposing a wall-mounted lighting fixture above each front entrance within the porch and the rear of each unit, with a total of four lights.

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Chairman Quinn asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Conway asked if the roof deck is on the plan.

Mr. Chen stated yes, this will be used occasionally.

Chairman Sugarman stated this roof deck complicates the application.

Mr. Chen stated if the Board objects, we will eliminate it.

Mr. Jovishoff stated the roof deck is in the plan.

Mr. Jovishoff stated is there any lighting on the roof deck.

Mr. Chen stated no.

Mr. Chen stated the bulkhead is in the middle of the building. There is a parapet wall.

Mr. Cereste stated as a condition of approval, the bulkhead will not exceed seven feet.

Mr. Jovishoff stated the prior application had two bedrooms. There is an office and study proposed there now.

Mr. Jovishoff stated I am concerned with the bulkiness of the building. The front yard is the only conforming area. This is a comment. I'm concerned with the surrounding properties.

Mr. Nitti asked if the A/C units are in the backyard.

Mr. Cereste stated these will be screened to control the noise.

Mr. Juzmeski stated the plan shows the stairway to the roof deck is all glass. Will there be glare to the West. Can you eliminate the glare?

Mr. Chen stated this will be like a skylight with lights for security.

Chairman Quinn asked for questions from the public.

David Spatz, Planner, 60 Friend Terrace, Harrington Park was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Exhibit A3 – Photo Board of Site and Surrounding Area
Top left-subject property from Maple Street
Top right-to the opposite side of Christie Street
Bottom left-to the South, showing a two-family home
Bottom right-across the street – showing single family home

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The neighborhood is a mixture of one and two-family homes. One D variance is required for FAR. Several other D variances are required. The site can accommodate the FAR. There is a conforming amount of parking on site. The property South of us is fully developed. We are consistent with the neighborhood. Drainage improvements are being made. The building behind us is a commercial building. We have a conforming amount of parking.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board.

Chairman Sugarman asked if any member of the public would like to be sworn in and testify.

Mr. Conway stated he is voting to approve this application with the stipulation that there will be no BBQ's on the roof deck.

It was moved by Mr. Joh, seconded by Mr. Conway and passed on a vote of 7-0 by members Liapes, Nitti, Joh, Conway, Tropea, Pacheco, and Sugarman to grant the applicant approval to construct a Two Unit Dwelling.

Docket #4-21, Edwin Glenn O'Connor, 1580 John Street, Block 3754, Lot 6, Two-Unit Dwelling

Mr. Cereste stated the applicant will live in the house. This will be a two-family dwelling. The property is 3,625 square feet in a one and two-family district. Two D variances are required for FAR and height.

Mark Martins, Engineer, 55 Walnut Street, Norwood was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Mr. Martins stated the property is 33' wide by 110' deep. There is an existing two-family home, detached garage and shed on the property. The site plan was show on the screen. The lot is flat. There will be a four car driveway, raised patio and roof deck on top. We are in the R3 zone, this is one and two-family homes.

A Stormwater Management system is proposed and will consist of a 6 unit Cultec recharger under the rear yard. These will connect to the roof drains at the front and rear corners of the dwelling.

The applicant is proposing two remove one existing tree in the rear yard. They will plant an Eastern Redbud tree and four Azalea plants on each side of the driveway. In addition, 19 Meyers Yew plants are proposed on the side yard. A total of 19 Arborvitae plants are proposed surrounding the entire perimeter of the rear yard. We are removing one tree and planting two trees.

Lighting will be at the door areas and rear porch.

Mr. Jovishoff's and the Neglia reports will be complied with. We will increase the size of the

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arborvitae.

Chairman Quinn asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Conway stated how can we stipulate that on the roof decks there should be no propane BBQ's, firepits or chimineas.

Mr. Mariniello stated just by stating what you just stated.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the public.

Peter Pulice, Architect, 344 Broad Street, Leonia was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Mr. Pulice stated the proposal is for a two-family dwelling. I will be presenting D1, D2, D3 and D4 dated February 5, 2021. The plan was shown on the screen.

The basement is proposed to consist of two separate storage/mechanical areas.

The ground floor will have a living space, an open plan combination kitchen/living room/dining room at the rear of the dwelling and a powder room and stairs to the upper floor at the front of the dwelling.

The second floor is proposed to consist of the lower duplex unit living spaces containing two bedrooms at the front of the dwelling; a laundry room, full bathroom, and stairwell to the lower floor at the center of the dwelling; and a master bedroom, with master bathroom and walk-in closet, at the rear of the dwelling.

The third floor will have living spaces for the upper single-level unit (Unit B) including an open-plan combination kitchen/living room/dining room at the front of the dwelling, the access stairwell, a laundry closet, a bedroom and a separate full bathroom at the center of the dwelling; and a master bedroom, with master bathroom and walk-in closet at the rear of the dwelling.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Conway asked to the height of the screening on the roof.

Mr. Pulice stated that is a 3' 6" railing.

Mr. Jovishoff stated he would like to see the planting materials that will be used in the final plans.

Mr. Pulice stated yes.

Mr. Jovishoff stated he would like to see the details of the lighting on the deck.

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Mr. Pulice stated yes.

Mr. Jovishoff asked how the driveway parking is being divided.

Mr. Pulice stated they are proposing a colored paver block in the center, each unit gets two spaces.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the public.

Brian Cho, 15-76 John Street stated a lot of variances are being requested. Did the neighbors that built in the neighborhood also need variances.

Mr. Pulice stated I don't have this information.

Mr. Cho stated do you feel that this design fits in the neighborhood.

Mr. Pulice stated I think it's complimentary and compact.

David Spatz, Planner, 50 Friend Terrace, Harrington Park was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Exhibit A3 – Photo Board of Site and Surrounding Area

Top left-subject property

Top right-to the right, all two-family homes

Bottom left-to the left, a series of newer two-family homes

Bottom right-across the street, Cedar Court Condominium

Mr. Spatz stated a two-family home already exists of the property. The site is well suited for the increased FAR, D variance. All drainage is contained on the property. The positive criteria is met. We have parking on site, no loss of street parking. I believe the variances can be granted.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions of the public.

Chairman Sugarman asked if anyone from the public would like to be sworn in and testify on the application.

Brian Cho, 15-76 John Street, Fort Lee stated my main concern is the size and height of the roof deck. I don't feel comfortable with the roof deck, this causes a loss of privacy in a residential area.

It was moved by Mr. Joh, seconded by Mr. Liapes and passed on a vote of 7-0 by members Liapes, Nitti, Joh, Conway, Tropea, Pacheco, and Sugarman to grant the applicant approval to construct a Two Unit Dwelling.

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Docket #5-21, 2053 Fletcher Associates, LLC, 2053 Fletcher Avenue, Block 4458, Lot 2, Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan – Eight Unit Apartment Building

Chairman Sugarman stated this application is carried to the meeting of April 27, 2021. No further notice is necessary, time is waived for the Board to act.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Joh, seconded by Mr. Conway to adjourn the meeting at 9:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Garofalo

Linda Garofalo
Recording Secretary