

FORT LEE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

August 22, 2023

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

Absent: J. Nitti

Present: J. Mariniello, Jr., Esq., D. Juzmeski, Neglia Eng.

Chairman Sugarman called the meeting to order at 7:34 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 2023.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Mr. Liapes, seconded by Ms. Hong and passed on a vote of 4-0 by members Luapes, Joh, Tropea and Sugarman to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 8, 2023.

Acceptance/Completeness

Docket #23-23, 135 OPR, LLC, 135 Old Palisade Road, Block 4355, Lot 8, Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan – Three Unit Dwelling

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

Docket #24-23, Oak Tree Fort Lee, LLC, 2016 Center Avenue, Block 4751, Lot 29, Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan – Restaurant & Signage

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

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Docket #25-23, 1550 Bergen Boulevard, LLC, 1550 Bergen Boulevard, Block 3454, Lot 10, Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan – Thirty-Two (32) Unit, Multi Family Building

John Molinelli, Attorney for the applicant was not present. Application incomplete, a survey has not been submitted.

Extension of Time/Site Plan Approval

Docket #6-19, JEM Associates, 175 Bridge Plaza North, Block 6151, Lot 11, Minor Site Plan – LED Billboard Sign

Mr. Alampi stated this is a request to extend the Minor Site Plan and Billboard Signage approval. We need to extend the municipal approvals for one year.

It was moved by Mr. Liapes, seconded by Mr. Tropea and passed on a vote of 7-0 by members Liapes, Conway, Joh, Tropea, Pacheco, Luppino and Sugarman to grant the applicant Extension of Time approval until July 13, 2024.

Public Hearings

Docket #19-23, 136 Myrtle Avenue, LLC, 136 Myrtle Avenue, Block 6855, Lot 1, Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan – Four Unit Dwelling (continued from the public hearing of August 8, 2023)

Chairman Sugarman stated the members that were absent for the hearing listened to the tape and are able to vote.

Mr. Macri stated the applicant will comply with the Fire Department letter.

Mr. Joh stated we only had 5 members at the last meeting on August 8, 2023. The plan shows a half bath and there are 4 full baths and an egress door. The full bath and egress door are on the ground floor and we have never approved anything like this. I do not approve of this.

Chairman Sugarman stated in my 18-19 years on this Board there was a time there was a misconception that a full bath was not allowed on the ground floor. A full bath is permitted on the ground floor.

Mr. Macri stated Mr. Joh wanted the egress door removed.

Mr. Joh stated he would like a sliding glass door here instead.

Mr. Macri stated we would like to leave the door as presented.

Mr. Liapes stated if this was for a tenant, they would have to walk through a neighbor's property to access the door.

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Mr. Joh stated this is a 4 unit townhouse.

It was moved by Mr. Liapes, seconded by Mr. Tropea and passed on a vote of 6-0 by members Liapes, Conway, Tropea, Pacheco, Luppino and Sugarman to grant the applicant Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan approval. Mr. Joh voted no.

Docket #21-23, 214 Columbia, LLC, 212-214 Columbia Avenue, Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan-Three Unit Dwelling

Mr. Tuvel stated this is a proposal for a triplex. The building needs a significant upgrade. No storm water management currently exists on the property. We are adding green space, landscaping and new sidewalks. We will comply with the Neglia report. A D variance is required.

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

Mr. Martins stated the existing conditions are this is an irregularly shaped lot. The total lot area is 5,903 square feet. The survey was shown on the board. Currently there is a three story stucco building on the property. Parking is across the front of the building. We propose to remove the existing structure.

Exhibit A1 – colorized plans dated January 9, 2023

We are in the R6 zone. There are multi family homes in the area. Each unit will have a garage and driveway access with planting strips. New curbs along Columbia Avenue will be installed. There will be plantings along the perimeter of the lot. There will be an underground detention system installed. There is a utility pole across the street. The Neglia report will be complied with. No trees are being removed. The AC units will be screened.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Juzmeski asked if the wall around the perimeter will remain?

Mr. Martins stated it is planned to be removed.

Mr. Juzmeski stated I am requesting the plantings on the west side be 5-6 feet tall.

Mr. Martins stated that is acceptable.

Mr. Mariniello asked what is behind the building?

Mr. Martins stated a 6 unit multi-family home.

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Mr. Juzmeski stated they comply with parking.

Mr. Luppino asked if there is 10 feet from the rear of the building to the property line?

Mr. Martins stated there is 6 feet on the sides and 10 feet to the rear.

Mr. Luppino stated these buildings are close to each other.

Mr. Tuvel stated we are sprinklering the building.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the public.

Vassilios Cocoros, Architect, 467 Sylvan Avenue, Englewood Cliffs was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Mr. Cocoros stated the lot is 75 feet wide x 68.56 feet deep. The lot is irregularly shaped. There is 6 foot side yard setback and there is 10 feet in the rear, 5 feet from the deck. There is 10'.2" between the building in the rear and the proposed building. We agree with the Fire Department report. This is a 3 level building with a roof deck in the front. The attic area is finished. This is an all brick structure with bay windows, stucco and a panelized system. Exterior lighting details will be provided. Each unit has the same configuration.

Sheet A2-ground floor-garage, utility room, entry hall, mudroom, bathroom, recreation room, closets, small patio and deck. First floor-living room, dining room, kitchen, eating area, sliding glass door to deck, powder room and coat closet.

Sheet A3-bedroom level-master bedroom with ensuite bathroom, closets, staircase, hallway laundry, two secondary bedrooms, laundry closet, linen closet and a shared bathroom.

Attic-hallway, bathroom, closet, bar area, sliding glass door to deck.

We will comply with the Neglia report.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Juzmeski asked the width of the driveways?

Mr. Cocoros stated Mr. Martins measurements are correct.

Mr. Cocoros asked can we keep the wall and clean it up?

Mr. Juzmeski stated yes.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the public.

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

Exhibit A2-Photo Board of Site and Surrounding Area

Top left-subject property

Top right-to the right, west

Bottom left-to the left, east

Bottom right-across the street

Mr. Spatz stated two D variances are required and C variances. The property is well suited for this proposal. We are consistent with the neighborhood. We are replacing an older building with a new updated building. The property can support the increased density. We are providing a conforming amount of parking. The height is consistent with the neighborhood. The lot is irregularly shaped. The setbacks are similar in the surrounding area. Drainage improvements are being provided on site. The positive criteria exists for the C and D variances. The building is being sprinklered.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the public.

Chairman Sugarman asked if any member of the public would like to come up, be sworn and testify on the application.

It was moved by Mr. Luppino, seconded by Mr. Pacheco and passed on a vote of 7-0 by members Liapes, Conway, Joh, Tropea, Pacheco, Luppino and Sugarman to grant the applicant Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan approval.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Joh, seconded by Mr. Luppino to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Garofalo

Linda Garofalo
Recording Secretary