

The Township of Haddon Planning/Zoning Board

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 1, 2024

A regular meeting of the planning/zoning board of the Township of Haddon was held on Thursday, February 1, 2024, in the municipal building court room (2nd floor), located at 135 Haddon Ave, Haddon Township, New Jersey was called to order by Chairman Richard Rotz.

Flag Salute

Confirmation of Sunshine Law

Roll Call was taken by Kimberly Schemeley (All members present, except Meredith Kirshner)

Swearing in of MaryRita D'Alessandro

Approval of minutes from January 4, 2024 motion by John Foley, seconded by Marguerite Downham, abstain Renee Bergman, approved.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Application 24-10, 314 Westmont Ave – William Rieger (Homeowners) sworn in by Lou Garty.

Lou Garty stated that after review of the notices they are in compliance.

Seeking to construct a 2nd story addition on the existing home. Seeking relief from lot frontage and side yard setbacks of pre-existing, non-conforming conditions. The addition will be within the current footprint of the home. Homeowner searched the neighborhood and 13 homes on the street and all but 2 are currently 2 story homes and 11 of the 13 are narrow lots than his.

A1 – Survey dated November 2023.

A2 – Plans with elevation prepared himself with software help.

Adding 1,000 square feet bring total home to 2400 square feet (going from 2 bedrooms to 4 bedrooms)

Zone R1: Bulk Variances: width 70ft looking for 5ft, total side yard relief of 11.45ft.

Downham: What are your plans with the garage.

Homeowner: Will be turning back into a garage as it is a bedroom now.

Public Comment: None

Discussion:

Wells: What is the height of the addition?

Homeowner: 32ft

Fusco: Explains height measurements and drains will be put back to conventional as it is separated into 3 sections currently.

Homeowner: Landscaping will be redone and siding will match existing.

Garty: Do they need a grading plan?

Fusco: That happens in the construction phase.

Lou Garty: Explains about style, conditions, taxes, permits, Inspections, assessments, etc.

Motion to accept by John Foley and seconded by Marguerite Downham. Approved

Resolution will be signed at the March 7, 2024 meeting.

Application 24-08, 228 Fern Ave – Stephen Scott (homeowner) sworn in by Lou Garty

Lou Garty stated that after review of the notices they are in compliance.

Seeking to construct a 2-story rear yard addition and a wraparound front porch. Seeking relief from lot area, frontage setbacks, side yard setbacks.

The home is falling apart, so they will be rehabbing it and adding an addition.

A1- Survey dated 1/03/2024

A2 – Photo Array taken by Lee Palo with no edits

A3 – Elevation plan – omit the one chimney was put on by accident.

Proposed porch & addition (westerly side). Relief -side set back relief: lot frontage and lot width non-conforming. Has 63ft, required 75ft needs 12 ft relief. Haven't changed side of lot.

Rotz: width & frontage – 6.4ft and 1.5ft relief.

Downham: is the garage used a garage?

Homeowner: Yes, it will be kept as a garage.

Rotz: any other variances needed

Homeowner: No

Lou Garty: Explains about style, conditions, taxes, permits, Inspections, assessments, etc.

Public Comment: None

Motion to close public comment by John Foley and seconded by Marguerite Downham, approved.

Rotz: Any other testimony for this application.

Homeowner: Thanked the board and stated that they are expecting their 1st child and hope to have the house renovated in time.

Motion by John Foley to accept as presented and seconded by Renee Bergman. Approved.

Resolution will be signed at the March 7, 2024 meeting.

Application 24-04, 202 Black Horse Pike – American Construction – Salvatore Sicilano (Attorney), Jessica Brunner (Owner) and Danco Campesi (Sign company) sworn in by Lou Garty.

Lou Garty stated that after review of the notices they are in compliance and the previous application was dismissed without prejudice.

Sicilano: This is our third time appearing before the board. They received Greg Fusco's letter. There will be no testimony by a planner as the owner cannot afford to pay a planner for this project.

Town ordinance allows 2 signs, they are requesting 5 signs.

The owners have reduced the size of all the signs and removed the phone number from the monument size in front of the building. The molding is staying on the building for appearance but the size will be 160 sq ft were only 40 sq ft is allowed. The monument sign was existing when purchased the building and will be removing the phone number

A1 – Survey

A2 – Berwick Ave rendering

A3 – Front of building

A4 – Free Standing Sign

A5 – Side window of office facing door

A6 – Front window of office facing street

Brunner: The window (Signs) coverings are for safety in her office. Those windows look into her private office from the Black Horse Pike with a bus stop right out front. People have in the past come up to the building and looked inside and have tried to enter that door which is not open to the public.

Camposi: (Print Parlor, 421 Route 73, Berlin) – The signs were redesigned smaller than existing. The "A" and "C" are slightly larger than the other letters as per the logo design. The material is vinyl stuck on molding and backing put up by American Construction.

Rotz: What is the size of the letters?

Camposi: "A" & "C" are 14" other are 10" on front and side of building. The monument sign is 7". None of the signs are illuminated.

Ryan: Why do need the signs on the windows?

Brunner: Safety reasons from people on the Black Horse Pike at the bus stop. Wanted something that she could look out of but people could not look in.

Ryan: Are the signs in the other windows being removed?

Brunner: Yes

Ryan: Is the door closed to those windows for public use?

Brunner: No

Bergman: Wouldn't blinds do the same?

Brunner: No, she wants to be able to see out.

Foley: Have you noticed a decrease in the number of people who walk up to those windows?

Brunner: Yes

Rotz: What are the lines going across the side of the building?

Brunner: Vinyl siding to make the side the building look nicer.

Mulroy: Is the white door the only door for the public? And can you see that door from your office?

Brunner: yes, it is and no I cannot.

Campesi: The monument sign is pre-existing and is 15ft tall. The sign is existing panels with just new vinyl lettering. The box is a light box but does not know if it works, but they will not be lighting it.

A7 – existing sign photo

Public Comment - None

Motion to close public comment by John Foley and seconded by Joe Buono. Approved.

Discussion:

Stevenson: There has been no testimony as to why they need so many signs.

Calves: is in favor of new application.

Foley: is in favor of new application as it is closer to ordinance. Common sense that they have a very large wall facing the Black Horse Pike, so it makes sense to have a larger sign. We should be giving consideration to location and nature of business.

Ryan: Not in favor. They did the 1st signs without permission, so we should not be considering the cost to change all of it as a factor.

Downham: Doesn't like the window signs. The signs are used to locate a business, not advertising. In this day and age people look up companies online and then use signs to locate the building when going there or if someone they know is looking for construction, they could comment they have seen the business on the BHP, but then would go online to get details and reviews.

Rotz: we could divide the application between the 3 signs and the 2 window signs.

Motion to approve the 3 signs (Side of building, front of building and monument sign) by Greg Wells and seconded by Marguerite Downham. Approved by a vote of 6-3.

Motion to approve the 2 window signs by Jose Calves and seconded by Frank Ryan. Denied by a vote of 3-6.

Resolution will be signed at the March 7, 2024 meeting.

Rotz: Need a motion to extend the meeting to midnight.

Application 24-06, 105-107 Haddon Ave – OLMP, LLC (owner).

Joses Calves recused himself.

Beth Marlin (Brown & Connor) attorney, Clifford Clay (engineer/planner), Rich Villa (Architect) and Dominic Piperno (Chef/Owner) sworn in by Lou Garty.

Clay & Villa stated their credentials for the board and the approved board to hear them testify.

Lou Garty stated that after review of the notices they are in compliance.

This will be a brand-new restaurant. The owner currently owns a restaurant in Collingswood. The property has been vacant for years, it has drainage problems, overgrown weeds and they will create parking.

Marlin: They will not be doing retail space at this time, so they withdraw the use variance without prejudice and if they decided later to do it, they know they need to come back before the board for approval.

This is a C1 district. The drainage issues will be addressed along with the eye soar that has become that building.

Dominic graduated culinary school in San Francisco, is the current chef and owner of Hearthside in Collingswood for the past 7 years.

This restaurant concept will be fine dining cuisine, wine, cocktails, tapas style, homemade pastas and breads.

Villa:

A1 – (A100) Architect Picture/Floor Plan

They will be removing the back portion of the building to create a parking lot for valet parking only. There will be outdoor seating in back. The building will be entirely repainted, new windows, new door on Haddon Ave and the signage will be back before the board at a later time. There will be plantings in front, trees on the side and rear.

Piperno:

36 Seats at the bar

Patio seating until 9pm, The restaurant hours will be until 11pm on weekdays and 12am on weekends. There will be no TV's, 40 employees with only 18-25 per shift, deliveries will be between 9am and 1pm while the restaurant is closed as well as the trash/recycling pick up. The restaurant will open at 3pm and may be closed on Sundays. In the future might consider doing a brunch.

A2 – (A200) Exterior Architectural rendering.

A3 – (A201) Rear and side elevations

Gray area was the retail space which has been removed.

The front of the building shows a waiting area and main portion of the restaurant. There is an interior trash storage, fire lounge and doors that open to the back yard.

Rotz: How is the parking accessed?

Villa: From Haddon Ave

Ryan: the rear building where the alley is, will there be access?

Villa: No

Marlin: Cliff will testify to the exterior.

Jandoli: What is the customer seating number?

145 Seats

Rotz: What will they be doing with the retail space?

Marlin: it will remain vacant space for now.

Garty: They can use it for restaurant related uses.

Rotz: However, it can not be more than 145 seats.

Downham: Will they be serving food at the bar?

Piperno: Yes

Downham: Are both patio sections covered?

Piperno: No

Piperno: There will be light music playing through the restaurant. No smoking on the property and no televisions. This is a high-end wine and cocktail bar, not a sports bar. Will not be open pass 1am.

Piperno: We want to work with the neighbors not fight. He will do what he can to make everyone happy.

Wells: What is in the rear now?

Piperno: A huge cinderblock wall, we will be taking that down and putting up "Green" walls.

Clay:

A5- Rendering

A6 (C102) Site Plan – 2800sq ft

A7 (C103) Grading Plan

A8 (L101) Landscaping

A9 (E101) Lighting

The property has serious drainage issues and previous attempts to fix were not good.

28000 sq ft building on 5/8-acre, rear site occupied building, right side (east) 1 foot off property line and other side is only 3 ft from property line. The back area is unwalkable and the building is in bad shape with drainage issues.

Rotz: Any clean up issues?

Clay: No

The building has been vacant for 5 years with significant drainage issues so the focus will be to fix that issue first. We will be putting in an underground system 200 feet long that ties into drainage on Haddon Ave inlet near Rita's. The parking lot will be graded and the neighbors run off will go into this system to avoid flooding in their back yards. There will be drywells with grates that tie into the system.

The back parking lot will have a 6ft solid vinyl fence and some landscape for a buffer. They have reviewed Greg Fusco's letter and are willing to work with Mr. Fusco to make sure everything is in compliance and works for the property.

Marlin: Mr. Fusco brought up that there is no curbing in the areas?

Clay: They did not do curbing, because the grade is pretty flat and it would hurt the drainage, so they are using parking bumpers instead.

The landscape plan shows curb landscape, islands in front, interior trees in parking lot, low shrubs and plants. Interior inside fence. The lighting will be 10ft poles with LEDs with sharp cutoffs. The light spreads sideways and down so it will not shine into the neighbors.

Rotz: Driveway to back only used by employees and valet?

Piperno: Yes

Jandoli: How will be valet work?

Piperno: Cars will enter from Haddon Ave and the valet will be in the front lot. The valet will park the cars in front and/or rear lots. There are 2 ADA spaces in front which can be parked by owner of car.

Rotz: 32 parking places, 7 or 8 along curb on Haddon Ave and 3 or 4 on other side of street.

Variances:

-aisle no width of 2 lane traffic, uniquely shaped sits 16 ft wide, can fit 2 cars but with the valet parking only one car will be going through at a time. Ordinance allows 35% covered for parking, they are at 41% and they would have to eliminate parking to comply and they feel the parking is more important.

Rotz: Will the parking lot be visible if standing on the ground in back yard.

Clay: No

Wells: Some of the spaces are for trees and plants?

Clay: Yes, for buffering purposes.

Jandoli: Did you do auto turn analysis?

Clay: Yes, front lot opened for those maneuvers.

A10 – Truck circulation plan (Sheet 102)

Rotz: Ran through variances

Fusco: Ran through his letter and concerns, which the owner has already addressed and will work with Mr. Fusco on modifications if needed.

Rotz: Not curbing parking lot will exacerbate the drainage issues?

Clay: We did use GIS topos, but we did not go into private properties.

Downham: Drain to Haddon Ave at Rita's – drains to Cooper Street?

Fusco: He's detaining the water under the parking lot then slowly letting out.

Rotz: Any way to put landscaping on other side of fence?

Fusco: That would be difficult for the owner to maintain.

Rotz: Any other alternate buffers?

Fusco: Evergreen Screen, but the concept of valet parking good and the turnover rate will not be bad.

Ryan: Giumarello's expanded original plan for evergreens and the neighbors pushed for fencing.

Rotz: Did you investigate offsite leasing for parking?

Clay: No, but they could in needed in the future.

Public Comment:

Kevin Heat (113 & 115 Haddon Ave) sworn in by Lou Garty.

-Parking for employees & Customers is a concern.

-When Haddon Ave shuts down for events, where will parking be?

- Retail stores in that strip use street parking from 8am to 9pm.
- Would like more details on shrubs
- There are 2 many liquor licenses in town already

Mulroy: Haddon Ave closed from Cooper to Strawbridge unless it's a parade so won't effect the parking.

Rotz: They must comply with noise ordinance

Scott Hulteen (7 E. Walnut Ave) sworn in by Lou Garty.

- Noise is a concern
- Outside patio is 12ft from his backyard
- The music played outside will be heard
- Would like a noise study done
- In Dec/Jan he got a substantial amount of rain

Rotz: Noise study can not be done as the back still has a building in the way of the what it will actually be.

Hulteen: With at least 50 people outside, a good estimate can be done.

Ryan: There is a noise ordinance and Noise is not a criteria of the zoning law.

Joseph Dicrischio (5 E. Walnut Ave) sworn in by Lou Garty.

- Residents haven't had time to examine the changes that were presented tonight.
- Wants the intent to be defined.
- No alleyway access – Where is the employee smoking area going to be?
- Noise is a concern
- Is concerned about having a bar in his backyard
- How is the trash being taken out of the restaurant?
- Smell from dumpster
- Is Asbestos going to be a concern during demo?
- How long will construction take?

Piperno: Employee smoking area hasn't been discussed as he doesn't have employees yet, but it will not be anywhere near the neighbors. Trash will be taken out through the building to the side with the parking lot and to the dumpster enclosure. The dumpsters will be emptied every day and cleaned every 3-4 months. The dumpster will be enclosed.

Buono: Does the Collingswood location have dumpster smelling issues

Piperno: No or not that anyone has complained about.

Clay: 12-16 months and the asbestos removal is done with negative air pressure as to not let it go air borne.

Jeff Hamilton (10 Cooper Street) sworn in by Lou Garty.

- He welcomes this very much
- Building is an eye soar
- Has concerns with new construction but it's better than what's there now.
- Main concern is rats, but if the trash enclosure is kept clean then it should be good.
- Thinks a higher than 6ft fence is needed, possibly 8-10ft high
- Would like tall shrubbery
- Is the metal railing between the parking lot and Rita's staying?

Piperno: Would be happy to put in an 8-10ft fence

Clay: The metal railing will remain.

Fusco: Your house is the most adjoining to this and Rita's with the kids and turn over of cars and this will have less of both.

Kim Harley (20 Cooper Street) sworn in by Lou Garty.

- Buffer is the wall
- Will be looking at parking lot from 2nd story of her home
- Wants a higher fence

Kathleen O'Malley (63 Sunset Lane) sworn in by Lou Garty.

- It is a huge improvement than what is there
- Giumarello's is larger with valet parking
- She is in favor of this project
- Praised the owner and his food.

Steven Zimmer (19 Cooper Street) sworn in by Lou Garty.

- Parking issue but thinks it is creative way to deal with it.
- drainage – will the owner have to maintain?
- Thinks Dominic is great.
- He is support of the application
- Haddon Square has no parking and noise but the town allows it.
- This should be accepted because it's correcting an issue.

Motion to extend the meeting to midnight by Renee Berman and Seconded by Joe Buono. Approved by a vote of 8-1.

Rotz: Application 24-07 will not be heard tonight and will be put on the March meeting. No further advertising will be necessary.

John Labell (14 Cooper Street) sworn in by Lou Garty.

- Will there be recourse if the drainage doesn't correct the flooding?
- Would like the 10ft lights to be smaller
- Would the owner have to come back before the board to add the outside bar in the future?
- Would a change in the valet parking have to come back before the board?

Garty: The board has no control over recourse and yes, they would have to come back before the board to make those changes.

Hulteen: Would like an acoustic wall instead of a fence.

Motion to close public comment by John Foley and seconded by Greg Wells. Approved.

Lou Garty: Explains about style, conditions, taxes, permits, Inspections, assessments, etc.

Discussion:

Marlin: Would like to request an additional variance for a higher fence if the board will allow.

Rotz: Requests that alternate material be looked into other than vinyl as it has a shelf life.

Wells: How high is the existing building in the rear?

Fusco: 16 feet

Ryan: What height would the board suggest?

Fusco: 8ft fence

Marlin: Please allow the owner time to look into other options

Stevenson: The square has an 8ft fence with molded plastic designed to be a sound barrier.

Clay: We will look into that.

Marlin: There are a lot of arguments for a C1 variance eligible for C2 variance benefiting the community.

Garty: Goes through the variances and normal speech about permits, taxes, etc. If passed it is still subject to police, fire marshal, county, engineer and board of health approvals as well.

Marlin: They agree to everything

Motion to approve as presented by John Foley and seconded by Renee Bergman. Approved.

Resolution will be signed at the March 7, 2024 meeting.

Resolution: 2023-27 – 82 Elgin Ave

2024-01 – 316 Glenwood Ave

2024-02 – 9 Wilson Ave

2024-03 – 210 Emerald Ave

2024-05 – 113 Utica Ave

Motion to accept the above resolutions by Marguerite Downham and seconded by Greg Wells, Abstain by Renee Bergman. Approved.

Public Comment: None

Zoning officer report (Lee Palo): None

Next meeting – Thursday, March 7, 2024

Motion to close meeting by John Foley and seconded by Greg Wells. Approved.

Respectfully submitted

Kimberly Schemeley

Secretary for Planning/Zoning Board