

**BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Tuesday, July 9, 2019**  
**—MINUTES—**

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:**

Acting Chairman Evan Lerner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Courtroom, 100 Commons Way, Bridgewater, New Jersey.

**2. OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT ANNOUNCEMENT:**

Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act N.J.S.A. 10:4-6. On January 14, 2019 proper notice was sent to the Courier Newspaper and the Star-Ledger and filed with the Clerk at the Township of Bridgewater and posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building. Please be aware of the Planning Board policy for public hearings: no new applications will be heard after 10:00 pm and no new testimony will be taken after 10:15 pm. Hearing Assistance is available upon request. Accommodation will be made for individuals with a disability, pursuant to the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), provided the individual with the disability provides 48 hours advance notice to the Planning Department Secretary before the public meeting.” However, if the individual should require special equipment or services, such as a CART transcriber, seven days advance notice, excluding weekends and holidays, may be necessary.

**3. SALUTE TO FLAG:**

There was salute to the flag.

**4. ROLL CALL:**

Stephen Rodzinak – present

James Franco – absent

Chairwoman Tricia Casamento – absent

Councilman Howard Norgalis – present

Beth Powers – absent

Mayor Dan Hayes – present

Evan Lerner – present

Urvin Pandya, Alt. #1 – present

Vacant, Alt. #2 –

Others present: Board Attorney Thomas Collins, Township Engineer Tom Forsythe, Board Planner Scarlett Doyle, Municipal Services Secretary Jacqueline Pino

**5. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES:**

None

**6. MEMORIALIZATION OF RESOLUTIONS:**

None

**7. LAND DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS:**

**BRIAD DEVELOPMENT-Somerset Corporate Blvd & Commons Way**

Block 411 Lot 39.11

#17-006-PB-Amend Prior Site Plan Approval-Signs

Attorney Kevin Coakley was present on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Coakley stated this is an application for two-three signs on the hotel that is under construction located on the corner of 202

and Commons Way. There was rezoning of the Somerset Corporate Center which included the AC Marriot, Lifetime Fitness and Zinburger restaurant. There is a restaurant on the bottom floor, which was included in the original application, but the hotel wanted to have another restaurant on the top floor. This is an upscale wine tapastre restaurant and will be called the Bradford. The original application approved four signs with a waiver. The variance that we are seeking is for three signs that will be exceed the 100 ft square footage.

James Talerico, senior director of development with The Braid Group and Rick Muniz, architect AIA were sworn in for testimony.

Mr. Talerico submitted exhibit that was marked into evidence as follows:

**A-1      7/9/19                      South & East Elevation of the Hotel Facades**

Mr. Talerico testified that the AC Marriot is a European style hotel, in which the hotel has an open floor concept for a separate restaurant. That is why we are proposing additional signage for marketing so the public will have access to the restaurant. Unlike a standalone restaurant the advertising is different due to the fact that the public will access the restaurant through the hotel. Mr. Talerico stated that the applicant requests the variances from the Board for the size of the façade signs on the North and the East side from the approved 96 square feet to 136.5 square feet to provide adequate space for AC Hotel Marriot and “The Bradford Fine Spirits & Tapas” and the Bradford logo. On the West side a blade sign of 5 square feet is proposed and will be located at the main entrance of the hotel. The Board had questioned why all the verbiage on the signs. Mr. Talerico stated that in the restaurant business today the restaurants are trying to differentiate exactly what the restaurant is. He also stated that it is necessary to properly identify the restaurant from the nearby streets and to the market the restaurant for general restaurant clientele.

Chairman Lerner opened the public portion of the meeting for questions. There were no questions or comments.

Mr. Ricardo Muniz-Guillet, AIA was accepted by the Board as an expert witness. Mr Muniz-Guillet described the signage variances as shown on the site plans and explained the relative sizes. Mr. Muniz-Guillet stated that the proposed size of the signs, are appropriate to help identify the property from the North and from the East. The blade sign identifies the location since the elevator goes directly to the roof top where the restaurant is located. The Board questioned the lighting of the sign. Mr. Coakley stated that the Bradford restaurant sign will be turned off when the restaurant is not open. The Board also questioned the size and future of the sign if the restaurant changes. Mr. Coakley stated that if the restaurant is no longer in use as a restaurant then the restaurant sign would be removed and the hotel sign would remain the size that its portion of the sign is.

Chairman Lerner opened the public portion of the meeting for questions. There were no questions or comments.

Motion by Mr. Rodzinak, second by Mr. Pandya, to amend the prior site plan for signage was approved with conditions on the following roll call vote.

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Rodzinak, Councilman Norgalis, Mayor Hayes, Acting Chairman Lerner, Mr. Pandya

ABSENT: Ms. Casamento, Mr. Franco, Ms. Powers

**BRIDGEWATER HILLS LLC-Frontier Rd & Route 22**

Block 711 Lot 7

#18-003-PB-Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan with Variances

Attorney Jeffrey Lehrer was present on behalf of the applicant which is a continuation from the April 9, 2019 & September 24, 2018 meetings.

Mr. Lehrer stated that there was a concern of the overall height of the hotels along with the color scheme. There were also, concerns about the buffer and the walk ways within the parking areas in the last meeting. We have made all the changes as requested by the Board and we are presenting the pictures that were requested from the Board as well. Mr. Collins, Board attorney stated they received a letter dated today, July 9, 2019 from Karl McAleer stating in receipt of the revised plans dated June 10, 2019 and the applicant has satisfied all fire safety & fire protection concerns. Mr. Lehrer also stated that they fully comply with the parking requirement in which 704 parking spaces are required and 705 parking spaces are provided.

Mr. Lehrer called Shrinath Kotdawala who was previously sworn in.

Mr. Kotdawala submitted exhibit that was marked into evidence as follows:

**A-12 7/9/19 Photographic Inventory & Visual Impact Assessment**

Mr. Kotdawala explained the general revisions to the plans and confirmed that they will comply with the review report and complied with most of them already. Mr. Kotdawala stated that the sidewalks will be concrete and will connect to the buildings. He also stated that the area of the steep slope disturbance has been reduced since two out of the three steep slope areas along Frontier Road will be kept in their current condition and the one by the storm water management facility. Mr. Kotdawala stated that he will work with Ms. Doyle, the Township Planner as previously testified regarding landscaping and lighting. Mr. Kotdawala stated that all parking stalls will be 9 ½ feet, which will still meet the 705 parking spaces provided. The Board questioned due to the size of the project will it be done in phases. Mr. Lehrer stated that nothing has changed, but the two hotels and restaurant will be built first.

Chairman Lerner stated for the public to hold all questions and comments until all testimony is heard.

Mr. Lehrer called Kamlesh Shah who was previously sworn in.

Mr. Shah stated that the parapets will not exceed 3 feet of the roof line. He also confirmed that the height of the hotels will be limited to 45 feet and that the air conditioning and heating are not on the roof.

Mr. Lehrer called Gary Kliesch who was previously sworn in.

Mr. Kliesch stated that he was aware of previous testimony regarding the blasting at the quarry. The Board questioned that they wanted the applicant to be aware of this since there is blasting from time to time. Mr. Kliesch stated they have taken steps when designing the buildings regarding this because the buildings are closer.

Christine A. Nazzaro-Cofone, PP was sworn in for testimony and was accepted by the Board as an expert witness.

Ms. Nazzaro-Cofone stated her opinions regarding the “c” variances that are being requested for the number of stories of four stories, where only three stories are allowed in the zone, the variance for the height of the retaining walls of up to 14 feet, where 6 feet is the maximum height allowed and the waivers for the loading spaces and for the variances from the landscaping replacement requirements. Ms. Nazzaro-Cofone stated that the granting of the variances would benefit the purposes of zoning by providing for appropriate commercial uses of the hotel and the other uses in a zone that promotes an efficient design. Ms. Nazzaro-Cofone stated that granting the variances for the steep slope could be justified under hardship, because the property has an extreme topographic condition. The steep slope area is man-made and is adjoining Frontier Road resulting from the construction of Frontier Road by the County of Somerset. Ms. Nazzaro-Cofone stated that they will work with the Township Planner addressing the concerns of the landscaping.

Chairman Lerner opened the public portion of the meeting for questions and comments.

Jeffrey Brookner of 60 Nicole Terrace was sworn and stated that he had questions about the drainage regarding the impervious coverage due to the steep slope since there is water coming off the mountain. This property is just north where route 22 passes through 287 in which that area often floods. Mr. Kotdawala stated New Jersey stormwater management required us to reduce the peak flow by 50% for a two year storm and 20% for a 100 year storm using the open basin. Mr. Brookner stated when he looks at the size of that detention basin seems to look like less than 5% of the overall foot of the project. He suggested that the Board and the Township take a careful look at the water flow due to the size of the project. Mr. Kotdawala stated that they did double check with Dave Hoder and they have enough capacity.

John Kulak of 13 Ramsey Street was sworn and stated a couple of quick questions the difference between three floors and four floors, an increase in rooms and also decrease in ceiling height and

how the building may look. How the developer of the project compared a three story building to a four story building. Ms. Nazzaro-Cofone stated that there are other zones in Bridgewater that allow four stories. She also stated that the buildings are very attractive along with no compromise to the aesthetics. Mr. Kulak stated that he was talking about the interior of the rooms. He wanted to know about the number of rooms and how they appear to the guests and why you would insist on four stories instead of three. Mr. Shah stated that high ceilings would look great, but we are dealing with the franchise business. Everything that is installed in the hotels are prefabricated the height, the curtains, the valance, the wall paper, the ceilings the doors that require us to use.

John Arcoleo of 1110 Washington Valley Road was sworn and stated that they lowered the height of the hotel and lowered the grade of the property. Mr. Kotdawala stated they lowered the footprint of the hotel he is keeping the existing grade of the building. The parking lot will not have more than 5% slope

Steven Singer stated he was unable to attend the April meeting, but had a question regarding the impact the traffic will have on this project on Route 22, 287 and Union Avenue. Mr. Lehrer stated that Mr. Miskovich testified at great length regarding the traffic. The Board suggested that he reach out to Ms. Pino at the Township to provide a copy of the tape.

Chairman Lerner closed the public portion of the meeting for questions. There were no more questions or comments.

The Board had complimented the applicant for all the changes that they had made to the application.

Motion by Councilman Norgalis, second by Mr. Rodzinak, to be approved with conditions on the following roll call vote:

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Rodzinak, Councilman Norgalis, Acting Chairman Lerner, Mr. Pandya

ABSENT: Ms. Casamento, Mr. Franco, Ms. Powers

NOT ELIGIBLE: Mayor Hayes

## **8. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:**

Mark Henegemuhle of 774 Eisenhower Avenue wanted to talk about an Ordinance 1904 that was adopted in February 2009. This is a land swap ordinance that a developer was given access to two Bridgewater lots, Block 437 Lot 12, which is 2.29 Acres & wetlands

The Board Attorney, Tom Collins explained to Mr. Henegemuhle the differences between the Zoning Board and the Planning Board along with the building permit if no subdivision is applied for.

9. **OTHER BOARD BUSINESS:**

Submission of Report and Recommendations of the Zoning Board of Adjustment for the Township of Bridgewater for the period January 1, 2018 thru December 31, 2018

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

It was the consensus of the Board to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jacqueline Pino,  
Secretary of Municipal Services