

BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD

Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 28, 2020
—MINUTES—

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

Chairman Fross called the Planning Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Courtroom, located at 100 Commons Way, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807

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 23, 2020, 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:

4. ROLL CALL:

Michael Pappas – present	Councilman Kirsh - present
Henry Wang – present	Patricia Casamento - present
Mayor Moench – present	Beth Powers – present
Alan Fross – present	Maurizio Vescio - present
Urvin Pandya – present	

Others present: Attorney Mark Peck, Esq., Planner Scarlett Doyle, PP, Engineer William Burr, IV, PE

5. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES:

February 12, 2019, Regular Meeting

Motion for approval by Mrs. Casamento and second by Mr. Pandya

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Casamento, Mr. Pandya

ABSENT: N/A

DENIAL: None

NOT ELIGIBLE: Mr. Pappas, Mr. Wang, Chairman Fross, Councilman Kirsh, Ms. Powers, Mr. Vescio,

April 9, 2019, Regular Meeting

Motion for approval by Mr. Pandya

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Pandya

ABSENT: N/A

DENIAL: None

NOT ELIGIBLE: Mr. Pappas, Mr. Wang, Chairman Fross, Councilman Kirsh, Mr. Vescio, Mayor Moench, Ms. Casamento, Ms. Powers.

June 24, 2019, Regular Meeting

Motion for approval by Mrs. Casamento and second by Mr. Pandya

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Casamento, Mr. Pandya , Ms. Powers.

ABSENT: N/A

DENIAL: None

NOT ELIGIBLE: Mr. Pappas, Mr. Wang, Chairman Fross, Councilman Kirsh, Mr. Vescio, Mayor Moench

July 9, 2019, Regular Meeting

Motion for approval by Mr. Pandya

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Pandya

ABSENT: N/A

DENIAL: None

NOT ELIGIBLE: Ms. Casamento, Mr. Pappas, Mr. Wang, Chairman Fross, Councilman Kirsh, Mr. Vescio, Mayor Moench , Ms. Powers.

July 22, 2019, Regular Meeting

Motion for approval by Mr. Pandya and second by Ms. Casamento

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Casamento, Mr. Pandya

ABSENT: N/A

DENIAL: None

NOT ELIGIBLE: Mr. Pappas, Mr. Wang, Chairman Fross, Councilman Kirsh, Ms. Powers, Mr. Vescio, Mayor Moench

August 13, 2019, Regular Meeting

Motion for approval by Mrs. Casamento and second by Mr. Pandya

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Casamento, Mr. Pandya

ABSENT: N/A

DENIAL: None

NOT ELIGIBLE: Mr. Pappas, Mr. Wang, Chairman Fross, Councilman Kirsh, Ms. Powers, Mr. Vescio, Mayor Moench

August 26, 2019, Regular Meeting (pending)

October 28, 2019, Regular Meeting (pending)

November 12, 2019, Regular Meeting (pending)

November 18, 2019, Special Meeting (pending)

November 26, 2019, Special Meeting (pending)

December 10, 2019, Regular Meeting (pending)

January 14, 2020, Reorg. & Regular Meeting (pending)

Vice Chair Casamento left the meeting at 7:09 pm

6. MEMORIALIZATION OF RESOLUTIONS:

None

7. LAND DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS:

ACS BRIDGEWATER LLC-Route 22

Block 559 Lot 3

#19-020-PB Minor Site Plan-Medical Offices

Attorney Jeffrey Lehrer represented applicant, ACS Bridgewater, LLC. Attorney Lehrer stated that the applicant applied to the Planning Board for approval of a minor site plan and related “c” variance relief and design waivers for improvements to property located at Lot 3 in Block 559 (1125 Route 22). The applicant was represented by Counsel, Jeffrey Lehrer, Esq. Mr. Lehrer explained that there was a

“divided building”, separated by a connected drive through, on the subject property. These buildings are “Building A” (west building), currently occupied by Hunterdon Healthcare, and “Building B” (east building), a vacant structure formerly occupied by Bank of America. The applicant proposes to enclose the existing drive through, create new entryways into Building B, add signage, and other associated site improvements. Building A would be occupied by Hunterdon Healthcare and Atlantic Healthcare, and Building B by Atlantic Healthcare.

The intent is to create “one-stop shopping” for medical services, which will include general practitioners, specialists, wellness facilities, and patient pharmacy. The applicant intends to replace the existing Building B canopy facing Route 22 and create a patient drop-off area, and install new signage and landscaping. Mr. Lehrer referenced Planning Board Resolution #15-027-PB (Exhibit 1), which permitted six (6) signs, including two (2) freestanding signs; the former Bank of America freestanding sign is to be replaced with a monument sign of the same size, but 6” lower (20.5’ vs. 20’ proposed) and the two (2) new façade signs (to replace the existing Bank of America façade signs) would contain 5 SF less sign area than the existing (113 SF to 108 SF). No signage variances are sought.

The applicant’s site plan was prepared by Eric L. Keller, P.E. & P.P., Bowman Consulting Group, Ltd., the partial topographic survey was prepared by Kevin P. Bollinger, P.L.S., Bowman Consulting Group, boundary survey prepared by Raymond B. Dowber, P.L.S., LMS Surveying Ltd and the architectural plan was prepared by Paul Newman, AIA of Kimmerle Newman Architects.

The applicant proposed to present testimony by the following witnesses, who were all sworn: Eric Keller, P.E., P.P.; Paul Newman, A.I.A.; and Edward Martins, Director of Design and Construction for Atlantic Healthcare.

The Board was presented with the followed EXHIBITS which would be used during the course of the hearing:

- A-1 Bridgewater Township Planning Board Resolution No. 15-027-PB;
- A-2 Aerial photo depicting existing conditions;
- A-3 Exhibit A-2 with Site Plan superimposed;
- A-4 Colorized plan sheet A-0;
- A-5 Colorized plan sheet A-1;
- A-6 Colored plan sheet A-4;
- A-7 Photographs depicting exterior;
- A-8 Photograph of existing east entry and rendering of proposed improvements;
- A-9 Photograph of existing drive through and rendering of proposed improvements;
- A-10 Colorized drawing (A-2) of proposed signage.

The Board and applicant discussed the following reports during the course of the hearing: the joint report of the Board Plannervand Board Engineer and the Fire Marshal.

Mr. Leher presented Mr. Keller as the applicant’s witness, who was accepted by the Board as an expert in both professional engineering and professional planning. He explained the minor site plan and related c(2) variances and waivers, from both an engineering and planning perspective. Mr. Keller presented Exhibit A-1 and, using Exhibit A-2, he explained that Building B was initially constructed in the 1970s, for Bank of America, and Building A was constructed in the early 1980s.

He testified that access to the site is via separate in/out driveways, the east driveway marked with signage, the west driveway unmarked; the 2015 approval permits a 45 SF sign at the west entrance. The Bank of America façade signage is to be replaced by Atlantic Healthcare signage on Building B, which will be 108 SF versus the 113 SF for Bank of America; the signage will also be relocated on the Building B façade.

The abandoned drive-through which remains is to be enclosed and used as lobby space, and will tie Buildings A and B together as a medical complex. Parking to the east side of the buildings will be for patients, and the west side for employees. At the required standard of 4.5 parking spaces per 1000 SF of floor area, 353 parking spaces are required; applicant is providing 357 parking spaces.

Mr. Keller testified utilizing Exhibit A-3 and explained that Building A (west side) would not be changed as a result of the Application. He presented testimony regarding building, parking, and

landscaping improvements for Building B. There will be a new covered area for patient drop off, and the sidewalk will be removed and replaced with landscaping. Traffic will circulate in a one-way direction. The drive through will be removed and replaced with an enclosed lobby area connecting Buildings A and B. The existing pylon sign at the east driveway entrance will be replaced with a monument sign that will be 20' high, 6" lower than the existing pylon sign, but of the same sign area. The monument sign will have signage for both Hunterdon Healthcare and Atlantic Healthcare. It is expected that this new signage will better serve motorists and patients with its better visibility and cleaner, more contemporary design. Impervious coverage at the subject property will increase by approximately 1100 SF, which will bring such coverage to 55.4%, which is under the permitted 60% maximum impervious cover permitted in the GC Zone. On-site stormwater run-off will continue to run into the existing detention basins. The loading zone will be relocated to a less visible spot to the rear of the building, and it is acknowledged that loading needs will not be significant and will primarily consist of medical and office supplies.

Lighting will comply with Township requirements, including footcandle levels, which are proposed to be 1.65 fc, where an average of 1.5 fc is required. Lighting for the west parking area was upgraded pursuant to the 2015 approval, and this lighting scheme will continue to the east parking area. Light intensity will not exceed .4 fc at property lines. All existing light poles will remain with replacement LED fixtures. Two (2) new poles will be added near the new Building B entrance, and four (4) new poles in the area of the new Building B patient drop off.

Mr. Keller testified regarding the necessary proofs for the c2 front yard setback variance, which involves the Building B canopy. The GC Zone requires a minimum 200' setback from the roadway (Route 22). The building itself is 105.5' from Route 22; with the existing 4' canopy it is 101.5' from the roadway. This canopy is being replaced and relocated along Building B, which results in a setback of 102' from Route 22. He testified that while this is still a nonconformity, it will be slightly less intrusive than what currently exists, as the new canopy will contain less mass, will be slightly further from the roadway (with the pavement over 150' from the building/canopy, and will have no discernible impact to light and air circulation. He also noted that such a canopy/covered area is a standard feature for medical facilities, and is preferred for dropping off/picking up patients as well as pedestrians. This is better zoning alternative than having no canopy, which would be the result if the variance were denied.

Mr. Keller testified regarding the joint Doyle-Burr January 23, 2020 report and represented that applicant agreed with, and would comply with, everything, with one exception. This exception concerned landscaping. applicant proposed shrubs of 18"-24", and trees of 6'-8'. The Board's professionals recommended shrubs of 24"-30" and trees of 8'-10'. The location and density was also a point of disagreement. The Board Planner strongly believed that landscaping should meet Township standards, which was more important as this is a highly visible property on a heavily travelled roadway. After discussion and testimony between the Board, applicant, and Board's professionals, applicant agreed that landscaping would be installed to the satisfaction of the Board's Planner. The Board questioned Mr. Keller about parking and lighting standards, traffic circulation, and driveway alignment, and is satisfied that these aspects will all meet the applicable codes and standards. The Chairman opened the meeting to the public for questions of Mr. Keller. No member of the public came forward to question Mr. Keller.

The applicant presented Mr. Newman, who was accepted by the Board as an expert in architecture and testified. Using Exhibits A-4 and A-5 he described the conversion of the drive through to enclosed lobby/medical office space. He explained that the existing indent between the buildings, which will be a drop-off secondary patient entryway. He noted that most ambulatory patients are expected to use a newly designed entrance on the east side of Building B, which is covered by a canopy. The application will allow the canopy to be extended, offering better protection. The enclosed former drive through will create a pathway between buildings and enable patients and staff to easily get from place to place within the facility. Using Exhibit A-6 elevations he testified regarding the new enclosure, which will be predominately glass, increasing light and air. Most of the existing HVAC units and ground-mounted equipment at the northeast corner of Building B are being removed, as the former use as a Bank of America data center required such fixtures whereas the proposed use does not require same.

The applicant agrees that any HVAC units will not be visible and will be placed behind the rooftop parapet.

Mr. Newman testified that the intent is to maintain the look and feel of the existing buildings, with the only changes being new canopies and signage, as well as the converted drive through. Exhibit A-7 depicts Building B exterior, and the applicant will be using matching color tones and LED lighting under the canopy. He testified using Exhibits A-8 and A-9, which are photos of the current east entryway and drive through and renderings of how they will look once improved. He testified regarding signage with Exhibit A-10, stating that the proposed monument sign will have a modern, professional look and will give better visibility to motorists as opposed to the existing pylon sign. The new façade signs will be 54 SF each, for a total of 108 SF on Building B.

The Chairman opened the meeting to the public for questions of Mr. Newman. No member of the public came forward to question Mr. Newman.

The applicant presented its next witness, Edward Martins, Director of Design and Construction for Atlantic Healthcare. Mr. Martins testified that Building B would be solely occupied by Atlantic Healthcare. The facility will house a variety of medical practices and services, including cardiology, orthopedic, radiology, oncology, urology, gastrointestinal, nephrology, endocrinology, and sleep disorders; not all practices will be in session at all times the facility is open. Connectivity between the buildings would be maintained and enhanced by the proposed drive through enclosure. The on-site pharmacy would not be open to the public, and would be limited to patients and making medications for use on-site. There will be approximately 90 employees and 400 patient visits per day. Operating hours are expected to be 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, and closed Sundays. The canopy design is one used throughout the Atlantic Healthcare system and is designed to meet wind and snow loads; it will cover the drop off/pick up patient area, and there will be elevator loading at this location as well. One emergency generator will remain for Building B. He agreed that patient parking will be restricted to the eastern parking lot.

The Chairman opened the meeting to the public for questions of Mr. Martins. No member of the public came forward to question Mr. Martins.

The Chairman then opened the meeting to the public for an opportunity to comment on the Application.

Resident George Bateman questioned whether a deceleration lane was needed on Route 22 to accommodate the traffic generated by the medical use. Mr. Keller testified that this use presented a low traffic impact that can be accommodated by the existing highway.

The Board deliberated the reports and testimony requesting granting the site plan and requested c2 front yard setback variance. The Board finds that the benefits of the variance outweigh any detriments, and promotes the general welfare. It further finds that the new, relocated canopy that triggers the variance will provide a covered area for patient drop-offs in a central area. It will be over 100' from the Route 22 right of way and over 150' from the Route 22 pavement. It provides marginally better light and air circulation, and is of less mass than what presently exists. Further, the new canopy will only extend 3' from the existing building. The Board finds that this presents no detrimental impact to either surrounding properties or to the zoning scheme. The Board also specifically finds that Building A and Building B are one building, and not two. The Board also finds that the removal of the drive through, replacing it with the enclosed space, will provide positive aesthetics. The Board finds that the applicant has presented a well thought out plan that is entitled to approval for site plan and for variances. Conditions of approval should include, as a general requirement that the terms of the approval are to be strictly in accordance with the plans, testimony and representations presented to the Board. The following conditions should be required.

- The applicant shall comply with the professional reports of the Township Planner, Board Engineer, and the Fire Marshal.
- The landscape plan and the plantings in the field shall be subject to review and approval of the Board Planner. Any dispute between the applicant and the Board Planner regarding the landscaping shall be returned to the Board for final determination.

- Any and all HVAC units shall be located on the roof, behind the existing parapet, so they cannot be viewed from street level.
- The eastern parking lot shall be restricted to patient parking only.
- The applicant shall submit a fully completed compliance report prior to the commencement of any work.

The Chairman asked for a vote on the application.

Motion for approval by Councilman Kirsh and second by Ms. Powers

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Pappas, Mr. Wang, Chairman Fross, Councilman Kirsh , Ms. Powers, Mr. Vescio, Mayor Moench,

ABSENT: Ms. Casament

DENIAL: None

NOT ELIGIBLE:, Mr. Pandya (recused due to a conflict)

DAVID HANSEL & TREVON PEIRIS-536 Berrwood Lane

Block 718 Lot 89

#19-014-PB Lot Line Adjustment

This application was carried to March 10, 2020 per request of Applicant, with not further notice required.

8. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

Members of the public wishing to address the Board on any matter not listed on the agenda may do so at this time.

There were no members of the public that wished to address the Planning Board.

9. OTHER BOARD BUSINESS:

None.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

None.

11. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:40 pm