

# **BERNARDS TOWNSHIP**

## **PLANNING BOARD**

### **MINUTES**

Regular Meeting  
December 3, 2019

Chairwoman Piedici called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM.

### **FLAG SALUTE**

### **OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT**

Chairwoman Piedici read the following open meeting and procedural statement:

"In accordance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Law of 1975, notice of this regular meeting of the Planning Board of the Township of Bernards was posted on the bulletin board in the reception hall of the Municipal Building, Collyer Lane, Basking Ridge, NJ; was sent to the Bernardsville News, Whippany, NJ, and to the Courier News, Bridgewater, NJ, on January 9, 2019; and was electronically mailed to those people who have requested individual notice.

The following procedure has been adopted by the Bernards Township Planning Board. There will be no new cases heard after 10:00 PM and no new witnesses or testimony heard after 10:30 PM.

### **ROLL CALL:**

Members Present: Crane, Damurjian, Esposito, Harris, Hurley, Mastrangelo, Piedici, Zaidel  
Members Absent: Asay, Coelho, McNally  
Also Present: Board Attorney, Jonathan E. Drill, Esq.; Township Planner, David Schley, PP, AICP;  
Board Planner, David Banisch, PP, AICP; Board Engineer, Larry Plevier, PE; Board Secretary, Cyndi Kiefer

Moved by Mr. Hurley, seconded by Mr. Crane, all in favor and carried, that Mr. McNally's absence from this meeting be excused and that Ms. Asay's absence from both the November 5, 2019 meeting and this meeting be also excused.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**November 5, 2019 – Regular Session** - On motion made by Ms. Mastrangelo and seconded by Committeewoman Harris, all eligible in favor and carried, the minutes were approved as drafted. Abstention: Zaidel

**November 5, 2019 – Executive Session** - On motion made by Mr. Zaidel and seconded by Mr. Hurley, all eligible in favor and carried, the minutes were approved as drafted.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Resolution authorizing Closed Session** for the purpose of: 2020 Board Professionals Appointments

Chairwoman Piedici read the resolution in its entirety into the record. On motion made by Mr. Crane, seconded by Committeeman Esposito, all eligible in favor and carried, the resolution was approved as read and the open session of the meeting was recessed at 7:38 PM.

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On motion made by Ms. Mastrangelo, seconded by Mr. Hurley, all eligible in favor and carried, the open session of the meeting was reconvened at 7:53 PM.

Mr. Zaidel and Mr. Crane recused themselves and left the room at 7:55 PM.

**PUBLIC HEARING** – (carried from 11/05/19)

**Mountainview Corporate Center LLC**; Block 11301, Lots 1 & 5; Mountain View Boulevard;  
Preliminary/Final Major Site Plan, Preliminary/Final Major Subdivision, Bulk Variances; #PB19-003

Present: Thomas J. Malman, Esq., Attorney for the Applicant  
Ronald A. Kennedy, PE, Engineer for the Applicant  
Robert C. Moschello, PE, Engineer for the Applicant  
Thomas S. Carman, LA, Landscape Architect for the Applicant  
Gary W. Dean, PE, Traffic Engineer for the Applicant

Thomas J. Malman, Esq., attorney with the firm of *Day Pitney LLP*, Parsippany, NJ, entered his appearance on behalf of the applicant. He gave a brief summary of the testimony that had been presented at the September 17, 2019 meeting and at the October 22, 2019 meeting adding that the applicant had met with some of the owners of neighboring properties since the October meeting. **Exhibit A-3**, a 13-page power point presentation entitled, "The Residences at Mountain View" and **Exhibit A-4**, a 43-page power point presentation entitled, "The Residences at Mountain View" were entered into evidence.

Chairwoman Piedici asked for observations from those board members who had attended the site visit on November 16, 2019. Both Ms. Mastrangelo and Committeeman Esposito felt that it was helpful to see the property and the adjacent residential areas now that most of the leaves had fallen. Chairwoman Piedici stated that she, too, had found her visit very useful.

Thomas S. Carman, LA, principal with the firm of *Melillo & Bauer Associates Inc.*, Brielle, NJ, was accepted by the board as an expert in the field of landscape architecture. Referring to several slides in **Exhibit A-3**, Mr. Carman described the proposed landscaping for both the apartment section and the townhouse section of the project noting that a combination of native and ornamental plantings is being utilized to create a layered and textured effect. He then reviewed the plans for the two (2) courtyard areas including plantings, hardscaping and open lawn areas noting that the courtyards are ADA compliant.

Next, Mr. Carman referred to a slide showing the overall landscaping plan for the entire site with the buffer plantings highlighted and noted that the buffering plans from the previously approved office use were expanded to work with the proposed residential use. He testified that the revised plans show additional berms and plantings from what was originally submitted with this application. The berms and solid fencing along the tops of the berms combined with layered plantings are designed to minimize the view of the proposed development from the surrounding residential areas. He noted that numerous 20-foot-tall evergreen trees would be planted to maximize screening and 80+ smaller trees would be planted in the woodland areas to further enhance that screening.

Mr. Carman testified that three (3) monument signs were proposed: one on Mountain View Boulevard to identify the development, one for identification of the apartment area near the entrance to that area and one for identification of the townhouse area near the entrance to that area. In addition, there would be two (2) wayfinding signs. Mr. Schley pointed out that the township ordinance allows only one monument (i.e. identification sign) for each neighborhood and as many wayfinding signs as the board approves. Mr. Malman advised that he would discuss this with his client to decide whether to pursue a "c" variance to allow three (3) monument signs.

In response to a concern voiced about overplanting and the financial burden that it might create for homeowners/associations which would bear the cost of removal of the excessive numbers of trees once they matured, Mr. Carman stated that he would review the plans to confirm that there would be no overplanting. He added that he had been very conscious about creating the correct palette of plantings to ensure that they would thrive and that the strategies for irrigation of the fringe plantings were still being evaluated.

Mr. Damurjian asked if the plan included any recreational areas for children. Mr. Carman responded that the amenity package had been geared towards the target audience which is empty-nesters and young professionals who typically don't have children, though the plans do include an open grass area where

children can plan. Several other members expressed concern about the lack of formal play areas. Chairwoman Piedici noted that the township ordinance is very specific about requiring recreational spaces for children of all ages. Mr. Malman advised that he would discuss this with his client.

Hearing no further questions from the board, Chairwoman Piedici opened the hearing to the public for questions of this witness.

David Griffin, 32 Primrose Lane; Lourdes Cornejo-Krohn, 25 Emerald Valley Lane; Sandhya Kamineni, 119 Emerald Valley Lane; and Suzanne Glassman, 109 Emerald Valley Lane questioned Mr. Carman about tree disease and maintenance, the lack of recreational areas and a detention basin access road on the east portion of the subject property.

Hearing no further questions from the public, that portion of the hearing was closed.

Ronald A. Kennedy, PE, president of *Gladstone Design Inc.*, Gladstone, NJ, referred to **Exhibit A-4** which showed the visual impact of the proposed development on the adjacent residential communities. He reviewed the view sheds and cross-sections taken at Harvest Way, Van Holten Road, Primrose Lane and Emerald Valley Lane which showed that for the most part, the berms, solid fencing and proposed vegetative buffering significantly mitigated the visual impact on those areas. He noted that from the cul-de-sac of Emerald Valley Lane which was over 900 feet away from the nearest building, the berms, etc. would screen out the townhouses however there was limited ability to completely screen the apartment buildings because of the existing topography and location of an existing detention basin. Mr. Kennedy noted that the previously approved office buildings would have had a much larger visual impact than the residential project currently proposed. He added that the solid fencing along the berms near Emerald Valley Lane, Van Holten Road and Primrose Lane could be tied together to prevent "migration" of people into the surrounding neighborhoods.

The last slide in **Exhibit A-4** showed a proposed pedestrian walkway within the existing pavement on Mountain View Boulevard. Mr. Kennedy testified that an off-road pathway was not possible due to environmental constraints. In response to concerns about safety, he opined that by removing one of the two outbound road lanes and using a hatched painted safety buffer, a six (6) foot wide or greater path could be created that would start at the entrance to the multi-family area and continue to 100 Marketplace. A discussion ensued about the potential for extending the path to Martinsville Road and/or to tying it to the sidewalks inside the Marketplace complex. Mr. Banisch, Mr. Schley, Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Moschello agreed to meet prior to the next hearing date to explore the connectivity issue.

Hearing no further questions from the board, Chairwoman Piedici opened the hearing to the public for questions of this witness.

Lourdes Cornejo-Krohn, 25 Emerald Valley Lane; Denise M. Coyle, 55 Van Holten Road; Harold L. Russo, 66 Van Holten Road questioned Mr. Kennedy about the location of stops for both school buses and transit buses, the plans for the emergency access road to Mountain Road and the possibility of off-site landscaping.

Hearing no further questions from the public, that portion of the hearing was closed.

Gary W. Dean, PE, engineer with the firm of *Dolan & Dean Consulting Engineers LLC*, Somerville, NJ, was accepted by the board as an expert in the field of traffic engineering. He reviewed the traffic report submitted by his firm, noting that this application significantly reduces the anticipated traffic from the previous approvals for office buildings. He opined that the necessary infrastructure to handle the traffic from the proposed development is in place and that there would be no detrimental effect on performance. He added that by repurposing one outbound lane of Mountain View Boulevard for bicycle and pedestrian use, the project would advance the "complete streets" concept and suggested that in addition to reflective striping, the path should also be painted a color to further indicate that it is not for cars. In response to a concern expressed by Mr. Damurjian that there should be more than one lane to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles moving in opposite directions, Mr. Dean testified that the driving lanes could be further narrowed which would serve to calm traffic and to increase the width of a single pedestrian/bike lane.

Referring to the left turn into the parking garage for incoming residents of the apartments, Mr. Dean opined that there would be no issue with traffic backing up because there would not be a lot of opposing traffic. He also noted that at that point in the road, there is enough room for a car to maneuver around the car waiting to make the left turn.

Hearing no further questions from the board, Chairwoman Piedici opened the hearing to the public for questions of this witness. Hearing none, that portion of the hearing was closed.

Mr. Malman stated that there was no further testimony planned for this evening. Chairwoman Piedici announced that the application would be carried *with no further notice* to the Planning Board's regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, December 17, 2019, at 7:30 PM in the Warren Craft Meeting Room.

**COMMENTS FROM STAFF** - None

**COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS** - None

**ADJOURN**

At 10:45 PM, Ms. Mastrangelo moved, Committeewoman Harris seconded, all in favor and carried, to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

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Cyndi Kiefer, Secretary  
Township of Bernards  
Planning Board

12/12/19 v2 dskpjd

*Approved as drafted 12/17/2019*