

**TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN
PLANNING BOARD
COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY**

**REGULAR MEETING
August 2, 2017**

The regular meeting of the Township of Franklin Planning Board was held at 475 DeMott Lane, Somerset, New Jersey and was called to order by Chairman Orsini at 7:30 p.m. The Sunshine Law was read, the Pledge of Allegiance said and the roll was taken as follows:

PRESENT: Councilman Chase, Alex Kharazi, Carl Hauck, Cecile Maclvor, Charles Brown, Robert Thomas, Jennifer Rangnow, Godwin Omolola and Chairman Orsini

ABSENT: Robert Mettler and Mustapha Mansaray

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Peter Vignuolo, Board Attorney, Mark Healey, Planning Director, and Christine Woodbury, Planning and Zoning Secretary

MINUTES:

- **Regular Meeting – June 21, 2017**

Vice Chair Maclvor made a motion to approve the Minutes as submitted. Mr. Omolola seconded the motion and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Mr. Hauck, Mr. Kharazi, Vice Chair Maclvor, Mr. Brown, Mr. Thomas, Ms. Rangnow, Mr. Omolola and Chairman Orsini

AGAINST: None

RESOLUTIONS:

- **Balaji Property Solutions, LLC / PLN-16-00004**

Vice Chair Maclvor made a motion to approve the Resolution as submitted. Mr. Kharazi seconded the motion and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Mr. Hauck, Mr. Kharazi, Vice Chair Maclvor, Mr. Brown, Mr. Thomas, Ms. Rangnow and Chairman Orsini

AGAINST: None

DISCUSSION:

Vouchers:

- **Clarkin & Vignuolo, P.C. (Peter Vignuolo) – August Retainer - \$833.33**

Vice Chair Maclvor made a motion to approve the Vouchers as submitted. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Councilman Chase, Mr. Hauck, Mr. Kharazi, Vice Chair Maclvor, Mr. Brown, Mr. Thomas, Ms. Rangnow, Mr. Omolola and Chairman Orsini

AGAINST: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Chairman Orsini made a motion to open the meeting to the public for any planning comment other than what was being discussed in the hearing that evening. Vice Chair Maclvor seconded the motion and all were in favor. Seeing no one coming forward, the Chairman made a motion to close the public portion of the meeting. Vice Chair Maclvor seconded the motion and all were in favor.

HEARINGS:

- **NISSAN NORTH AMERICA, INC. / PLN-17-00011**

Mr. Peter U. Lanfrit, Esq., Attorney appeared before the Board on behalf of the Applicant, Nissan North America, Inc. Mr. Lanfrit explained that they were there that evening to obtain Site Plan approval in which the Applicant was proposing to construct an addition to an existing office/warehouse facility with new 15-bay loading area and

modifications to existing parking lot at 1501 Cottontail Lane, Somerset; Block 517.04, Lot 2.05, in an M-1 Zone. He noted that the original approval in respect to the subject project was in the mid-1980 with a building of approximately 306,000 sq. ft. as well as a Phase II of 150,000 sq. ft. which was approved in 1980, but was never built. He then noted that they were back before the Board that evening to put an addition on of approximately 200,000 sq. ft.

Mr. Kharazi has recused himself from voting on this hearing.

Mr. Kenneth Fielder, Corporate Services Manager, Nissan North America, Inc., came forward and was sworn in. Mr. Fielder explained the operations at the Somerset facility, stating that it was primarily marketing and sales for the Infiniti/Nissan Division in the office portion and the distribution of parts/warehousing, which he indicated was the major portion of the business conducted at that location. Should the Application be approved and the addition built, Mr. Fielder indicated that they would now be housing large collision center parts to service dealerships in the Northeastern United States as well as some smaller buildings. Mr. Fielder also testified that he believed it would increase their headcount by eight (8), with truck traffic of two (2) to three (3) additional trucks per day. Currently, he stated that they have approximately 134 full time daily employees, spread out over two (2) shifts. He noted that the bulk of the employees work during the day shift, with a small group starting at 6:00 a.m. and the second shift staying until midnight, with the office staff working 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. He testified that deliveries were made by tractor trailer and would have two additional outbound trucks and one additional inbound truck. He stated that most truck traffic comes to their facility via Rte. 287 and Exit 12 (Weston Canal Road).

Mr. Robert Espasa, Engineer, employed with PSS&S Architecture and Engineering PC, came forward and was sworn in. He entered into the record as Exhibit A-1, an aerial photograph of the existing conditions on the site and the surrounding area and Exhibit A-2, which was a colored rendering of the site improvements. He then discussed with the Board, utilizing Exhibit A-1, the location of the subject property and what the surrounding land uses were. Mr. Espasa indicated that the site was comprised of 31.5 acres in size, currently fully developed with the 306,000 sq. ft. warehouse facility and a loading area to the south, trailer storage to the north, and existing parking to the east of the building. He added that there were two (2) detention basins on the site; one to the south and one to the northwest corner. He then testified that there were two access drives on Varga Lane and two driveways on Cottontail Lane. Mr. Espasa then discussed the existing conditions on-site and then drew the Board's attention to what was being proposed, noted by the use of color on the exhibit. He told the Board that where the proposed addition was planned, there was currently tractor trailer storage and a small parking lot where the loading dock was being proposed. He added that it included 15 new loading dock spaces and the lost tractor trailer storage spaces would be relocated to the loading dock area. Finally, the lost parking spaces from the loading dock area would be reconfigured in the existing parking lot.

Mr. Espasa then detailed the three (3) variances they were seeking in conjunction with the Application. They are:

1. **Off Street Parking** – Mr. Espasa indicated that, by ordinance, 402 parking spaces were required, and 286 spaces were proposed. He stated that the proposed amount of spaces were more than adequate for Nissan’s use of the property.
2. **Impervious Coverage** – He then stated that 60% impervious coverage was allowed, and the proposal was for 60.8%. Mr. Espasa told the Board that they went over the allowable impervious coverage because of a request by the Fire Dept. to pave the proposed turf fire lane and widen it to 24 ft. along the western portion of the property to accommodate the outriggers of the fire truck. He noted that the proposed fire lane runs from the newly proposed loading docks all the way around the new building and around the rear of the existing building. Mr. Espasa testified that widening and paving the fire line was what increased the impervious coverage over what was allowed.
3. **Side Yard Setback** – Mr. Espasa stated that a 40 ft. setback was required, and a portion of the existing building on the westerly side was 31.9 ft., which was an existing condition.

Mr. Espasa then went on to describe the Lighting Plan to include five (5) LED light fixtures on five (5) poles located around the newly proposed loading dock area as well as building mounted lights on the eastern face of the addition to light the loading dock area. He added that there would also be two (2) proposed lights on the existing building to help light the reconfigured parking lot in addition to site lighting that would remain.

Mr. Espasa then directed the Board’s attention to refuse removal, describing how it is handled now and what would change in the future. He indicated that currently, the refuse enclosures were outdoors and located at the southern loading dock area. He also stated that recycling and metal bins would be placed externally at the new proposed loading dock area.

Mr. Espasa then discussed the proposed fencing for the project. He indicated that the original proposal called for an 8 ft. high chain link fence with barbed wire. Since they found out from staff comments that barbed wire was not allowed, the proposal was changed to an 8 ft. high privacy fence to secure the loading dock. He then moved on to speak about the required tree removal to accommodate for the location of the new detention basin in the northeastern portion of the site. Mr. Espasa added that they were proposing to replace 109 trees on-site along the frontage of Pierce Street and the intersection of Pierce St. and Cottontail Lane to dress up the site, but also to provide screening of the improvements. He then stated that Mr. Healey’s Planning report asked for some additional trees on the site, and Mr. Espasa agreed to include. He then showed the Board, utilizing Exhibit A-2, where they would be placed at the intersection

of Pierce Street and Cottontail Lane. He added that they would also include additional trees along the Pierce Street frontage where there was currently a gap of shade trees.

Mr. Lanfrit asked to wait until the detention basin was relocated and put in place at the intersection of Pierce Street and Cottontail Lane to see how many trees they can preserve to determine a final Landscape Plan to present to Mr. Healey's satisfaction. A discussion ensued among the Board, and they were agreeable to include that in any Resolution.

Chairman Orsini inquired as to the type of detention basin they were planning, and Mr. Espasa stated that it was a combination sand filter and detention basin that would be grassed at the bottom. Mr. Espasa added that they had met with the Delaware & Raritan Canal Commission (DRCC) in June of 2017, and that they had approved, conceptually, the storm water management plan. He did explain that there would be a berm around the top of the basin, and the Chairman stated that it would be a good idea to have some plants and trees located there. Mr. Espasa stated that they already planned to have some landscaping planted along the southern berm, but also agreed to include additional trees and plants on the western berm as well.

Mr. Espasa then addressed the staff reports, including Mr. Healey's July 19th Planning report, Raymond Cianfrani's July 25, 2017 report, the Environmental Commission's report, Franklin Twp. Sewerage Authority's July 25, 2017 report, Mr. Hauss' Fire Prevention report of July 26, 2017 and Mr. Vega's July 25, 2017 Engineering report. He testified that they would be able to comply with all of the comments contained within them. He added that by complying with all of the requests contained in the previously mentioned reports, there would be no significant changes to the plan that was before the Board that evening.

Councilman Chase opened a discussion regarding the choice of tree species noted on the plan and gave some suggestions. Mr. Espasa agreed to look into providing varying types of trees.

Vice Chair Maclvor made a motion to open the meeting to the public. Mr. Omolola seconded the motion and all were in favor. Seeing no one coming forward, Vice Chair Maclvor made a motion to close the meeting to the public. Chairman Orsini seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Mr. Lanfrit gave his summation, noting that the increase in impervious coverage was de minimus, that the parking field was appropriate for the use and that the setback shortfall was an existing condition.

Vice Chair Maclvor made a motion to approve the Application, with variances. Mr. Omolola seconded the motion and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Councilman Chase, Mr. Hauck, Vice Chair Maclvor, Mr. Brown, Mr. Thomas, Ms. Rangnow, Mr. Omolola and Chairman Orsini

AGAINST: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no Committee Reports discussed.

WORKSESSION/NEW BUSINESS:

There was no work session or new business to discuss.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Board did not enter into an Executive Session that evening.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Orsini made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:55 p.m. Vice Chair Maclvor seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Murphy, Recording Secretary
August 27, 2017