

Franklin Township

Somerset County, New Jersey



Technical Review Committee

MEMORANDUM

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To: Zoning Board of Adjustment

From: Technical Review Committee

Date: August 20, 2020

Re: Ananda Mandir, Inc. – Temporary Use Permit (ZBA-20-00015)
269 Cedar Grove Lane (Block 508.02; Lot 5.03)

As requested, we have reviewed the submitted application materials listed below and issue the following report for the Board's consideration.

Project Description

The subject site is located on the westerly side of Cedar Grove Lane and is occupied by a place of worship and associated cultural hall. The use was originally approved in 1999 with numerous subsequent approvals related to expansions of the use over the years.

One of the conditions of approval was a restriction against outside events.

The applicant seeks a Temporary Use Permit in order to conduct events partially outdoors during the High Holy Days October 21-25 and November 14. The application form explains the proposal:

Explain, in detail sufficient for the Board to understand the nature of the proposal, issue, appeal, interpretation or matter:

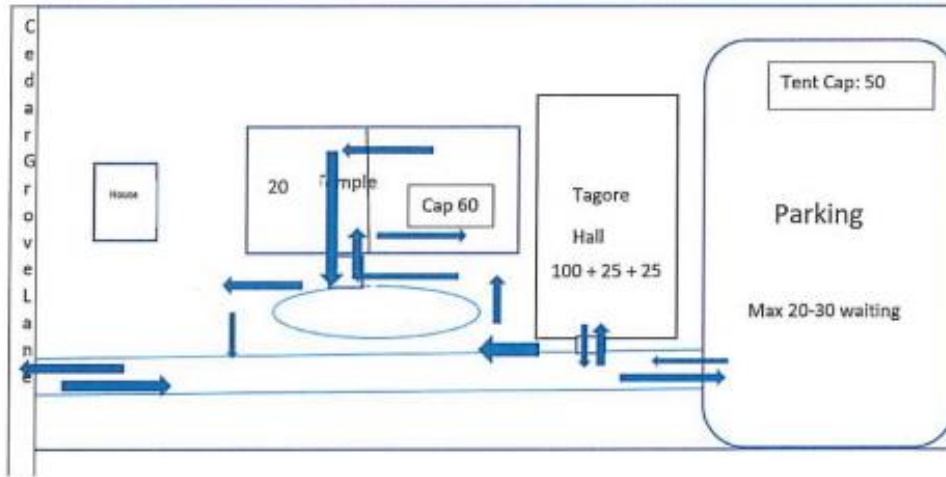
Applicant proposes to construct a tent in the parking lot as a waiting area for members of the congregation prior to entering the temple during the High Holy Days since the members allowed to enter the Temple are restricted pursuant to Executive Orders 152, 156, 161 and 173 of the Governor. The dates for which the temporary use is requested are October 21-25 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. and November 14 5:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. The protocols for said services are annexed hereto as Exhibit "A".

General Plan to Handle devotees attendance:

***** Everyone onsite (inside or outside) has to have a mask covering mouth and nose and keep safe distancing AT ALL TIMES******

1. **On-line Registration Only** (advertised on the web page and also by email invitation to membership registry) to control total attendance per day. A 10% provisional walk-in attendance will be kept but not advertised.
2. Temple attendance will be limited to the maximum allowed by Executive Order on the date of the event. No floor carpet seating will be allowed. Attendees to utilize previously staged chairs to maintain a safe distance.
3. Attendees will arrive at the community hall to receive their ticket to enter the temple in batches of 10 every 30 min.
4. Total attendees registered in a day in the morning session will be limited to max 600 adults and evening 400 adults with max capacity of 300 at any time spreading around the temple, hall and outside tent.
5. There will be an overflow attendance waiting in the outside Tent on the periphery of the parking lot facing Frank Lake property to avoid any noise from the houses on the other side of the parking lot (see fig.)
6. Tagore Hall will have max occupancy maximum allowed by Executive Order on the date of the event inside the Hall. Hall will have a video projection of the temple deities to allow people to watch the event from outside the temple.
7. A tent will be rented in the parking lot where there will be chairs for people to sit when the hall and temple are full capacity. Whether the tent will be open or closed will be decided a few days before the event based on the weather forecast and expected temperature outside.
8. Simple pre-packaged food will be served at the tent where people can sit at safe distanced chairs. Family members will be allowed to sit closer.

9. Police will be hired for security during days of expected high turnout based on the on-line registration data.
10. Max capacity of 300 at the site is based on the family attendance window of a 2-hour visit at the site. Will allow approximately 600 in two batches in the morning and 400 in the evening.
11. Foot traffic (schematic) Flow



Review Comments

1. The sketch is not detailed enough for an appropriate review. The proposed should be overlaid on a copy of the site plan with the various proposed elements (e.g., tent, etc.) drawn to scale.

After such a plan is presented staff will be able to review and potentially comment on issues such as available parking, vehicular circulation, emergency access, protection of occupant of the tents from vehicular traffic, etc.

2. The applicant needs to submit an event plan and details for an event that complies with the Executive Orders that are currently in place; if new Executive Orders are issued before their event which would allow higher occupancy, the applicant can submit a revised plan for consideration. If new Executive Orders are issued that become more restrictive, the applicant will need to comply with those new Executive Orders.
3. A permit is required for the tent. At the present time, there is no indoor dining permitted, so the applicant cannot have a "tent" (with sides) and serve food; the applicant can have a "canopy" (sides open) and serve food. The applicant state they will make a decision on whether the tent in the parking lot will be "open or closed a few days before the event based on weather forecast and expected temperature outside" – this decision cannot wait

until a few days before the event to make because it effects how the applicant will be able to use the tent. If the applicant want to serve food under the tent – the applicant cannot have sides; if the applicant want the sides down, the applicant cannot serve food – this is an example where the applicant need to develop a plan that complies with the current Executive Orders and if the Orders change, the applicant can modify the plan, but we cannot approve a plan that doesn't comply with the current Executive Orders. If the applicant plan on using heaters for the tent, a permit from Construction Department is also required. The applicant will need to apply for an Electrical permit for the lighting.

4. The applicant need to submit a plan on how the applicant are going to control the number of people on site – the applicant state the applicant will have “On-line Registration Only” – but then the applicant go on to state that the applicant will have a 10% provisional walk-in attendance. If the applicant are going to allow people who are not registered to attend, how is the applicant going to control the number of people on site?
5. More information is needed for the “simple pre-packaged food”. The serving of this to those in the tent may or not be allowed depending on executive orders in place at the time of the event. A temporary food license will be required if food is allowed.
6. If the Board approves the request, staff would recommende that there be a specific requirements for staff to do an inspection prior to the event for the whole site to ensure compliance.
7. The applicant needs to hire Fire Prevention staff to be there during entire event at a level approved by the Driector of Fire Prevention.

