

Franklin Township

Somerset County, New Jersey



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

Planning – Zoning – Affordable Housing
Planning Board – Zoning Board of Adjustment

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MEMORANDUM

To: Zoning Board of Adjustment

From: Mark Healey, PP, AICP
Director of Planning/ Senior Zoning Officer

Date: September 30, 2020

Re: Pillar of Fire International
D(3) Conditional Use Variance, "C" Variance and Site Plan (ZBA-19-00045)
Weston Canal Road (Block 516.01, Lot 1.01)

As requested, I have reviewed the application materials listed below and issue the following report for the Board's consideration:

- 9-sheet set of site plan drawings prepared by VanCleeef Engineering, last revised 7/30/20

Site and Project Description & History

The subject site is located along Weston Canal Road in the northwesterly portion of the Township. The site contains various buildings and uses associated with the Pillar of Fire campus. Places of worship are a permitted conditional use in the A zone. Applicable conditional use requirements are found in Section 112-37.

Under Docket ZBA-08-00009 the applicant received D(3) variance and site plan approval to construct a recreational/ worship building with associated parking area. Under that approval the applicant received a variance to construct 259 parking spaces (where 1,305 spaces were required by ordinance based upon the size of the worship area).

The applicant now seeks approval to expand the existing parking lot associated with a recreational/ worship building Docket ZBA-08-00009 by adding 224 additional spaces (application indicates that 251 exist + 224 additional = 475 proposed).

The proposal requires the following approvals:

- *Site plan approval*
- *D(3) conditional use variances:*

- Off-Street Parking (112-37.D(1)): 1,305^{1,2} parking spaces required – 475 spaces proposed
- “C” variances
 - Freestanding Sign – Area: 25 square feet permitted – 36 square feet proposed.

Review Comments

1. Under Docket ZBA-08-00009 the Board approved a parking variance for 259 spaces. This number was based in large to the following condition being placed on the application (based on the presumption of 1 car per three attendees, as per ordinance):

Maximum seating capacity shall be limited to 750 people within the gymnasium/sanctuary building and at no time will floor seating be used simultaneously with the bleacher seating.

The applicant indicates, in the Traffic Impact Study, that the purpose for the additional parking is not to accommodate additional attendees per event but to “accommodate peak parking demand that occur during the changeover between their two existing Sunday morning worship services.” The applicant should address this in testimony and whether they seek to continue, modify or have removed the existing condition of the 750 occupancy limit.

2. Since the site is located within 1000 feet of the D&R Canal, review by Township Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC). The applicant should provide testimony addressing the status/ comments received from the HPAC.
3. Landscaping (including trees) should be incorporated into the parking lot islands.
4. As a place of worship, the development is exempt from payment of the affordable housing development fee.

¹ The resolution for Docket ZBA-08-00009 cites a parking requirement of 1,305. However, the application forms for this application cite a parking requirement of 1,356 spaces. I don’t believe the worship area is changing. Thus the applicant should provide clarification.

² The application form incorrectly identifies this as a C(1) variance.

Figure 1: Site Location



Figure 2: Site and Surrounding Area

