

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

**VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING  
March 2, 2022**

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 Michael Orsini, Chairman, at 7:30 p.m. The Sunshine Law was read, the Pledge of Allegiance said, and the roll was taken as follows:

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**PRESENT:** Councilman Anbarasan, (arrived at 7:48 p.m.), Carl Hauck, Meher Rafiq, Theodore Chase (arrived at 7:48 p.m.), Jennifer Rangnow, Charles Brown, Robert Thomas, Sami Shaban and Chairman Orsini

**ABSENT:** Mustapha Mansaray and Carol Schmidt

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mr. James Clarkin, Board Attorney, Mark Healey, Planning Director, and Christine Woodbury, Planning & Zoning Secretary

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**OATH OF OFFICE:**

Board Attorney, Mr. James Clarkin, rendered the Oath of Office for:

- **Robert Thomas**

Chairman Orsini then asked if Mr. Thomas and Ms. Rafiq would agree to serve on the Minor Subdivision Committee. Both were agreeable.

**MINUTES:**

- **Regular Meeting – December 15, 2021**

Chairman Orsini made a motion to approve the Minutes, as submitted. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion, and the roll was called as follows:

**FOR:** Ms. Rafiq, Ms. Rangnow, Vice Chair Brown, Mr. Thomas, and Chairman Orsini

**AGAINST:** None

**RESOLUTIONS:**

- **2 G Birch View Glen / PLN-17-00008**

Chairman Orsini made a motion to approve the Resolution, as submitted. Ms. Rafiq seconded the motion, and the roll was called as follows:

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

AGAINST: NONE

- **Canal Road Solar Partners, LLC / PLN-21-00017**

Chairman Orsini made a motion to approve the Resolution, as submitted. Ms. Rafiq seconded the motion, and the roll was called as follows:

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

ABSTAIN: Mr. Shaban

AGAINST: NONE

- **Elizabeth Realty Partners, LLC / PLN-21-00001**

Chairman Orsini made a motion to approve the Resolution, as submitted. Vice Chair Brown seconded the motion, and the roll was called as follows:

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

AGAINST: NONE

- **Orion IV Elizabeth Logistics Center, LLC / PLN-21-00013**

Chairman Orsini made a motion to approve the Resolution, as submitted. Vice Chair Brown seconded the motion, and the roll was called as follows:

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

AGAINST: NONE

**DISCUSSION:**

- **Subdivision Committee – Access Capital Decision**

Chairman Orsini then gave background for the Application, which was approved by the Subdivision Committee.

**HEARINGS:**

- **THE HARBOR GROUP / PLN 21-00020**

Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan w/C Variances in which the Applicant wanted to re-subdivide the property, demolish the two existing buildings and construct a 151,756 sq. ft. warehouse and a 50,262 sq. ft. one (1)-story office building at 110, 120 & 130 Belmont Drive, Somerset; Block 528.04, Lots 19.31 & 19.32, in the B-I Zone - **CARRIED TO MARCH 16, 2022 – no further notification needed**

**DL - 05/13/2022**

Ms. Woodbury, Board Secretary, then gave information on how to participate in this upcoming hearing.

- **JWH REAL ESTATE HOLDING CORP / PLN-21-00023**

Ms. Meryl Gonchar, Esq., Attorney, appeared before the Board on behalf of the Applicant, JWH Real Estate Holding Corporation. They were there to obtain Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan in which the Applicant proposed development of a one (1)-story 100,265 sq. ft. warehouse addition at 1100 Randolph Road, Somerset; Block 517.04, Lot 1.01, in the B-I Zone - **CARRIED FROM JANUARY 5, 2022 – no further notification needed.**

Ms. Gonchar explained that the original building was approved in the 1980's, the use was permitted, and the expansion had been designed to the Township's zoning

standards. She then noted that there was outdoor storage that existed on the site, which was granted separate approval a number of years ago, and preserved on the site.

Ms. Gonchar then told the Board that they did serve notice prior to one of the earlier meetings when they were originally supposed to be heard. She noted that their consultants met with the Township's consultants to go through review letters to address questions and comments. She added that they had the hearing carried and that they had re-noticed and resubmitted.

Ms. Julia G. Algeo, Engineer and Sr. Principal, Colliers Engineering & Design, 1000 Waterview Drive, Hamilton, NJ. The Board accepted her qualifications. Ms. Algeo entered two (2) exhibits into the record as Exhibit A-1, the 1100 Randolph Rd. Existing Conditions, dated March 2, 2022, and Exhibit A-2, the 1100 Randolph Rd. Proposed Conditions, dated March 2, 2022. Ms. Algeo then identified the property and its surrounding streets and existing conditions, utilizing Exhibit A-1. She explained that the property consisted of 20.98 acres, with a tributary to the Randolph Brook located in the northwest corner of the site that ran in a south to north direction, with wetland buffers and riparian zones, floodway and flood hazard zones all associated with the tributary. Ms. Algeo testified that a Letter of Interpretation (LOI) and Flood Hazard verification had already been issued by the NJDEP. She then noted that there were two (2) driveways to access the site, one (1) on Randolph Rd. (for passenger vehicles) and the other on Schoolhouse Rd. (truck entrance). She noted that both driveways were 30 ft. wide, with full circulation around the site utilizing the internal paved driveways and that the original two (2)-story building consisted of approximately 202,165 sq. ft. and was located at the southwest corner of the site. She added that the building was being utilized for light manufacturing and warehouse space. Ms. Algeo indicated that the first floor consisted of 195,200 sq. ft., with the second floor measuring at 6,965 sq. ft. She noted that the current office space measured at 14,000 sq. ft., with approximately 100,000 sq. ft. of light manufacturing and approximately 88,000 sq. ft. consisted of warehouse space. Ms. Algeo indicate that there were 81 existing parking spaces on the site, with 49 spaces near the entrance off of Randolph Rd., with another 32 spaces as one would continue along the 30 ft. access aisles that included three (3) handicapped spaces. She then noted that the Schoolhouse Rd. entrance led into the truck court, with the twelve (12) existing loading docks located at the rear of the building. Ms. Algeo then identified the large, paved outdoor storage area that was approved back in 2014. She noted the large, grassy area, approximately 140,000 sq. ft., was originally going to be a Phase II building addition, and was proposed as such at the present time. Ms. Algeo indicated that the original plans allowed for a 110,772 sq. ft. building addition, to include 5,332 sq. ft. of office space and 105,450 sq. ft. of warehouse space. She then noted that there were currently three (3) detention basins located on the site, one(1) on the northwest side off of Randolph Rd., one (1) in the northerly area, and one (1) close to Schoolhouse Rd. She then described surrounding uses as commercial and industrial buildings, with a residential area behind those.

Ms. Algeo then described what the Applicant proposed for the site, utilizing Exhibit A-2. She indicated that the Applicant was proposing a warehouse addition of one (1)-story

and 100,112 sq. ft. that would be connected to the existing building, with an additional 70 car parking spaces, 15 new loading docks and 16 trailer spaces and stormwater management facilities. Noted was that the new parking spaces would be located along the westerly side and along the front of the new building. Ms. Algeo added that there would be four (4) new handicapped spaces proposed to be included in the total new spaces provided, for a total of 151 parking spaces on site, with a minimum required 132 parking spaces required. Ms. Algeo described the new parking spaces as being constructed with porous pavement and storage beds. She noted that a bicycle rack was also proposed at the northwest portion of the new parking area and that six (6) make ready spaces that had charging stations would be included, at least one (1) of which would be an ADA parking space. She then described no change to the existing access drives from Randolph Rd. and Schoolhouse Rd., with the circulation on site to remain as is existed currently. Ms. Algeo indicated that the loading area would be located on the south side of the building, with the front of the building on the north side, and the entrance and 4,000 sq. ft. office space at the southeast corner of that addition. She indicated that there would be 96,112 sq. ft. of warehouse space and that the proposed building was slightly smaller (less 10,000 sq. ft.) than what was originally proposed for the Phase II section in the original plans from the 1980's. Ms. Algeo then indicated that the trash container would be located at one of the loading dock doors, with refuse and recyclable removal would continue to be provided by a private hauler. She then drew the Board's attention to the loading ramp that was proposed on the east side of the building. Ms. Algeo indicated that the outdoor storage area would remain as it currently existed and that the Applicant was proposing an optional 8 ft. chain link security fence , with two gates at the northwest side and the other at the storm drainage easement, to provide security for what was stored there. She then indicated that the building setbacks well exceeded the requirements of the zone. Ms. Algeo then noted that the building coverage was proposed for 33%, where 50% maximum was allowed and total lot coverage proposed was 57%, where 60% maximum was allowed.

Ms. Algeo then opened the discussion regarding the storm water management for the new building addition and parking areas, where water would be collected, treated and attenuated in five (5) porous pavement systems. She added that there was going to be some porous concrete pavement on the easterly side of the trailer parking spaces and in a portion of the loading area. She then went on to describe the system, noting that they would be including a new bio-retention basin in the northeast corner of the site and that it complied with the current storm water management rules. Ms. Algeo then went on to describe the sanitary sewerage system and how it could incorporate serving the new building. She then opened a discussion regarding the water utility as well as the request from the Fire Prevention Direction to add two (2) additional fire hydrants to the plan.

Ms. Algeo then went on to describe the Landscape Plan, noting that it was in compliance with the Township planting requirements as well as in accordance with the parking requirements. She noted that the plan included three (3) deciduous trees, 59 evergreen trees, 3 flowering trees and 35 shrubs. Ms. Algeo also discussed the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission's (DRCC) requirements for plantings along

the stream corridor. She then noted that 121 trees were required and 155 trees were being provided.

She then drew the Board's attention to site lighting, noting that the plan had been designed to Township norms for safety and basic security. Ms. Algeo indicated that new lighting was proposed throughout the site, with all LED fixtures included and mounting heights at approved requirements. She then described the building mounted lighting, noting that they came with a night-time friendly designation.

Ms. Gonchar then asked if the circulation plan had been approved by the Fire Prevention Director for the ability of emergency vehicles to navigate the site. Ms. Algeo indicated that the plan was submitted with the other site documents. They then discussed the ability of 18-wheel trucks to be able to circulate safely throughout the site, with Ms. Algeo testifying that the truck courts and circulation aisles were large enough for those vehicles to circulate through the site and into the loading docks and trailer spaces. Ms. Gonchar then asked for Ms. Algeo's testimony as to the fact that a Traffic Impact Study, dated September 30, 2021, was prepared by Colliers Engineering and submitted as part of the Application. Ms. Algeo answered in the affirmative. Ms. Gonchar also indicated that an environmental assessment was done and submitted along with the plan sets. Applicable with all of the Township requirements and design standards.

Ms. Algeo then addressed the February 4, 2022 CME Engineering report, noting that drop-off/pick-up and rideshare areas were provided by including more parking spaces than what was required. Ms. Algeo then drew the Board's attention to the request for waiver of providing sidewalks on the north side of the driveway where there were NJDEP regulated areas and create difficulty for a sidewalk to be installed. She also stated that they didn't feel it necessary to provide a sidewalk along Schoolhouse Rd. as there were none there presently along that roadway. She then provided clarification on item #7 regarding the soils. Ms. Algeo noted that the site was underlaid with weathered rock and bedrock and unsuitable for recharge. She then addressed item #16, where there was agreement with the Township Engineer to provide, instead of an 18 ft. wide access drive to the basin, that a 12 ft. wide access road would be sufficient. She then testified that they could comply with all other items in the CME Engineering report.

Ms. Algeo indicated that they could comply with Mr. Healey's Planning report. She also stated that they would comply with all requirements of the Fire Prevention Director based on his letter of December 16, 2021. Ms. Algeo indicated that they would work with the Director to comply with all comments, and that they were providing a bio-retention basin instead of the underground detention system. She indicated that they could comply with Police/Traffic Safety Bureau letter.

Ms. Gonchar noted that the Jan 26, 2022 Environmental Commission letter asked for compliance in providing 4% of the total parking spaces provided (151) for the electrical charging stations (6 parking spaces). Ms. Algeo testified that they could comply. They

then discussed the request for a rain garden, and she indicated that that was similar to a bio-retention basin, which they were providing.

Mr. Rick Pratt, Architect, Pratt Design Studio, 175 Tenth Street, Belford, NJ, came forward and was sworn in. The Board accepted his qualifications. Mr. Pratt then briefly described what the new addition would look like and how it would relate to/coordinate with the existing building. He entered into the record as Exhibit A-3, a cross section exhibit, dated February 25, 2022. Mr. Pratt then presented Sheet SD-1 from the original submission, which was the Ground Floor Plan, and showed where the addition would connect to the original building and the ramps leading to the office portion of the addition. He then pointed out that there was not really a ramp leading to the truck bay slot, but described how trucks would connect to the bay floor and how other equipment (gantry) would be utilized in that area. He then showed an elevation exhibit from the original submission (Sheet SD-2) to show the detail of the truck bay area. He then pointed out the architecture elements from the existing building and showing how they carried the same look, color and finish around to the addition. Mr. Pratt then showed and explained where the handicapped parking spaces were located and the ramps that will service those parking spaces. He then noted that the building would be sprinklered in answer to a question from the Fire Prevention Director. Mr. Pratt then showed the Board Exhibit A-3, showing the different sections of the proposed addition, noting the roof mounted equipment that would be screened from view by the building elements.

Mr. Thomas asked that they do not grant a waiver for a sidewalk at the Randolph Rd. corner on Schoolhouse Rd. as he believed they asked for sidewalks further down the roadway and could be connected at some point in time. A discussion ensued among the Board. Vice Chair Brown did not want a contribution in lieu so that they could take advantage of the opportunity since other developments were required to provide the same. Ms. Algeo mentioned that there were trees and utility poles along Schoolhouse Rd. which may make the installation of sidewalks difficult. The Board members were in agreement for the need to provide sidewalks along Schoolhouse Rd.

Councilman Chase opened a discussion to provide a "cool roof" as suggested by the Environmental Commission in their January 26, 2022 memorandum. He added that it requires the roof to be painted with a reflective covering or roof-mounted solar panels. Mr. Pratt stated that they could comply with the reflective coating and that the ability to add solar panels to the building at a later date could also be provided.

Chairman Orsini then opened a discussion regarding the need for the overage of required parking spaces. Ms. Algeo indicated that they were planning for any accommodation of various percentage changes of office employees to manufacturing employees in the future. She also added the earlier discussion on porous pavement and low impact development that were being proposed for the site would benefit from the additional parking for stormwater quality control on the site. A discussion ensued. The Chairman asked if they would be agreeable to landbank the additional spaces, and Ms. Algeo indicated that the parking areas were also part of the stormwater system. She asked if they could look at that situation more closely and make it part of their compliance documents and landbank if they can. The Board was agreeable. The

Chairman then asked if wayfinding signage could be provided at the truck egress points to direct traffic to Rte. 287 instead of allowing trucks to traverse through the Township roadways. Ms. Algeo indicated that they would agree to that request.

Chairman Orsini then opened the meeting to the public for questions. Mr. Thomas seconded, and all were in favor. Seeing no one coming forward, the meeting was then closed to the public, and all were in favor.

Ms. Gonchar then gave her summation comments.

Dr. Chase made a motion to approve the Application, with the discussed additions of wayfinding signage and the requirement to provide sidewalks along Schoolhouse Rd., he consideration of banking parking spaces. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion, and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Councilman Anbarasan, Mr. Hauck, Ms. Rafiq, Dr. Chase, Ms. Rangnow, Vice Chair Brown, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Shaban, and Chairman Orsini

AGAINST: None

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Chairman Orsini then made a motion to open the meeting to the public for general Planning comments. The motion was seconded, and all were in favor. Seeing no one coming forward, Chairman Orsini made a motion to close the public portion of the meeting. Vice Chair Brown seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

No reports were discussed.

#### **WORK SESSION/NEW BUSINESS:**

There was no work session or new business discussed that evening.

#### **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 9:10 p.m. The motion was seconded, and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathleen Murphy, Recording Secretary  
April 26, 2022