

**TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN
ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY**

**REGULAR MEETING
June 20, 2024**

This Regular Meeting of the Township of Franklin Zoning Board of Adjustment was held at 475 DeMott Lane, Somerset, New Jersey and was called to order by Chairman Thomas at 7:30 p.m. The Sunshine Law was read, and the roll was called as follows:

PRESENT: Cheryl Bethea, Richard Procanik, Alan Rich, Gary Rosenthal, Robert Shepherd, Vaseem Firdaus, Michael Dougherty, Kunal Lakhia, and Chairman Thomas

ABSENT: Joel Reiss and Faraz Khan

ALSO PRESENT: Eric Bernstein, Board Attorney, Mark Healey, Planning Director, and Christine Woodbury, Planning & Zoning Secretary

MINUTES:

- **Regular Meeting – March 7, 2024**

Vice Chair Shepherd made a motion to approve the Minutes, as submitted. Ms. Rich seconded the motion, and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Mr. Procanik, Mr. Rich, Vice Chair Shepherd, and Chairman Thomas

AGAINST: None

- **Regular Meeting – March 21, 2024**

Mr. Rosenthal made a motion to approve the Minutes, as submitted. Ms. Bethea seconded the motion, and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Ms. Bethea, Mr. Procanik, Mr. Rich, Mr. Rosenthal, Vice Chair Shepherd, Ms. Firdaus, Mr. Lakhia, and Chairman Thomas

AGAINST: None

- **Regular Meeting – April 4, 2024**

Mr. Rosenthal made a motion to approve the Minutes, as submitted. Ms. Bethea seconded the motion, and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Ms. Bethea, Mr. Procanik, Mr. Rich, Mr. Rosenthal, Vice Chair Shepherd, Ms. Firdaus, Mr. Dougherty, Mr. Lakhia, and Chairman Thomas

AGAINST: None

RESOLUTIONS:

- **ECG New Jersey, Inc. / ZBA-23-00014**

Mr. Rosenthal made a motion to approve the Resolution, as submitted. Ms. Firdaus seconded the motion, and the roll was called as follows:

FOR: Ms. Bethea, Mr. Procanik, Mr. Rich, Mr. Rosenthal, Vice Chair Shepherd, Ms. Firdaus, and Chairman Thomas

AGAINST: None

- **Thomas Hauss / ZBA-23-00021**

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

FOR: Mr. Procanik, Mr. Rich, Vice Chair Shepherd, and Chairman Thomas

AGAINST: None

- **Arun Doddaghatta / ZBA-24-00005**

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

FOR: Mr. Procanik, Mr. Rich, Vice Chair Shepherd, and Chairman Thomas

AGAINST: None

HEARINGS:

- **LEVIN PROPERTIES, L.P. / ZBA-24-00001**

Mr. John Wisniewski, Esq., Attorney, appeared before the Board on behalf of the Applicant, Levin Properties, L.P. He explained that they were before the Board that evening for Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan w/"C" & "D" Variances in which the Applicant proposed to construct a 4 (four)-story apartment building at 940 Easton Avenue, Somerset; Block 385, Lot 2.07, in the GB Zone – **CARRIED FROM MAY 2, 2024, with no further notification required.**

Mr. Wisniewski gave a summary of the previous hearing, noting that they ended the meeting with the Applicant's Engineer, Mr. Turner, giving testimony related to the Site Plan at the last hearing.

Chairman Thomas then gave the public an opportunity to ask questions of the Applicant's Engineer, Mr. Turner, related to his testimony at the last meeting.

Mr. Arnold Schmidt, 134 Hickory Road, Somerset, NJ, came forward. Mr. Schmidt asked Mr. Turner if the assessment made in the Environmental Assessment report that the proposed project would not pose any risk to the public's health and safety was accurate. Mr. Turner answered in the affirmative. Mr. Schmidt then asked if they had any assessment that included the possibility of teens/pre-teens utilizing the sidewalk that was proposed from the apartment building to the McDonald's site and that they might be wearing ear buds and listening to music as they were navigating from the apartment building to the McDonald's site across the two-way entrance/exit driveway connecting to JFK Boulevard. Mr. Turner indicated that it was not discussed in preparation of the Site Plan. Mr. Bernstein, Zoning Board attorney asked that Mr. Schmidt cite the page in Mr. Turner's report and what part of the report he was referring to when asking questions.. Mr. Schmidt indicated that it was Page 9, 5.13, under Public Health and Safety. Mr. Turner indicated that the plan was designed to be safe for pedestrian movements. A discussion ensued, and Chairman Thomas suggested that maybe Mr. Schmidt's concerns and questions were best discussed with someone in charge of site management when the building was operational. Mr. Schmidt stated that he was concerned about the difference between a retail space and a 200-unit apartment building having teens/pre-teens living there and the possibility of them crossing JFK Boulevard to get to Marconi Park. Mr. Wisniewski objected to the line of questioning as he felt it was outside of the scope of the Application and testimony that was given. Mr. Turner indicated that it was not a question that he could answer. Mr. Schmidt then asked, "when preparing the Public Health & Safety Section of his report, the report indicated that the multi-family residential use did not create a potential dangerous site and was highly unlikely that the project posed any risk to public health or safety", did Menlo Engineering (on behalf of Levin Management) take into consideration Marconi Park, McDonald's and the children living in the proposed apartment building and walking to these sites under all the precarious situations that he mentioned in his questioning.

Chairman Thomas then asked Mr. Schmidt what the difference was between having a retail store on the property and having an apartment building? He noted that there could be people driving to the retail store and walking to other stores/businesses in the complex. Mr. Schmidt

indicated that it was much different with the potential of 500 people living on-site walking to the surrounding businesses and across a busy JFK Boulevard.

Mr. Turner indicated that Marconi Park was not part of the Application, and that it was his responsibility to identify and make sure that the on-site circulation, both pedestrian and vehicular and their interactions were safe and he stated that that was what they have done.

Mr. Schmidt then asked to speak on behalf of the Environmental Commission, and Mr. Bernstein, Board Attorney, indicated that he would need a formal resolution from the Environmental Commission to speak on their behalf and provide copies to the Board Secretary, the Applicant's Attorney and the Board in order to speak on their behalf. Chairman Thomas stated that the Environmental Commission had already submitted a report, so he suggested that Mr. Schmidt have them amend the report and include whatever he wanted to say or ask about. Mr. Bernstein then told Mr. Schmidt that if sometime down the road he could present an expert, witnesses to testify or documents to present that he wanted the Board to consider and then Mr. Wisniewski could cross-examine and the Board to examine. He added that Mr. Schmidt was not free to conduct an inquisition of any of the expert witnesses of the Applicant simply because you believe or don't believe that they did or did not provide a full picture of what you think they should be providing. Mr. Bernstein then stated that Mr. Schmidt needed to provide that testimony/documents or argue his point at the end of the hearing, whenever that will be.

Mr. Cal Hapstead, 10 Webster Road, Somerset, NJ, came forward. Mr. Hapstead asked what other witnesses would be testifying throughout the duration of the hearing. Mr. Wisniewski stated that they would be hearing from Dave Minnow, their Architect, that evening and planned on calling in the future Carl Penke, their Traffic Expert, Chris Otto from the Otto Evaluation Group, Paul Phillips, their Planner, and Matt Harding, a representative from the Levin Management Company. Mr. Hapstead then was asking about the number of people inhabiting the apartments. Chairman Thomas indicated that the number of people and the number of schoolchildren was speculative, and Mr. Healey interjected that the Applicant would be having someone from the development side (Chris Otto) and also Paul Phillips, the planner to testify and answer those kinds of questions. Mr. Hapstead then asked what the diameter of the pipe that would be hooking up to the main sewer pipe. Mr. Turner indicated that the sewer main was already there and was an 8-inch diameter sanitary sewer main. He added that an Application needed to be made to the Franklin Township Sewerage Authority in order for them to do their study to confirm adequate capacity, but that they didn't believe there was any reason that there was not adequate capacity. They then discussed how the calculations were done for residential uses and commercial uses. Mr. Hapstead's final question was whether they were aware of any other strip malls that had a residential component to them in Franklin Township. Mr. Healey pointed out that there were many along Hamilton Street, and a discussion ensued.

Ms. Elizabeth Tuller, 10 Doria Road, Somerset, NJ, came forward. Ms. Tuller asked what the Applicant was doing to take into consideration the fact that there was going to be a 100-unit apartment building in a strip mall environment and the safety concerns for pedestrians. Mr. Turner again stated that the site had been designed for adequate pedestrian circulation through sidewalks, crosswalks at all intersections, all ADA ramping that was required and adequate pedestrian safety movements.

Ms. Terry Thorsen, 18 Lebed Drive, Somerset, NJ, came forward. Ms. Thorsen asked Mr. Turner if the report she handed him was his report. Mr. Turner answered in the affirmative. Ms. Thorsen asked him why it said that the K-Mart building produced about 10,000 gallons of effluent and it was estimated that the proposed project would produce 40,000 gallons of effluent. Mr. Turner indicated that they need to get approval from the Franklin Township Sewerage Authority as well as the NJDEP, and without it, the project can not move forward. Ms. Thorsen then asked about a pumping station that was mentioned in the Application paperwork, but Mr. Turner indicated that there was no pumping station involved with the apartment building.

Ms. Cashmera Medun, Spangenberg Lane, Somerset, NJ, came forward. She wanted to know if there would be a crosswalk from the K-Mart building to Marconi Plaza, and Mr. Turner answered in the negative. Ms. Medun then asked if the median on JFK be maintained by the Applicant, and Mr. Turner answered in the negative. Chairman Thomas indicated that it was the responsibility of Public Works and could be asked at a Council Meeting.

Ms. Kiki Anastasakos, 3204 Enclave Circle, Canal Walk, Somerset, NJ, came forward. Ms. Anastasakos asked if Mr. Turner was part of a team of experts that will also present testimony. Mr. Turner answered in the affirmative. Ms. Anastasakos then asked if Mr. Turner was aware that the K-Mart had an automotive section in its store for over 30 years that was fully operational. Mr. Turner answered in the affirmative. Chairman Thomas then asked Ms. Anastasakos whether she was aware that the issue was discussed at the first meeting, and she answered in the affirmative, but wanted to be reminded of Mr. Turner's testimony. Mr. Turner stated that if there were any environmental remediation requirements associated with the former K-Mart building, they will take place and the site would be brought up to residential standards and certified as such by the NJDEP. Ms. Anastasakos asked if Mr. Turner would be involved in any remediation, and Mr. Turner answered in the negative.

Ms. Louise McGoff, 27 Bedford Road, Somerset, NJ, came forward. Ms. McGoff asked if the Applicant would be investigating about any lingering viruses in the building since it had been a COVID testing site. Mr. Bernstein, Board Attorney, indicated that her questioning was outside the scope of Mr. Turner's expertise as a Civil Engineer, but that she could ask that question if the Applicant brings on a representative of Levin Properties. Ms. McGoff stated that Easton Avenue was rated as a Grade "F" highway that had produced one of the highest fatality rates in Somerset County. She then asked what remediation measures would take place to minimize the impact of more steady traffic onto Easton Avenue and have they coordinated their efforts at all with Somerset County. Mr. Turner indicated that there would be a Traffic Engineer who would be testifying and would be a more appropriate question to ask that witness. She then wanted to know if Somerset County would be involved, and Chairman Thomas indicated that they provide a report to the Board related to the project and give their comments and recommendations.

Mr. Litraikis, 85 Arlington Avenue, Somerset, NJ, came forward and was sworn in. Mr. Litraikis asked what provisions they have included on the site for children playing and people walking their dog. Mr. Turner indicated that there were pedestrian sidewalks and open space areas immediately around the building for dog walking. They also have planned for some dedicated open space area that were located in the northeast corner of the parking lot (10,000 sq. ft.) and on the outside of the parking areas. He added that it could accommodate certain special events and there were also areas within the inside area of the building wings. He

added that the architect would be able to provide information on the individual components that would be included. They then discussed putting another big box store in the building, with Mr. Turner indicating that the building would have to be designed to the current big box standards with the required number of parking spaces and would potentially impacting other uses on the property such as Stop & Shop. He also added that a representative of the Applicant indicated that big box stores are not interested in coming to that location.

Ms. Linda Raimondi, Harrow Drive, Somerset, NJ, came forward and was sworn in. Ms. Raimondi wanted to know if there was a way to know in advance what witness would be speaking on any given hearing date so that the public could compile questions in advance. Chairman Thomas indicated that the Applicant's attorney, Mr. Wisniewski, can probably indicate who the tentative witness would be at the next hearing.

Ms. Katherine Sportack, resident of Larsen Road, Somerset, NJ, came forward. Ms. Sportack asked about what kind of soil that was on the site, and Mr. Turner indicated that there was a section on Soils on Page 4, Section 3.1.2, of the Engineering report submitted to the Board and included Clynesville Loam and a table that showed the various parameters of that kind of soil. Ms. Sportack then asked if that kind of soil had good drainage, and Mr. Turner indicated that it had moderate drainage. There was a discussion regarding the way the ground slopes in front of the current K-Mart building and the comparison of current conditions as opposed to proposed conditions after construction. Mr. Turner added that the current conditions on the property had a certain coverage and the proposed condition would reduce that coverage and was what their drainage calculations were based on. He added that they were also reviewed by Township professionals, Somerset County Soil Erosion Conservation District, Somerset County, and the Delaware & Raritan Canal Commission (DRCC) and were required to abide by their comments. Ms. Sportack then opened a discussion regarding climate change, and Mr. Wisniewski suggested that she could bring an expert before the Board related to climate change.

Mr. Healey suggested that Mr. Turner summarizes the testimony he gave at the last meeting regarding drainage and stormwater impacts.

Mr. Turner indicated that he had testified to the storm water management system at the last hearing, noting that there was an existing system on-site. He then added that they had to modify that system in order to accommodate the new building and meet all of the obligations of the storm water management rules and regulations that were in place at the time the Application was deemed "complete" and stated that they had done so. Mr. Turner then stated that they were decreasing the amount of impervious coverage on the site (78.6% existing and 73.2% proposed), thereby, reducing the flow from the property into the existing drainage system. He added that they had also provided on the property and around the building water quality structures that they were required to do in accordance with the NJDEP and the DRCC standards. Mr. Turner then stated that they were also required to obtain their approvals, and part of the approvals were rigorous reviews of the storm water management system. Mr. Turner then indicated that reviews would also come from Somerset County where they will review the drainage in their road, and if they think the project was having an impact on their system, then they would point it out. They then had a discussion regarding the possibility of land banking some parking spaces, but Mr. Turner stated that he didn't think it would make a big enough impact.

Mr. Alex Strauss, 285 Hazlitt Way, Somerset, NJ, came forward. Mr. Strauss asked if they would be able to exceed the storm water standards, and Mr. Turner answered in the affirmative. Mr. Strauss then suggested a water holding tank underground or including a rain garden. Mr. Turner indicated that his testimony was that they would comply with the storm water regulations. Mr. Strauss then opened a discussion regarding the location of sidewalks and the possibility of removing trees on the site. Mr. Turner explained that any trees that needed to be removed due to the roadway or sidewalks would be replaced. He also added that there would be a Township Maintenance Bond in place to protect the trees. They then discussed the parking on the site, and Mr. Strauss asked if they considered under the building parking. Mr. Turner indicated that they had not studied that as they have adequate surface parking. Mr. Strauss then asked about security for the parking area, including security fencing, and Mr. Wisniewski stated that the report from the Police Dept. that did not have any of those concerns and was submitted as part of the review of the Application. Mr. Strauss then opened a discussion regarding curbing along the sidewalks in front of the large apartment building and the strip mall, and Mr. Turner detailed the new curbing that would be put in place there. They then discussed the truck traffic and the circulation for Stop & Shop, and Mr. Turner indicated that the Stop & Shop activities/truck movements did not have anything to do with the apartment building.

Mr. Arnold Schmidt, 134 Hickory Road, Somerset, NJ, came forward again. Mr. Schmidt brought up the fact that there were many automotive chemicals used at the facility for over 30 years and that he had worked for the NJDEP and had written reports for many facilities he inspected.

Ms. Debra Foster, 31 Buttonwood Drive, Somerset, NJ, came forward. Ms. Foster asked what amenities would be provided in the 10,000 sq. ft. area. Mr. Turner indicated that it had not as yet been decided, but that they would work with the architect and provide some testimony. He noted that they had provided sidewalks, landscaping, benches, but was there to be further detailed even though they do not want to clutter the area since it was meant to be an open, community space. Ms. Foster asked them to keep in mind that if apartment dwellers invited people over to BBQ and they would park over in the Stop & Shop lot and walk over, it could create a parking issue. Ms. Foster then asked about school bus pickup areas, and Mr. Turner stated that it would be done through the Board of Education.

Mr. Healey then asked Mr. Turner if he had designed the site to accommodate the school bus movements, and Mr. Turner indicated that they can accommodate truck movements, so they definitely can accommodate school bus movements. Mr. Turner then described the path a tractor trailer would take to get to the rear loading area for Stop & Shop and back out again via Easton Avenue. He then also described the path a tractor trailer would take to make deliveries to the commercial tenants at the rear of the strip mall, following a path from Easton Avenue towards Stop & Shop, but then making the right to traverse behind that building. He added that they would use signage and the property management would need to get involved to have trucks do the u-turn instead of traversing behind and around the residential building. He did indicate that there was space for trucks to make the turning movements to traverse around the rear of the residential building and drive parallel to JFK Boulevard and across the front of the building to the main drive and make the left to go out. He then asked if they would be agreeable to have more affirmative ways to prevent trucks from going around the residential building and having them make the u-turn. Mr. Turner indicated that he would need to speak to his client, but stated that there may be ways to do that.

Chairman Thomas indicated that somewhere down the road, he would be advocating for a public bus service like NJ Transit to actually have a stop on-site for service to Bound Brook and New Brunswick train stations.

Ms. Vanessa Davenport, Learnington Way, Somerset, NJ, came forward. Ms. Davenport asked whether there were accommodations for trucks to enter at the JFK Boulevard entrance. Mr. Turner stated that they would then follow the roadway to get to either the rear of Stop & Shop or to the rear of the strip mall. He indicated that they would look at the turning point making the right to get to the roadway to both of those buildings and widening the roadway there to make sure that trucks could easily make that turn.

Ms. Terry Thorsen, 18 Lebed Drive, Somerset, NJ, came forward. Ms. Thorsen then asked if there was any reason that they chose a 25-year storm system as opposed to a 100-year storm system. Mr. Turner indicated that that was what was required based on the current standards for that particular Application where they were basically doing a redevelopment of the site. Ms. Thorsen indicated that in the past 25 years that Hurricane Floyd dropped 15 inches in Franklin, SuperStorm Sandy dropped 12 inches and Hurricane Ida dropped 7.6 inches, all above the threshold for 6.7 inches for the 25-year storm. Mr. Turner referred to their storm water management report, dated October 26, 2023, where there was an analysis that went up to the 100-year storm event, but the 25-year storm was used when designing underground storm pipes. She then opened a discussion regarding experiencing another Hurricane Floyd and whether that storm water management system would be able to handle it. Mr. Turner indicated that the new, current run-off rates accommodate the historical rain from those larger storms.

Mr. Arnold Schmidt, 134 Hickory Road, Somerset, NJ, came forward. He asked for the names of who would be giving the planning, traffic, etc. testimony, and Chairman Thomas stated that they would be giving that information at the end of the meeting.

Chairman Thomas then made a motion to close the meeting to the public.

The Chairman then opened the meeting to discuss when the next meeting would be scheduled so that those in attendance now from the public would know what to expect. Mr. Wisniewski stated that they would put on Mr. Minnow, the Architect, that evening and have a period at the next meeting for questions from his testimony. He added that the next witness to give testimony after that would be the Traffic Engineer. The Board discussed starting the meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the next meeting to have enough time for questions from the public and allow for the Traffic Engineer to make their presentation as well. The Board agreed to the change in time for the August 1, 2024 Zoning Board meeting and Mr. Bernstein stated that notice would be given to the appropriate newspapers and on the website to make sure that the public was made aware of the change in time for that meeting only

Vice Chairman Shepherd made a motion to approve the change in time for the August 1, 2024 Zoning Board meeting. Mr. Rich seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Mr. Healey made a statement to the Board, the Applicant and the public to allow the Architect to give his testimony, do not interrupt him, and then write questions down to bring up at the next meeting on August 1, 2024 for the Architect.

Mr. David Minno, Architect and Principal of Minno and Wasco Architects & Planners, specializing in multi-family residential architecture, located in Lambertville, NJ and Newark, NJ. The Board accepted his qualifications. Mr. Minno then ran through the plans and discussed the reviews they had received from the municipality, and discussing the two (2) components of it to include the architecture of the 200-unit multi-family building on the site of the old K-Mart along with a face-lift to the retail portion of the building adjacent to the residential building. He described the residential building to include modern amenities and things like how package deliveries/mail would be handled in a large building. He then noted the large amount of interior and exterior open space as well as amenity spaces. Mr. Minno described the entrance to the building that created a motorcourt atmosphere where there is accommodation for people to be picked up and dropped off at the entry and a place for an Amazon truck to sit for a few minutes as they unload and deliver packages. He discussed the ¼ acre park area that helped to create a beautiful entry to the building. He then discussed the main lobby area that included a mail room, package storage area, leasing area and then the central area that allows one to see through to the outdoor courtyards with a club room to the left and an exercise facility with windows out to the courtyard. He then pointed out the three (3) elevators and their locations along with a small lobby on the JFK Boulevard side where there was a fair amount of additional parking there and where building management would schedule move-ins that would accommodate small trucks and would exclude large moving trucks. He noted that the building was generally an E-shape facing south and designed it that way to get the maximum amount of light into the courtyards. Mr. Minno then described the location of the swimming pool in the courtyard that would be accessed through the interior of the building through the Club Room and accessed from the exterior through a courtyard with a key card because there was a fence surrounding the pool for safety. He then noted that there would be seating around the pool and private terraces off of the first floor units and adjacent to the courtyard. He noted that the other courtyard included grilling areas and fire pits, seating areas and walkways and benches located throughout.

Mr. Minno then discussed a trash termination room on the ground floor with trash chutes on the upper floors that feeds into that area where the trash was compacted. He then noted that recyclables were collected in the trash room on each floor and brought down by building management to the ground floor for collection and pick-up and a loading area where trash could be picked up from that first floor trash room where it is collected and compacted.

Mr. Minno then indicated that it was a fully sprinklered building, with a high standard of fire safety with all of the floor to floor fire ratings and side fire ratings were met ratings. He then noted that because the building was elevator served, each unit was considered handicap adaptable. He enumerated the types of units to include 61 market rate one (1)-bedroom units, eight (8) one (1)-bedroom affordable units, 99 two (2)-bedroom market rate units, 24 two (2)-bedroom affordable units and eight (8) three (3)-bedroom affordable units. Mr. Minno then indicated that they have 20% affordable units (40) on-site and meet all affordable housing standards that have been established for the state. He then discussed the square footages of the courtyards, including 16,000 sq. ft. for the one that included the pool and 12,000 sq. ft. for the more passive courtyard, 2,950 sq. ft. for the Club Room, the entrance lounge is 3,250 sq. ft., the fitness center was 1,930 sq. ft. He then described the storage area in the partial basement as well as an area there for a mechanical room, a fire sprinkler room, and a water meter room.

Mr. Minno then showed an additional elevation showing the components of the building on the second through fourth floors and a roof plan for the building that included parapets that would shield the view of the roof-top mechanicals. He then showed a rendering of how the building would look that included four (4) stories and was going to be 46.72 ft. in height. He then discussed the building materials being used after meeting with the Franklin Township Historic Commission and would be making some suggested changes to show them at a future meeting. Some of the materials included would be a mix of traditional horizontal fiber cement siding, fiber cement panels with a concrete façade and a dark colored brick lower façade, wood composite panels, large architectural windows with operable sash and generous storefront glass on the lobby level. Mr. Minno then detailed the four (4) ft. overhung canopy that was almost 12 ft. in height over the front doors. He showed additional elevations from the different frontages of the building, both facing Easton Avenue and JFK Boulevard.

Mr. Minno then drew the Board's and public's attention to the retail building that included 13 retail spaces. He noted that they were going to reconfigure the building to include 17 retail spaces and give the façade a fresh look that tied into the residential building in terms of materials. He then showed a rendering of the entire retail building and then brought to a larger scale and showing the end with the smaller retail spaces and another rendering showing the larger spaces. He noted the varied roof line and stone accents throughout the retail portion. He noted the additional landscaping, especially between the residential building and the retail spaces.

Mr. Minno then discussed the 10,000 sq. ft. green space in front of the residential building. He noted that the use was a bit open-ended, but felt it was an attractive space for the residents to gather and would include outdoor wifi both there and in the courtyards to accommodate working from home. They also felt the space could be used for special events to include a farmer's market or a small music event. Mr. Minno then detailed some similar sites that they were working on with residential and retail components in East Brunswick on Route 18, on Route 1 in New Brunswick on the old Sears site as well as in Paramus in the Garden State Plaza that included a residential component. He noted that it is allowing to keep retail strong and successful by having customers living nearby in walking distance, creating a symbiotic relationship and beneficial to both retail and residential.

The meeting was completed and a motion was made to **CONTINUE the hearing to AUGUST 01, 2024 – with no further notification required – at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at 475 DeMott Lane, Somerset, NJ.** Ms. Bethea seconded the motion.

Chairman Thomas indicated that they would begin that meeting with questions of the Architect from the public and the witness for that evening, as it stood now, was the Traffic Engineer.

DL – 08/31/2024

MEETING ADJOURNED:

A Board member made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:09 p.m. The motion was seconded, and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Murphy, Recording Secretary
July 28, 2024