



**CITY OF ABSECON  
Municipal Complex  
500 Mill Road  
Absecon, New Jersey 08201**

**PLANNING & ZONING**  
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**FEBRUARY 12, 2025  
PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Bob Preston at 6:30 p.m.

Flag Salute  
Notification of Meeting

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Aleli, Kirk, Kolbe, LaMaine, Marrone, Parker, Tiberio, Seher, Howell, Reilly, Preston  
**ABSENT:** Kirk

**OLD BUSINESS:**

VOTE: Minutes of January 8, 2025 meeting  
Motion to approve – Greg Seher – second – Christine Parker  
All were in favor.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Appl. #1-2025 for Absecon Urban Renewal LLC – Block 203 – Lot 1.01 – 401 New Jersey Avenue & White Horse Pike for preliminary and final major site plan approval and minor subdivision for a new 2,490 sq. ft. Wendy's drive-thru Restaurant and the conversion of the previously approved office building into a 5,077 sq. ft. multi-tenant commercial restaurant/retail space, which is on Lot 1.05.

Mike Lario, attorney appeared on behalf of the applicant – explained they are here tonight for a new drive thru Wendy's restaurant and to convert the previously approved office building into a one story approximately 5,000 sq. ft. 3 tenant, multi-unit restaurant/retail space. They are seeking one variance with the building setback from the internal circulation road for the commercial building. It is the same 6 ft. setback that was previously approved for the office building, but going from two story to a one story, the building footprint slightly changed and necessitates a variance. This would be the final phase of this project for Block 203 Redevelopment Plan.

Also appearing were: Brian Atkins, project engineer; Nathan Mosley, traffic engineer; and William Rountree, owner. They were all sworn.

Brian Atkins – gave a brief background, since he has been before the board many times. Exhibit A1- an aerial view of the site was marked into evidence. He described the existing conditions and improvements on the site today.

Exhibit A2 – colored rendering of the site plan submitted with the application. They propose a 2,490 sq. ft. building with a drive thru and full by pass lane and there will be 25 parking spaces. Site work is all complete and the impervious coverage will be 70.9%. The trash enclosure will look like the building and will be submitted for approval. Hours of operation will be 6:30 a.m. to midnight and deliveries will be two times a week after hours.

Exhibit A3 – elevations

Exhibit A4 – architectural – the building is more of a modern look with a square roof. It will have a variety of colors on walls and maintenance free. Final plans with a seal will be provided. Signage will be on three sides of the building. The building mounted signs will face Michigan Avenue, White Horse Pike and Route 9 and all will comply with the ordinance.

Exhibit A5 – a rendering of a Wendy's

There is also a minor subdivision for this lot as well, which will be known as Lot 1.06.

Greg – wants to make sure the access off Route 30 would be clearly marked throughout the site for drivers

Bob – asked for an explanation of the patio design

Brian – there is no parking in front of the building. There is a 400 sq. ft. patio that will have fencing around it, some landscaping, and tables with seating for 16. The fence will be made of decorative metal and it will be concrete. The trash enclosure will be a brown tone and more of a wood-like siding system. There will be one EV “make ready” parking space to the north of the handicapped space. All the ground work and conduit will be installed, but the charger is not required yet.

Tom – wanted them to make sure they have the fence approved beforehand, so there are no problems afterward

### **Building conversion**

Mike – They would like to convert this into a 4,352 sq. ft. retail/restaurant space.

Brian - It was originally approved for an office building. We made minor adjustments to the parking, to fit in a trash enclosure, that will be needed now and service access in the rear. Landscaping will be added as well. We are required to have 24 spaces and we will have 26 and one handicapped space will be added.

Exhibit A6 – architectural for this building

Brian – we have no tenants yet, but the building will be a similar color scheme to the liquor store and Chipotle. The rear of the building will look like the liquor store as well. Signage will comply with the ordinance.

Bob – there are existing signs around the site now and they were designed for the office building to be constructed, but now that it will be three different businesses, how will that work?

Mike – as the tenants are found out and if we cannot comply, they will need to come back before the board. We are not proposing any changes now by way of signage.

Bob – I think we are all in favor of this project and what it will do for Absecon, but he feels it turned its back on NJ Avenue. This is the last chance that we have, to invite patrons to come into the site. Maybe some landscaping could be added to make it more appealing.

Mike – it is like you almost have frontages on four sides. We are proposing some additional landscaping, so maybe Brian can speak to it.

Brian – the rear of the building faces Michigan Avenue. The NJ Avenue side will have more windows, but we have limited frontage on it. We will have some landscaping and will coordinate with your board professionals. We want to have benches and bike racks and some signage along NJ Ave, which the Redevelopment Plan allows.

Bob – suggested they should try to use the same type of elements at both of these locations.

Mike – we can certainly try and will work with the professionals. We are seeking one variance, that was previously granted for the office building, but since the footprint is changing a little, we are still seeking it.

Brian – the Redevelopment Plan requires a 25 ft. minimum setback between internal drive aisles and fronts of buildings. In other phases of this site, we have needed it as well. He feels there is not a negative impact. He has read the two professional's reports and they can comply with everything besides what was testified to tonight. The police and fire departments had no comments on this as well. He feels this application meets all the requirements to be given approval. County approval will be needed and we agree to it being a condition of approval.

There were no public in attendance, so no comments were made.

Tommy – asked if anything entrances are going to have to be shut down during construction

Brian – no we will not want to do that.

Andy – asked for testimony relative to the access that is closest to the Firestone. The layout of this phase is a little different than what we saw before. The signage seems to be okay, but he spent

Nathan Mosley – he gave a brief background of himself to the board. He has been with this project since the beginning. They will put in control safe methods for circulation and the site will have stop bars on both sides of the driveways and stop signs. He does not see any concerns and feels the design is safe.

Andy- mentioned the tire display that Firestone put up and they are aware of it. The issue is that his company does not own that site anymore and they have had difficulty convincing Firestone to not have that rack there. It was not approved as part of the site plan and code enforcement is going to have to speak to them. It is more of a safety issue now. Also, a good visual is needed for people to see what is happening on the site at all the locations.

Greg – there are multiple points of exiting the site, when someone is coming out of the Wendy's is there a preferred flow for the drivers?

Brian – not really. They will be able to turn either way.

Andy Previti – referred to his report of 1/7/25 for the subdivision. The board traditionally asks that they get filed by plat, according to law. A condition of approval should be that.

As to the site plan, he referred to his report of 1/31/25, with plans having a latest revision date of 1/28/25. As to the architectural plans, it is up to the board, not him, if it is enough for you to decide if this is the building that is to be built. The plans submitted for permits need to be consistent with our approvals. We heard testimony that they will comply with all my comments. With the new restaurant building, he feels the ladder facing the Michigan Ave. side should have a cage around it, with a lock and those details should be added to the plans. He also feels there should be landscaping and some sort of screening along the Michigan Avenue side of the building where the trash enclosures will sit.

Bill Rountree - we will do what we did with the liquor store, and we will have more evergreens around it.  
Bob P. – recommended a landscape plan, prepared and signed by a certified landscape architect. The plan provided is not accurate or adequate.

Andy – the city has recently completed the street scape project on NJ Avenue, so maybe their plans can be incorporated into these, to maybe spruce it up a bit and tie it all together. It would be an improvement to the NJ Avenue side. The rear of the liquor store looks pretty good. They did a good job with it. The plantings are young, but they will grow. You could do the same thing. The cross easements will be taken care of for the utilities and pump station. What is a presell board?

Brian – it is generally before the order window. It has some food specials advertised and is usually smaller.

Andy – on the EV make ready parking spot, there is a detail for the proposed space, but are you putting the charging equipment in now? Was told no, but Andy said a sign should be there. They need to have a construction plan and have a pre-construction meeting with the city engineer before any work can begin. He thanked Mr. Rountree and Mr. Aikens for working with him and Chris and meeting to revise the plans according to their comments.

Chris Dochney - they have addressed most of his comments from the meeting that they had with the applicant. The subdivision conforms to everything in the ordinance. The two variances are due to existing conditions and has no problem with them. He had a minor concern with the one parking space near the trash enclosure. If one of the dumpster doors are open, you cannot back out of that spot. The elevations match the renderings, and it appears the signage is consistent with the plan. 20% facing the two larger streets and 5% facing the smaller streets. I will confirm all this once we get the plans. Asked if they are doing anything to meet the “green” sustainable standards or more of the bare minimum. Asked how much the building would change if the tenants are not known yet. Would it just be the interior? Of course, things can happen during construction, but we just want to make sure it will not change dramatically.

Bill – this is a representation of what we want to build and we are modeling it to be like the Chipotle.

Chris – had a concern about the parking for the retail/restaurant building. If your tenants are going to be take out or a cell phone store, it is enough. If that ends up being one tenant, it might not be enough.

Bill – we are not moving towards one large restaurant

Mike – summed up the application to the board

Joe – motion would be to approve a minor subdivision for Lot 1.01, creating Lot 1.06 and approval for preliminary and minor site plan for Block 203, Lot 1.01 and 1.05. The applicant has agreed to all the conditions and comments set forth in the planner and engineer’s reports. There is a necessity of two minor variances. One pertaining to the sidewalk on NJ Ave. and the other with the drive aisle being 6 ft. between the building. Signed architectural drawings will be provided along with a detailed plan showing landscaping, fencing, etc. Motion was made by Tommy Marrone – second – Betty Howell  
ROLL CALL: Aleli, yes; Kolbe, yes; LaMaine, yes; Marrone, yes; Parker, yes; Tiberio, yes; Seher, yes; Reilly, yes; Preston, yes

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn – Deb Reilly – second – John Aleli

All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Tina Lawler, Secretary

Approved: 3-12-25