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

PLANNING & ZONING
Tina M. Lawler, Secretary

PH. (609) 641-0663 ext. 112
FAX (609) 645-5098

FEBRUARY 20, 2024
ZONING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Pat Malia at 7:00 p.m.

Flag Salute

Notification of Meeting

ROLL CALL
PRESENT: Baltera, Cottrell, Famularo, Koussoulis, Sellers, Seher, Malia
ABSENT: Lawler, Reilly
ALSO PRESENT: Eddie Dennis, Board Engineer; Jim Grimley, Board Attorney

OLD BUSINESS:

VOTE: Minutes of January 16, 2024 meeting
Motion to approve: Mike Famularo – second – Marina Koussoulis
All were in favor

NEW BUSINESS:

Appl. #1-2024 for Absecon Veterinary Hospital – 195 S. New Road - Block 211 – Lot 1.01 for an Amended Site Plan to create a parking lot; a Variance for the expansion of a pre-existing non-conforming use and a bulk variance for a buffer strip.

Bob Baranowski, Esq., attorney for applicant; Bill McManus, Planner/Surveyor; Tom Roesch, Engineer and Dr. Chris Torre all appeared and were sworn in.

Bob – explained that they are here tonight seeking site plan alterations. There is an area that exists already on site that they made as a parking expansion on the gravel area and we will hear from the witnesses that this is part of the area to be restored and will be shown on the site plan. He then wanted to start with his witnesses.

Dr. Torre – the hospital has been around awhile and there are four owners now and we have been growing and expanding over the years offering more services. We are asking for additional parking to support the additional services and staff needed. There are usually 21 people per shift from 8:00 a.m. to midnight. We have overnight staff to take care of animals that need to stay. During the day are the peak hours of service. We have started emergency services, as well, so that can become busy at times. The parking area that was created will be removed.

Tom Roesch – he was accepted as an expert witness. He then referred to the 2005 site plan that was approved for the hospital as well as a 4,000 sq. ft. commercial building at the northeastern portion of the property. Everything was built except the commercial building and the sidewalk in front of it. The lot coverage approved then was 47%. He then switched to the new site plan dated 11/10/23 for this application. They now need 49 spaces and they have 48 now. The proposal is to use the gravel parking area, basically where the commercial building was supposed to be. That will not get built now and they would create parking adjacent to the current parking and continue some around the northerly portion of the site. The gravel area that is left will be removed and top soil will be put down. There will be an increase of 14 parking spaces and the lot coverage will go down to 45%. There is an existing stone parking area will be removed as well, so all parking will be done in the paved areas. A CAFRA permit will not be needed with this. He then addressed Eddie's report of 1/30/24. Comments: 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 14 and 15 were answered and they will be able to comply with all the comments.

Bill McManus – he was accepted as an expert witness and he addressed the planning portion. It is a classic expansion of a non-conforming use, needing a D2 variance. There are no C variances required and they will comply with the buffer zone. There is a design waiver for the size of the parking stall. This was a waiver granted in 2005 and he feels it is reasonable to grant this.
He feels this application advances the purposes of zoning as and it is suited for this property, since it was approved in 2005 and in operation without incident and believes they advance that purpose and it also promotes a desirable visual environment. They will be removing the stoned parking area, putting in new curb, asphalt, new side walk and landscaping in that area, which will be an enhancement to the property. He feels these betterments in this application, certainly out weigh any detriment, if there are any. With respect to the negative criteria, we certainly do not believe there is any detriment to the public good and there are really no neighbors immediately adjacent to the property. There are wetlands on the westerly side for a significant portion of the property and no complaints that we are aware of from anyone on the operation of this use. We do not feel this impairs the intent of the zone plan or ordinance in any way. We think it is an advancement or a betterment for this lot. For all this reasons, we feel we can comply with the expert's requirements for the expansion of a non-conforming use.

Eddie Dennis – they pretty much covered all my comments and they said they will comply with the conditions. He has no objection to the design waiver for the parking stall size being 9 x 18.

Pat – asked if the city passed an EV ordinance yet, which requires them to have a charging parking spot for electric cars. This is state mandated.
Eddie – said that we do not yet. I will have to tell them.

Pat – we would have to do two things: the D variance for the expansion of the non-conforming use and an amended site plan approval.

Eddie – yes, this will include the design waiver. He does not know if the commercial building approval expired, but the testimony tonight was that it will not be getting built.

Pat opened the meeting to the public, but there were no comments.

Pat – the board members are now going to have a discussion.
There was no much discussion. The consensus was that this is a simple application and they are willing to address all of Eddie's concerns. They are keeping the same use of the property and no issues were seen or any detriments if approved.

Jim – the first motion would be to grant use variance relief to expand a non-conforming use to the Absecon Veterinary Hospital.
Motion was made by Steve Baltera – second – Mike Famularo
ROLL CALL: Baltera, yes; Cottrell, yes; Famularo, yes; Koussoulis, yes; Sellers, yes; Seher, yes; Malia, yes

Jim – the motion would be to approve the amended site plan and design waiver for the parking stalls
Motion was made by Chris Cottrell – second – Marina Koussoulis
ROLL CALL: Baltera, yes; Cottrell, yes; Famularo, yes; Koussoulis, yes; Sellers, yes; Seher, yes; Malia, yes

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn – Greg Seher – second – Steve Baltera
All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Lawler

Tina Lawler, Secretary

Approved: 3-19-24