



**CITY OF ABSECON
Municipal Complex
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PLANNING & ZONING
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**APRIL 16, 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, Reilly, Sellers, Seher, Malia

ABSENT: Lawler

ALSO PRESENT: Bob Smith, Engineer; Jim Grimley, Board Attorney

OLD BUSINESS:

VOTE: Minutes of March 19, 2024 meeting

Motion to approve: Chris Cottrell – second – Arianne Sellers

All were in favor

VOTE: D&R for Appl. #2-2024 for Daniel and Lisa McCall – 204 Cynwyd Drive – Block 184 – Lot 2
for bulk variance relief for lot coverage to install an inground pool

The lot coverage was added to the resolution after being calculated at 45.5%

The French drain and fence will still need to be approved

Motion to approve: Chris Cottrell – second – Greg Seher

ROLL CALL: Baltera, yes; Cottrell, yes; Koussoulis, yes; Reilly, yes; Seher, yes; Malia, yes

NEW BUSINESS:

Appl. #3-2024 for Kesayan Commercial Property Trust – 705 White Horse Pike – Block 190 – Lot 4 for use variance relief to convert an existing office building into 16 one-bedroom - age-restricted (55+) residential apartments

Ray Went, attorney for applicant;

Ray – we are here tonight to discuss an application that most of you might be familiar with. It is a commercial property we are seeking to convert to a residential property 55 and older. We think this is a smart move for the city and we will introduce witnesses to discuss why this property should be converted to what we are presenting tonight.

Bill McManus, planner/surveyor; Harry Harper, architect; Raffi Kesayan, owner and Joe DiGirolamo, realtor were all sworn in to testify.

Pat – we heard a similar application for this property and most members were here for it. It might help your presentation to pinpoint what is different from last time.

Ray – the first major difference is that it will be 55 and older, so no kids in the school system. That might not make a difference to you or not. A couple other tweaks were made as well.

He then called on Mr. Kesayan.

Mr. Kesayan – said he cannot find tenants to keep it as an office use. He is drowning in debt and feels apartments are highly in need and this would be a good fit.

Joe DiGiralamo – realtor with Farley & Ferry – went over rental statistics for the area. Since COVID office rental has gone down, but apartment rentals have gone up and are in high demand. We screen potential tenants before even showing them units.

Ray – so these are going to be working or retired people, not transients.

Greg – what is the percentage of vacancy for county businesses?

Exhibits A 1 and A2 were submitted that lists the availability of 1-bedroom units in the County and the number of offices in Atlantic County

Harry Harper – when we were first before the board two years ago, it was a mixed use of number of bedroom units. This has been changed to 16 one-bedroom units that will have a kitchen, one bedroom, one bath and two closets. He feels there is a real need for this. Most places have a waiting list to get in and we are finding this is a trend all over. There will be no children and no amenities. It will be strictly apartments. This will have a better price for renting then. Traffic would be minimal and an office use, would have more. This is on a bus route as well. The bedrooms are almost 100 sq. ft.

Mike – what would be an estimate of a monthly income?

Joe – from about \$1,300 a month

Pat – typically places being 55 and over usually offer amenities

Harry – retirees and downsizers sometimes cannot afford the higher places.

Bob – asked him to go over the exterior of the structure.

Harry – he then described the building having cedar shakes; new windows and doors, new railings, and new roof. The building will look good and standout.

Mike – are they being made ADA compliant?

Harry – the first floor will all have ADA compliant or they can be converted.

Steve – how much are you looking to put into the building? What is it worth on the market as it stands?

Harry – he will probably put \$500,000 into it

Joe – because it is office space and not in demand, an estimate is about \$500,000 and if we could find a buyer. There is not a need for office space.

Bill McManus – you heard what has been changed with this application, some statistics, and other data. He then described the surrounding area and neighbors of the property. The property sits in a HC zone and residential is not a permitted use, hence the need for a use variance. For the positive criteria, there are 3 broad categories. It is an inherently beneficial use; there is an undue hardship not brought on by himself and economic inutility. Revenue is down and costs are up. The asset does not come close to the value, so we tried to find a fit. They feel the site is suited for this and meets the positive criteria and advances the purpose of zoning. It promotes the general welfare and the parking is adequate for the standards.

For the negative criteria: Is it a detriment to the public good? Not substantially – it is a positive use and the traffic would be minimal. Is it an impairment to the zone plan? Not substantially as well.

This would be for 55 and over residents, with an affordable housing component of 4 units that would give the city 4 credits.

Steve – does this site meet the requirements for the other business uses in this zone?

Bill – those calculations were not done. The trash enclosure needs a “c” variance for a side yard setback because we do not want to lose parking. They have read the engineer’s report and comments and will comply with all of them.

Ray summarized the application

Bob Smith, board engineer – went over his report of 4/2/24. They gave the justifications for the D and C variances and the suitability of the location. They might need DOT approval. There are no changes to the site, except for the upgrades to the outside of the building. They agreed to comply with all our comments. The city would receive some affordable housing credits as well.

Pat – is there a green space requirement?

Bob – landscaping will be required

Pat opened the meeting to the public, but there was no comment.

Board questions.

Arianne – what would be the leasing terms?

Joe – at least a one year minimum.

Pat – feels the area not suited for residential

Greg – agrees, but it is better that they change it to one-bedroom units and 55 and over

Steve – years ago, senior housing was knocked down, now it is needed. He thinks this is too close to the White Horse Pike.

Chris – 55 and over is a plus and feels it was a good creative way to develop the property and the supply is low for the demanded needed

Marina – does not feel it is ideal, but feels it is doable

Steve – how many units at that development next door are occupied?

Joe – there are 26 units and 12 are vacant

Arianne – feels it is a win for the town and it will enhance the property

Jim – crafted the motion that would be to grant the use variance for a 55 and over – 16-unit building.

Motion was made by: Chris Cottrell – seconded by – Marina Koussoulis

ROLL CALL: Baltera, no; Cottrell, yes; Famularo, yes; Koussoulis, yes; Reilly, no; Seher, no; Malia, no

Motion was denied at 4 against it – 3 for it

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn – Greg Seher – second – Mike Reilly

All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,



Tina Lawler, Secretary

Approved: 5-21-24