



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

PLANNING & ZONING
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**JUNE 21, 2022
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, Seher, Malia

ABSENT: Lawler

REGULAR MEETING

OLD BUSINESS:

Vote: Minutes of May 17, 2022 meeting

Motion to approve: Mike Reilly – second – Marina Koussoulis

All were in favor except Chris abstained.

VOTE: D&R for Appl. #2 - 2022 for Patel Jigna (Royal Lodge) - 553 E. Absecon Blvd. – Block 225 – Lot 14 for variance to construct a 12 ft. x 20 ft. storage building

A change was done on page 3 to change the height of the shed from 25 ft. to 10 ft. high.

Motion was made by Mike Famularo – second – Chris Cottrell

ROLL CALL: Baltera, yes; Famularo, yes; Koussoulis, yes; Reilly, yes; Malia, yes

NEW BUSINESS:

Appl. #6-2022 - Kesayan Commercial Property Trust – 705 White Horse Pike – Block 190 – Lot 4 for use variance to convert existing office building to apartment use

Brian Callaghan, attorney for applicant appeared along with Bill McManus, engineer and planner; Harry Harper, architect and Raffie Kesayan, owner/applicant

Raffie Kesayan – was questioned by Mr. Callaghan. He has owned the property since 2009 and it's been a struggle from day one. It was 50% vacant then and many brokers have tried to get rentals, but received no interest. The new realtor has not received any calls on it either. He was getting \$20 a square foot and when down to \$12.00 and still couldn't rent them out. It's losing money every year. It should bring in \$96,000 a year, but we only got \$17,000 last year and that has been consistent in the past year. We still have to pay sewer for the 8 units even though only two are occupied, besides taxes, landscaping and snow removal. Two units are occupied now; one is a doctor and the other is a limousine company. It was recommended by the broker to try and make it residential.

Harry Harper – referred to Exhibit A-1 the architectural plan. He explained what is there now. Al Warriner built it sometime ago and he thinks it was never successful. When it was suggested to convert this, he thought it could work. The White Horse Pike has motels all along the road and this building actually looks like a motel now. It's two stories high and thought we could make it three types of living units with each floor mirroring the other. On the second floor they have connected the front of the building with the rear of the building for exiting purposes. It gives a corridor that runs all the way around the building. From an exit stand point that is great, since we have three exits and everyone has accessibility. Handicapped accessible units will be on the first floor and two units would be made for handicapped uses; the building will be sprinklered; they will fire rate the wall separations for the units and sound proof them as well. They were considering some type of shake siding with railings and stone out front the lower level making it look like apartments and not a motel or commercial building. They plan on having: 4 studio units at 368 sq. ft; 4 two-bedroom units at 728 sq. ft. and 12 one-bedroom at 445 sq. ft.

Chris – asked if there would be an elevator

Harry – two stories are not required; once you hit three floors it's needed

Mike R. – he is concerned about children living there and sees no amenities are planned.

Brian – the hope was not to attract children to live there; that's why we limited the size of the units

Mike R. – there is a bus stop there, but there is no means of walking anywhere because there are no sidewalks and you have to walk down to the light to cross over.

Bill McManus – referred to Exhibit A2, the site plan that was submitted with the application. Besides the use variance request, they are asking for minor site plan approval. They don't propose any significant changes to the property other than adding a dumpster for trash; re-striping the parking lot with handicapped spaces; adding some lighting outside and will work with the engineer as to anything that is required. He explained the permitted uses in the area and the positive criteria categories as well as the negative criteria that needed to be addressed.

Exhibit A4 – the survey, which does not coincide with the deed, so that needs to get fixed. Mr. Callahan suggested different ideas that he would do to correct this.

Board questions.

Mike Reilly – asked why type of leases they'd have

Brian C. – they'd have one-year leases

Eddie – he noted from the testimony is that the crux of the argument being presented is that this site has been zoned in utility as an office use. He commented that there is an office complex behind this site that is somewhat viable and has tenants. The building does need some upgrades and maybe if the building was upgraded, it would have been more competitive with the other one and sustained itself. The length of the lease being one year could be made a condition of approval. They've testified that there are two tenants in the building. Since it's on a state highway, they will have to comply with any requirements that they could have. He doesn't feel the lot configuration is trivia and it should be made a condition of approval. You need to have lawful access to the site. They addressed the items he mentioned and will work with them. It may be a good idea to put in a small section of sidewalk and connect to the neighbor's to the east and also to connect the parking lot to the driveway area, so people can have a paved path to get to the sidewalk. Affordable housing wasn't mentioned tonight.

Brian C. – we can coordinate with the city and state to comply with any requirements there may be.

Pat – questioned the R4 zone and its requirements

Eddie – explained them and said that 12 units are allowed per acre

Pat – so we have under an acre with a request for 16 units?

Bill – mentioned other developments in town that have high density living

Motion to open meeting to the public – Greg Seher – second – Mike Reilly

All were in favor.

Scott Reighard – owner of ReMax Realty next door at 703 White Horse Pike – he also feels that if the building had some upgrades to it, it would have made it more conducive for office rentals. His biggest concern with converting to residential is kids there. You can say you won't rent to people with kids, but if you have multiple bedrooms, people will want to rent and there should be made a condition of the length of the lease, so there are no short-term rentals. Sidewalks should be extended to meet ours to make it safer. There is a bus stop out there, so people do walk there.

Motion to close public – Greg Seher – second – Marina Koussoulis

All were in favor.

Brian – we will agree to install sidewalks and to reduce the potential for kids, we will amend our application and remove the studios and two-bedroom units, and agree to 16 one-bedroom units.

Eddie – stated the proposed conditions of approval as:

- A minimum one-year lease
- Work with us on the site comments included in his report, with the addition of the installation of sidewalk in front of the property
- Address the access to the site and remedy it
- Comply with any affordable housing conditions, but they don't propose any

Pat – so we are now dealing with 16 units and the conditions that were stated by Eddie

Greg – there was recently approval given to a new office building down the road, so obviously there is a need for it. With adding a residential use in that area, it will be bringing more pedestrian traffic, which is a concern in that area.

Mike – agrees the biggest issue is with people crossing the White Horse Pike and the curve in the road where this property is

Steve – agrees with Greg and Mike

Chris – Mike summed it up pretty well. We will have to weigh the pros and cons.

Pat – this is more densely populated than other areas where the Master Plan permits multiple housing units. There are other districts that allow denser populations, but they were done based on a planning board application and site plan. We limit other areas to 12 units per acre and to 4 units per building and require 75% open space for common green space. This is all done for a reason. We only permit 30% lot coverage and he doesn't feel the financial hardship of under utilizing the property outweighs the detriment to the Master Plan.

Marina – instead of taking on this tremendous expense to change the property, maybe he could take a different approach and give the building a face lift and do a little bit more aggressive promotion. Things are coming back now since Covid started.

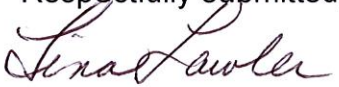
Jim – started to craft the motion to be: this would include all issues and requirements in Mr. Dennis' report; the easement access issue; the installation of sidewalks in front of the property and the leases being a minimum of 1 year.

Brian Callagan – prior to the vote, we would like to withdraw the application. This way we would be able to come back before the board with some of the recommendations made tonight.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn – Greg Seher – second – Marina Koussoulis
All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,


Tina Lawler, Secretary

Approved: 12/20/22