



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

PLANNING & ZONING
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**JUNE 28, 2023
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

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

Flag Salute

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Aleli, Gersh (late), Horton, Howell, Thompson, Strugala, Tiberio, Preston

ABSENT: Kirk, Reilly, Clinkscale

OLD BUSINESS:

Vote: Minutes of May 24, 2023 meeting

Motion to approve – Nick Tiberio – second – Betty Howell

All were in favor.

NEW BUSINESS:

Application #3-2023 for ENV Growers, LLC - Block 26 - Lot 1.01 – 125 Pleasant Avenue for Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan Approval with variances and waivers to be able to construct a building for the use of cannabis cultivation

Jeffrey Brennan, attorney for applicant appeared as well as James Barr, representative of ENV Growers, LLC and Bill Nicholson, applicant's engineer

Mr. Brennan – explained the property is in an I/PI zone (Industrial/Planned Industrial) consisting of 5.6 acres of vacant land right now. The applicant would like to construct a 24,000 sq. ft. facility to be used as cannabis cultivation.

Exhibits marked into evidence:

A1 – grading and utilities plan

A2 – landscaping plan

Mr. Nicholson – described the property as it is today and the surrounding uses. There will be two 2-way driveways on both sides of the property and it will be a full movement around the building. The loading area will be in the rear and will have room for two trucks. There are 44 parking spaces in the front and 21 phantom spaces in the rear if they are necessary. There will be two ez ready spaces as well if they are needed. There is sewer down the street, but they will be running a water line from Mill Road down to the east side of their property. They will need a variance in the building design since it will be longer than the 100 ft. that is allowed and a design waiver for putting landscaping in the parking lot. They feel there would be no substantial detriment to the area nor the zone plan or ordinance. Going over exhibit A-2, he explained the landscape out front and the internal islands that will have it now.

Bob P. – asked if there will be perimeter fence and if the woods in the rear would remain.

Bill – no fence is planned and the woods will remain.

Lou – inquired about the lighting and if it would disturb the neighbors.

Bill – there will be 3 light poles out front with LED lights and 1 in the rear. There would be some spillover into the street and driveway.

Lou – will be the basin be fenced in

Bill – it is not proposed and they feel they do not need a fence

John – the proposed building is 240 ft. wide along Pleasant Avenue. Do you propose any windows?

Bill – no we do not

James Barr – explained the operations of the business and said the they should have final State approvals by September. The building is divided in half by a firewall with an access door. The main entrance will have a “man trap”, similar to a vestibule and there will be security procedures for visitors and non-staff people. The rooms are air lock and scrubbed. The delivery bay in the rear of the building will also have a man trap. There will be 10 separate rooms for flowering fixtures controlled with LED lights. There will be a secure vault for the final product. They expect to have 40-50 employees for a 24-hour business. The 2nd and 3rd shifts would have skeletal crews probably. There will not be many deliveries and they are done in the rear in a garage. Outgoing deliveries will be scheduled with a security truck, based on the need, and will be randomly scheduled so it can not be predicted. They will have the best odor control measures and the building will be sealed, with weatherproof doors. There will be no exchange of air and it will have an internal fan system with carbon filters. Their security features will be surveillance with high def internal and exterior cameras, which will have 30 days storage and they will work with the police department on this as well. They will have a vault for finished product, which will have reinforced walls. They don't plan on having a fence at the property, since it will be a well-lit building. It will meet all the state security standards. Trash is standard and will be picked up probably twice a week and consist of packing materials; boxes and plant waste, which is state required to be mixed with other materials, to render them unusable. The timeline is to clear the land and then build the shell of the building and insulate it. They are at least a year and half away. It takes 5 months to produce product. They plan on running water lines from Mill Road down Pleasant Avenue to their site, roughly 1,000 ft. The estimate of the project is \$11,000,000 and the city also receives 2% of the gross revenue. There are 1,000 total LED fixtures in the building. They should grow 13,000 lbs. annually and net 8,000 lbs.

Betty – asked if they were having 24-hour security

James – not if we don't have to. We will have a guard during the day and will take security measures for the employees.

Bob – asked where the caged area for the trash is

Bill – there is a concrete pad in the rear

Bob – asked the number of deliveries a day

James – about 1-2

John – asked if anything is regulated by the DEP

James – no

Lou – mentioned that we are a volunteer service for fire and ambulance and if they will be in contact with them

James – we could have discussions with them and go over the alarm systems and extinguishers – we have drills with the staff as well

Betty – the firemen take hazard classes each year, maybe they should add cannabis

Kim – is the staff trained?

James – yes, for indoor farming. There is no soil used; it's more like sponges.

Nick – did you consider solar panels?

James – maybe down the road. We need a lot of power here.

Nick – what type of heating?

James – we will do a pig tail for a generator and have one on the site, but it's not for the whole building

Bob opened the meeting to the public.

Joe Wolfson – owner of Range 129 next door – is this a good use to be right next door to a gun range? This street has no water down it. If he is going to run it to this property, could the rest of us get it? The closest fire hydrant is 150 ft. away. A traffic study should have been done and how about a CAFRA permit? If there are 50 parking spaces or more, it's needed. Summit Avenue is only 20 ft. wide, so will the electric poles be moved to make the roadway wider? The city installed the street lighting. He feels the basin should be fenced in as well, since it's over 2 ft.

Crystal Yankasky - 107 Summit Avenue – why does the building need to be so long? 150 ft. is allowed and they are asking for a 240 ft. having a blank wall. Can you address the noise?

James – that is regulated by the state statutes

Crystal – how about the odor? The air flow doesn't address her issues. How will you mitigate it?

James – we have studied three different facilities in NJ and some have issues. You need to stop it inside. We will have air curtains installed; air locked vestibules and carbon filters, ten times stronger. Hepa filters will be in the plant rooms and the trim and curing rooms. Weather proofing will be done at the entrance and exit. We will supply the odor plan and there are no state regulations on this.

Chris D. – provisions on smells can be put on the applicant

Bill Pettek – 107 Summit Avenue – the smell isn't the issue. He was told years ago that he wouldn't suffer from Agent Orange, but he does. He is concerned about PVB's coming out of the building. Can you make it so that doesn't happen?

Brian Kara - there are lady slipper flowers all over the property in the rear and they are an endangered species. He questioned how big the area that they're keeping the trees in the rear.

Bob closed the public portion.

Chris Dochney – Board Planner – the building is a basic steel building and asked if they could do an extended vestibule with a gabled roof at the entrance to enhance the building since it's going to be so long. There is lack of landscaping, so they need a plan. It is mostly scrub now and it's not going to last. They asked for a waiver for this. What they are calling ghost spaces in the back, he's known them to be banked parking. He asked James if they are allowed to have a glass roof?

James – yes, but you can only have one cycle of growth a year then.

Andy Previti – Board Engineer – has spoken to Bill and he said he'd address all his comments in his 5/31/23 report. The 10 x 20 ft. pad in the rear for the trash that they say is big enough should be enclosed. The basin is 2.8 ft. deep and should be fenced in with a 72-hour drainage. There are no id signs. Directional signs should be shown on the plans and stop signs as well. A handicapped space is needed. They are asking for a waiver to do paving. The requirement is 4 inches and it needs to be 2 inches at least. The sidewalks should be the same level as the parking lot. He would like to see the water line details. If the building is being fire suppressed, he needs those designs as well.

James – if there is a fire wall, it is not needed.

Andy – there should be a sewer lateral dye test. He explained the new stormwater management regulations, that they will need to comply with. The basin will be moved, and the maintenance of it is recorded by deed and it needs to name a responsible person. There should be an entrance with a roadway to it and have a gate. An irrigation plan is needed and a lighting plan, none is shown on the plan. Permits from Atlantic County Planning Board, Cape Atlantic Soil and CAFRA are needed. The board needs to determine if they want to approve preliminary and final approvals tonight.

Bob – if the water line is extended is that on the city?

Andy – it's an off-site improvement, so there could be an agreement between the developer and the other businesses where they could chip in.

Lou – he is in favor of this project, but sorry to see that it is not complete. The lighting is important to look at and he would like to see a complete set of plans before action is taken.

John – he is torn between it. Maybe we can give preliminary approval first.

Joe McGroarty – Board Attorney – explained we can do that and they would do the revisions and then come back to the board for final approval.

Bob – is concerned that nothing was done properly and that it deserves only preliminary approval

Betty – there are many issues that need to be addressed and some corrected

Bob – do we have to look into that endangered species that was mentioned? A grading plan is needed and it needs to show how much vegetation is being kept in the rear. Nothing shows the front or the sides either.

Andy – moving the basin helps a little

Motion was made for preliminary site plan approval only by Lou Strugala – second – John Aleli

ROLL CALL: Aleli, yes; Gersh, yes; Horton, yes; Howell, yes; Thompson, yes; Strugala, yes; Tiberio, yes; Preston, yes;

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Andy Previti - \$78.45 for Absecon Urban Renewal; \$1,877.56 for ENV Growers, LLC

Chris Dochney - \$217.50 for Absecon Urban Renewal

Motion to approve: Betty Howell – second – Jessica Thompson

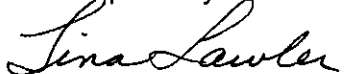
All were in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn – Lou Strugala – second – Betty Howell

All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,


Tina Lawler, Secretary

Approved: 8-9-23