



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

PLANNING & ZONING
Tina M. Lawler, Secretary

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**JULY 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, Reilly, Sellers, Seher, Malia

ABSENT: Koussoulis, Lawler

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

OLD BUSINESS:

VOTE: Minutes of June 18, 2024 meeting

Motion to approve: Mike Reilly – second – Chris Cottrell

All were in favor

NEW BUSINESS:

#6-2024 for Gary Gandolfi – 138C Crestview Avenue – Block 3 – Lot 15 seeking “C” variance approvals for height and lot coverage to construct a 20 ft. x 28 ft. pole barn with a 6 ft. x 28 ft. porch and a 10 ft. x 15 ft. concrete pad

Gary Gandolfi, owner was sworn in and testified on behalf of himself. He had this house built in 1986 and he put a shed up in 1988. It is old and it's being eaten by ants and no longer repairable. He still needs an outside building for his equipment and other things that he uses, so he thought why not expand it a bit. As far as the height, he initially wanted to go two stories, which would have required a height variance, but he no longer is doing that due to costs, so he will be keeping it at the 15 ft. height limit. He wants to put a cupola on top of it, but was not sure if that required a variance, so he advertised for the height variance anyway. The porch attached to the building, will be for winter storage of outdoor furniture.

Greg – asked why he is going so much larger in size

Gary – I have a lot of junk and I do woodworking, which I will do out there

Pat – you mentioned the cupola being installed, is that the only thing putting you over the height?

Gary – yes

Bob – we had originally received the plan showing it at 17.2 ft. height, but now they lowered it and conforms. The question then was the cupola. He then read from section 224-9, so he feels there is no need for a height variance to construct that. It is an ornamental feature. He then went through the rest of his report. The other variance is for lot coverage. 40% is allowed and he will be up to 43.6%. He said that the applicant needs to testify that this is the minimal size that he needs. The height is a non-issue. There should also be testimony about the availability to acquire adjacent property, as to not need a lot coverage variance?

Gary – explained the neighbors' house is for sale, but it has nothing to do with this building. The property behind him belongs to the City and his rear setback will be 11 ft. and his left setback will be 11 ft. for the building, but 3 ft. of the roof will extend into the setback, which section 224-15f allows. Leaving him with a 7 ft. setback.

Greg – will there be a slab under the porch? And what is the 10 x 15 slab next to the shed going to be used for?

Gary – there will be a concrete slab for the building and porch and the 10 x 15 area will be used for working outside at certain times.

Pat – we are talking 3.5% over what is permitted? Your lot size is 100 x 200.

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

The application was closed and the board discussed it upon themselves.

Pat – sees no large issues with this. The land to the rear is vacant and the one to the right wants too much for the property.

Greg – sounds like the sizes are meeting his requirements for his needs. He does not see a way to reduce the coverage.

Mike R. – it appears he reduced the size of the pole barn and it will look a lot better than the old shed

Jim – by way of majority of affirmative votes, does the board grant applicant bulk variance relief to construct a 20 x 28 ft. pole barn with a maximum lot coverage of 43.6%

Motion to approve – Chris Cottrell – second – Mike Reilly

Roll Call: Baltera, yes; Cottrell, yes; Famularo, yes; Reilly, yes; Sellers, yes; Seher, yes; Malia, yes

Motion passed 7-0 in favor.

#7-2024 for Absecon Veterinary Hospital – 200 S. New Road – Block 237 – Lot 1 seeking Use Variance approval to operate an animal hospital

Bob Baronowski, attorney for applicant – explained they are here to tonight to receive approval to open a veterinary office. We were previously here a few months ago for the existing animal hospital to add parking and other improvements. The opportunity arose to acquire this property, contingent on receiving approval for the animal hospital. This would become the wellness center for routine care and checkups. The emergency care would remain across the street. We could have 6-7 exam rooms; 5 employees per shift and we could operate with the existing parking that is available on the site. The intent is to create a better calm environment for the pets that come in to get routine wellness care. In an emergency setting, there is a higher level of stress and this will keep them separate.

Parties appearing and sworn in: Amy Gardner, the chief administrator for the hospital; Dr. Chris Torre; Tom Roesch, engineer; and Bill McManus, planner.

Amy Gardner – we are having a lot of activity with the emergency services and the front office is all open, so it is hard when you have someone come in with a new puppy and then someone running in with a dog that might have been hit by a car. We want to make sure we can get back to the family feel with our primary care practice. This will alleviate stress on everyone. The two buildings will operate independently of each other. We will be taking over the whole building and convert it into 6-7 exam rooms and 5 staff members. Sufficient parking will be on site.

Pat – clarified that they are staying within the foot print of the building and not adding on

Greg – it is currently a doctor's office now and how many rooms are there now.

Bob – there is space to have more rooms, but we are limiting it because we do not want to add on. Even internally, we do not want to make it more crowded. We will fit the number of rooms that match what the traffic can accommodate. It was fortuitous for this property to become available.

Arianne – what will be the operating hours?

Amy – we discussed possibly 8 am to 6 pm. There are no overnights at this building. The emergency hospital is open until midnight.

Pat – the application reads 7 am to 9 pm – Monday through Sunday

Mike R. – how many patients can you see at any given time?

Amy – most likely about 6, but we want to stagger appointments so dogs all come in at the same time

Tom Roesch – applicant's engineer and planner – explained the location, neighboring properties, and the layout of the property. The original site plan for this property was done by his firm in 1983. The stormwater system drains right into the DOT one on Rt. 9 and the only driveway is off Rt. 9 and not Ohio Avenue. The property needs a big cleanup and sidewalk repair. They are proposing 20 parking spaces and 17 are required, but we want to update that in case they want 7 exam rooms and 6 employees, bringing the need to 20. The handicapped accessibility will be redone and some restriping and ramp work. They will remove crushed stone along Rt. 9 and put soil and seed down and plant some shade trees. It is not a drainage use for the property. There is an old trash corral and that will be rebuilt on a concrete pad. Two light poles will be added to the site. He has seen no drainage issues, but they will install new grates on the site. They are asking for a waiver from the size of the parking stalls from 10 x 19 to 9 x 18. Most of the asphalt is decent condition, but they will seal the cracks and seal coat the entire property and restripe, making it look much better. We got a waiver from Atlantic County for Ohio Ave.

Bob Smith – you addressed most of my comments, but will you put the trash enclosure details on the plan? Most of the concrete along Ohio Avenue is in good shape, but some of the panels need some work. There is a site triangle easement for Ohio Avenue, but wanted to know if there is any impact with the trees. They should only need Atlantic County site plan approval letter.

Amy Gardner – spoke to some of the building changes. Of course, the gutters will be cleaned; possibly a dormer for cosmetic looks and redo the siding and painting.

Bill McManus – applicant's planner/surveyor – this will be their primary care facility and no overnight visits will be held there. They will make it look good and it will be something everyone will be proud of when done. He discussed the use variance, C variance for lot coverage and a site plan waiver. He feels the use of the property is well suited for this location. Some of the special reasons they feel they meet are: section 2A in the MLUL that says it should advance the purpose of zoning and promote the general welfare. Another purpose is to promote a desirable visual environment. Lighting will be added; new landscaping; fixing the parking lot and enhancing the handicapped accessibility. They feel they qualify for the C variance for the lot coverage because when it was first approved, it was a stone parking lot, but sometime after 1982, it was paved over. Because of it being paved, the impervious coverage exceeds what is allowed in the zone by just under 8%. The paving brought it closer to conformance, since today parking lots need to be paved. That benefit outweighs the detriments. They believe they meet the standards to be granted a site plan waiver as well. He addressed the site triangle issue.

Bob Smith – basically I went over all my comments and they have been addressed. He would like a detailed trash enclosure added to the plan, as well as some of the sidewalk along Ohio Avenue that is broken, so those few panels need to be fixed.

Pat – asked if the sign will stay the same or if they need a variance.

Bob – they are just going to change the copy on it, but keep the sign.

Greg – asked if the signage will be clear, as to which hospital people need to go to.

Amy – yes, there is a large sign at our current facility, so that will be changed

No public comment.

Board deliberations

Mike R. – feels it is an improvement to the corner and it is not much of a stretch for the use

Greg – it fits into the neighborhood business type

Arianne – feels it is a positive for that area and the city

Pat – sees no issues and it advances the purposes of zoning and sees no detriments to the zone plan

Jim Grimley – we will need 3 votes:

#1 - Motion to grant use variance relief to operate a veterinary primary care facility

Motion was made by Greg Seher – second – Steve Baltera

ROLL CALL: Baltera, yes; Cottrell, yes; Famularo, yes; Reilly, yes; Sellers, yes; Seher, yes; Malia, yes

#2 – Motion to grant bulk variance relief to have lot coverage of 67.28%

Motion was made by Arianne Sellers – second – Mike Famularo

ROLL CALL: Baltera, yes; Cottrell, yes; Famularo, yes; Reilly, yes; Sellers, yes; Seher, yes; Malia, yes

#3 – Motion to grant request for a site plan waiver

Motion was made by Chris Cottrell – second – Arianne Sellers

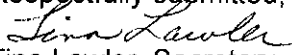
ROLL CALL: Baltera, yes; Cottrell, yes; Famularo, yes; Reilly, yes; Sellers, yes; Seher, yes; Malia, yes

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn – Greg Seher – second – Steve Baltera

All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,


Tina Lawler, Secretary

Approved: 8/20/24