

Township of Pilesgrove Planning Board

Minutes

Held at the Pilesgrove Township Municipal Building

September 15, 2021

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. He announced that the South Jersey Times and the Elmer Times were noticed on June 16, 2021. Notice was posted on the bulletin board outside the municipal building. All of the above was done in accordance with the New Jersey Sunshine Law.

Members stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Members:

Jeff String, Chair
Mark DeSiato, Vice Chair
Joe Crevino
Russel Davis
Mark Desiato
Milton Eachus
George Brooks
Craig Lewis --absent
Bill Miller
Jeff Dobbs -- absent

Alternate #1 Mark Valente – absent
Alternate #2 Ruth Peters --
Alternate #3 Joe Blandino -- absent
Alternate #4 Matt Hitchner

Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Chair seated Mr. Hitchner for Mr. Dobbs and Ms. Peters for Mr. Lewis. The Board's professionals were sworn in

Motion to approve August 18, 2021 Regular meeting minutes (DeSiato/Crevino) all ayes on voice vote.

Resolutions

Res. 2021-021 Pilesgrove Solar

Memorializing the Board's action to deny a use/conditional use variance to Pilesgrove Solar/Nichomus Run (Eachus/Miller), all ayes on roll call with DeSiato, Eachus, Miller, Hitchner and String voting to approve the Resolution to deny.

Completeness Hearing

None

PUBLIC HEARING

2021-013 Rich Warner, minor subdivision, B 22 Lots 3 and 7

Attorney Michael Floyd submitted two exhibits (A1 is an aerial of the property and surrounding lands. A2 is the minor subdivision plan; no revisions). No exceptions are taken with the comments in the board professionals reports. The Solicitor swore in Rich Warner and engineer Joe Mancini. Mr. Warner explained his role as the court-appointed agent to resolve the estate and clear debts. He described the lot and the proposed subdivisions, existing dwellings and accessory structures. He described pre-existing conditions and the variances requested for an existing building. No new buildings are proposed. He described the positive and negative criteria. He said anyone driving by the property would not know the subdivisions took place. The property is farmland preserved and the use will continue as agriculture. The SADC has approved the plan.

The Engineer reviewed his report of August 18. All requested changes have been agreed to.

Motion to open to the public (Crevino/DeSiato) all ayes on voice vote. There was no comment. Motion to close to the public (DeSiato/Eachus) all ayes on voice vote.

Mr. Miller asked whether the Board should receive a copy of the SADC approval; he was advised that will be done. He also asked whether Oldmans Township requires a sign off. Mr. Floyd said no, because the changes do not affect the land in that township.

Motion to approve the minor subdivision and subject to certain conditions (Crevino/DeSiato) all ayes on roll call.

2021-014 North Point, use variance, Block 45, Lots 1 and 7

Mr. String stepped down. Mr. DeSiato assumed the chair. Mr. Crevino stepped down. Mr. DeSiato said no one is available to seat for Mr. Crevino.

The Solicitor swore in the North Point professionals: Christine Nazzaro Capone, planner; Larry Lapinski, engineer; Josh Sewald, civil engineer, and Corey Chase traffic engineer. Their credentials were accepted by the board.

The Solicitor said the notices are in order and the Board has jurisdiction.

The application is bifurcated, and tonight's application is only for the height variance of the one building.

Jeffrey Chang, attorney, reviewed the application and described the property, which is currently an operating sod farm in the PLI zone.

Mr. Sewald said the intention is to develop the site as an industrial park, and the application is for the height variance for one of the buildings to be located the furthest from the road way. He explained the trend toward high warehousing; the 122 feet is not an arbitrary numbers, but in line with new construction. He said the height is less intrusive when viewed from the highway and the use of the PLI zone is consistent with the Township's master plan.

He said the only variance requested on the 442 acre parcel at highway 40 and Auburn Road is for the building height. The applicant's engineer described in detail the planned construction as depicted in mapping. The reason for placing the 122 foot building at the back of the property was in response to community input. He described elevations – and the highest point on the site is at Route 40 and drops at the back where the building is proposed.

Mr. Hitchner had to leave approximately 7:30. The applicant preferred to continue with six members.

Footprint of all of the buildings depicted on the map equal 4.6 million sqf. Four buildings are to be built on spec, designed for traditional warehousing will take place with respect to docking and loading/unloading in buildings within the height ordinance. The 122-foot facility would be only the second in the country, custom-designed for cold storage, and serve a fortune 50 firm. The height design is specific to cold storage, and products would be handled by cranes for energy and operational efficiency. He further discussed elevations and scale. He described the cooling dynamics related to height. The building has different heights over multi levels. The docking area is about 40 feet; the cold storage is 83 feet; the penthouse vacs take the structure to 106 feet; the lightning rods take it to 116 feet.

At 7:50 Mr. Hitchner returned.

Mr. Sewald said there are many approvals on the state level that the applicant needs to secure. They have tried to comply with all of the bulk standards of the township's PLI zone. The plan is below allowable impervious cover and complies with setbacks.

The applicant opted to provide Mr. Hitchner with a summary of the testimony that took place while he was out. Mr. Sewald reviewed the information. Mr. Miller asked if Board members can visualize the height and whether the applicant could do a balloon test to show how high 122 feet is.

Mr. Sewald said he believes it would not be possible to see the building from the trees on the String farm. There are also natural buffers. The closest structure is 3100 feet away. It was estimated the Amazon building in the County is about 60 feet tall. Solar panels are not contemplated at this point.

Mr. Sewald said a package treatment plant will be on the property and preliminary approvals have been requested. Fire suppression will high tech. That information will be presented during the site plan approval.

Ms. Nazarro Capone said the zone contemplated this use in the PLI, so height is the only item for discussion. She discussed positive and negative criteria. She cited the township Master Plan, which recognizes increased on line purchasing generating modern warehousing needs. She said scaling is relevant to the Board's decision – nearest neighbors, size of parcel, frontage, building location, scaling, and site elevation. In reviewing the township's height ordinances, she said it would allow a hotel (with roof vacs etc) at nearly 80 feet closer to Route 40. Wind structures could be as high as 140 feet, yet on a smaller parcel of land. Taking everything into consideration, in her opinion there is not substantial detriment in granting this one single variance.

In answer to a board question, Mr. Sewald explained the sloping grades with respect to height and topography. The planner said the testimony tonight is site specific, specifically for this building, not for future buildings.

The Board's planner asked if the square footage can be quantified for the different heights. The applicant said it can supply that. The Solicitor said the Board is not obligated to approve any other building for height variances. Mr. Chase said should something happen to the proposed buyer, there is a massive storage in cold storage and there would be other buyers at this level of design.

The Board's Planner said the testimony provided tonight addressed comments in his report and he has nothing additional. The Engineer had no comments.

The Board took a recess for five minutes. The Board broke at 8:50. The Board resumed at 8:57 p.m.

Motion to open to the public (Miller/Eachus) all ayes on voice vote.

There was no public comment.

Motion to close to the public (Brooks/Peters) all ayes on voice vote.

Motion to approve the height variance with conditions and subject to site plan (Brooks/Davis) all ayes on role call with Davis, DeSiato, Hitchner, Peters, Miller and Brooks voting yes; Eachus voting no.

Old Business

The Planner said a subcommittee needs to meet to discuss the master plan

Vouchers

Motion to approve vouchers (Brooks/Crevino) all ayes on roll call.

Motion to open to the public (Crevino/DeSiato) all ayes on voice vote. There was no comment. Motion to close public comment (Crevino/Brooks) all ayes on voice vote.

Motion to adjourn (Crevino Eachus) all ayes on voice vote.

Meeting adjourned 9:05 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Planning Board Secretary Rita Shade