

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
DECEMBER 20, 2006
7:30 P.M.

Chairman called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

Present:

L. Barrar, Chairman
J. DiBartolomeo
R. Krouse
N. D'Amico
J. Hannold
J. Wolf
J. Albrecht
R. Brown
A. Loder
J. Lattaney
J. Conroy (not voting)
M. Ward, Solicitor
D. Kreck, Engineer
L. Furey, Redevelopment Planner
M. Grandowicz, Secretary

Absent:

C. Mecca, Zoning Officer

Motion was made by J. DiBartolomeo and seconded by N. D'Amico for approval of the November 15, 2006 minutes, after the Chairman noted some minor corrections. All voted aye for approval as corrected.

There were no completeness reviews on the agenda.

Two resolutions were on the agenda for action:

Resolution 06-10 Donofrio for the Little Rays of Sunshine Daycare. Motion made by N. D'Amico and seconded by J. Wolf to table the resolution, with all members voting aye.

Resolution 06-11 M.T. Martin. Motion made by N. D'Amico to table the resolution, seconded by J. Wolf, with all members voting aye.

Old Business: Bohler Engineering request for an interpretation of C70-18 Item B and D. The Board reviewed, and a written response has been issued. The request was to inquire if this section refers to a retaining wall. The Chairman stated the section does not refer to retaining walls. Motion made J. DiBartolomeo and seconded R. Krouse. All voted aye, with the exception of R. Krouse, N. D'Amico, J. Lattany who abstained.

Board Action: Center 48 Limited Partnership, Magnolia Holdings and National Retail Associates L.P. Preliminary and final site plan approval and preliminary and final subdivision approval. Bill O'Hagan the attorney representing the applicant introduced himself. He is from the firm Stout and O'Hagan. He confirmed with the board that notice and publication was reviewed and processed. The board solicitor Mr. Ward agreed.

He stated the property is known as Lion's Head Plaza accessed from Evesham Avenue in Somerdale, and the White Horse Pike in Magnolia. The plan is to upgrade the existing center, demolish some of it, and expansion of primarily the Walmart Store.

The property encompasses two towns. A portion of the Walmart will be in each town. Both Magnolia and Somerdale have declared the property in need of redevelopment. The other remaining store space is mostly vacant. He stated from the White Horse Pike it is very hard to see the center. Somerdale preliminary and final site plan application has been made and approval has been granted.

The design is a Main Street Concept which witnesses will testify. The site will appear as a Main Street with various facades and be a place where people can congregate, not only to shop. He referred to a resolution from 1990 regarding parking spaces that allowed 9 foot x 18 foot spaces, rather than the required 10 foot x 20 foot spaces.

Also a link will be provided to Kennedy Boulevard from the center. A traffic light improvement was mentioned and also the NJ Department of Transportation recommended the light at the proposed entrance with Washington Avenue, but they have decided to offset the entrance and light from Washington Avenue.

The presentation tonight will be about the Magnolia portion. Mr. O'Hagan asked his witnesses be able to speak and present various sections of the application. The Chairman agreed that these are the procedures the board follows. The Chairman stated the applicant would be allowed to present their case first in whole.

The witness identified themselves and was sworn in. Adam Panoski, Bohler Engineering, Landscape Architect; Brian Zaplan, Bohler Engineering, Professional Engineer; Ken Mahowitz, TRC Engineers, Traffic Engineer; Steven Rebsebo, Walmart Stores, Director of Community Relations; Thomas Thomas, Thomas Planning Associates, Professional Planner; Craig Wright, Architect; John Orrico, National Realty and Developers, President.

Mr. Zaplan, Bohler Engineering, Professional Engineer stated he had a bachelors degree from Lafayette College and has been employed by Bohler since 1989. He is a professional engineer in NJ, PA, DE, MD and VA. It was confirmed he signed the plans presented tonight. The plans are of the Main Street Design Concept.

Exhibit A14 shows overall condition of the Lion's Head Plaza and are dated November 2006. Existing area is 43 acres with a plaza that exists in the eastern side. The plan shows the buildings which will remain. Evesham Avenue access point is shown as well as the White Horse Pike right hand turn exit and the entrance, and the Kennedy Boulevard access.

Primary existing site conditions Mr. Zaplan points out, as well as the drainage facilities. Magnolia has 5.12 acres which consists of proposed combined parcels. Somerdale has 48.4 acres of the site. Various parts of the site are undeveloped. He points out Pizza Hut, Citgo Gas Station, Camden County Building, and the Old Egg Harbor Road. It was also confirmed that Mr. Zaplan was the professional who testified at the Somerdale hearing.

Exhibit A15 dated November 2006 shows existing buildings and he points out the demolished section of the Caldor Building and the rebuilding of that section. Improvement of new public housing would be maintained by Somerdale connecting to Kennedy Boulevard. This plan was the one submitted to, and a revision made prior to the Somerdale hearing.

Exhibit A13 dated November 2006, revised December 2006 shows the new enhanced landscaping. A question was asked about how much of the Walmart is in Magnolia. The answer of 33, 233 s.f. are in Magnolia, and 164,013 s.f. are in Somerdale. He pointed out the division line of the Boroughs on the Walmart store area.

Exhibit A19B dated December 2006 shows the Magnolia area. Improvement with an outparcel on the White Horse Pike near Pizza Hut was pointed out.

There are no improvements on the White Horse Pike included in the application at this time. No improvements to the Citgo or Landsmand property on the Magnolia portion of the White Horse Pike.

The zone is Light Industrial in Magnolia. The applicant stated they had reviewed the code and 84 parking spaces are required for the part of the Walmart Store in Magnolia. They have proposed 9.5 foot wide x 18 foot deep parking stalls. The total number of spaces is 1724 spaces. Generally suitable is 9 foot x 18 foot for department stores. They made them a bit wider to allow better access. The attorney brought up again the old variance granting 9 foot x 18 foot spaces. 122 spaces were approved at that time when the old variance was given.

Exhibit A10 presented 1.4 acres of improved area. The witness for the applicant spoke of the 15-20 foot elevation difference in Magnolia. The proposed elevation of the Walmart site would be lower than the buildings on the White Horse Pike. The attorney presented A16 which provided the retaining wall. The wall would be from 1 foot to about 14-15 feet high. The run off would be less than currently exists toward the adjoining properties.

Loading area was on the western side of the site. The distance to the nearest residence to the White Horse Pike is 1,020 feet which was given by the applicant.

Access can be gained by the delivery vehicle left or right turn off the White Horse Pike at the proposed new traffic signal. Access to Pizza Hut and out parcels #1 and #2 will have to use of the same delivery aisle. 5 count at the Pizza Hut was determined by the current Pizza Hut. 9 foot x 18 foot spaces are designed for Pizza Hut. They explained the rear of the Pizza Hut and the 14,000 s.f. of new retail development is adjacent to Pizza Hut. The report for erosion and sediment control was dated November 2006 and the witness admitted to being the individual who completed the report.

A variance is being requested as a bulk variance from the 30 foot rear set back.

The attorney went into detail regarding the architecture of the façade of the store buildings.

Exhibit A21 was presented showing the front façade of the stores. The façade plans presented are the same as Somerdale approved.

It was noted that in the Light Industrial Zone a building could be 50 feet high.

A 5 minute break was taken at this time by direction of the Board Chairman.

Exhibit A19B which presented the overall site plan was shown. The witness spoke of the landscaping which included street trees and flowering trees along the main street into the complex. Lawn area behind the Walmart Store planted with flowering trees, deciduous trees, and evergreen trees to screen the back of the store.

The drainage basin was stated to be 300 feet long, 2-4 feet in height and 12-30 feet wide.

Landscaping in Magnolia consisted of the screening of the basin, the access drive with a hedge row, around the right in, right out drive access, and evergreens on the northern side of the retaining wall. A six foot high fence on top of the retaining wall for extra screening was also provided.

The witness stated the landscaping in Magnolia met the code requirement.

Lighting in the parking lot is typical parking field lighting but across the front of Walmart it is more pedestrian scaled street lamps with lower wattage and lower height to create pedestrian feel and main street feel.

It was explained pedestrians would have access throughout the site. There are planned pedestrian ways in the parking area, and providing along the front of the stores, and a gazebo located near Kennedy Boulevard intersection and the front entrance drive. Also a clock tower and a plaza area to give the whole site a main street atmosphere.

Access from the White Horse Pike will have sidewalk along the main drive.

Report A8 entitled pedestrian circulation more exactly states what has been mentioned. The witness stated there would not be sidewalk in the rear of Walmart in the loading area. The applicant feels it is not safe to have walking in this area. It would be better to have walking in the main shopping area.

The next professional was . He stated his education was from Lafayette College with a bachelors in Architecture. He is licensed in NJ since 1992 as well as 9 other states in the northeast. He has had his own firm since 1994. He is the architect for this project. The Board accepted his credentials.

Exhibit A22 was the first of 5 drawings showing the Walmart footprint, the north, south east and west elevations. This presentation is to help get a general understanding of how the building works. It was explained there are three main entrance ways into the Walmart. Two are on the left, and one is to the far right which leads to the garden center. The center entrance is the main entrance.

A23 shows all 4 elevations of the building.

A24 is a rendering of the front façade. This elevation is unique for Walmart.

A25 is a material board which shows the various materials to be used on the building. Its consistent with materials being used on the front façade. Quick brick is the type of material being used.

A22 and A13 were referred to, to assist on what is adjacent to Walmart. The Engineer spoke of how the site is interconnected to the other parts of the site.

All mechanical units are on the roof of Walmart and are inset. The closest resident is 190 feet in one direction, and 240 feet in the other direction. Also it was noted the elevation difference is about 40 feet between the mechanical units and the neighbors.

A23 was referred to, to speak of the north side of the building, and the elevation showing the garden center. The façade will wrap around from the front to around the side at the garden center. The receiving area will be about 200 feet back from the south side of the building.

Mr. Wright was he next witness, with a bachelors from Drexel University in Structural Engineering. He has 32 years experience in land surveying, which 20 years being with the City of Philadelphia. Also worked for Waste Management Mid-Atlantic Division regional surveying, and employed by Control Point Associates Inc. in the PA office who did the survey for this application.

A26 is the survey plan which was prepared by the witness. Applicant intends to acquire a portion of land from Mr. Landsman and the J.W. Kennedy Investment parcel for the new proposed access drive.

A27 shows the Kennedy piece is in Somerdale and Magnolia with 35,402 s.f. falling in Magnolia, and 25,227 falling in Somerdale.

Mr. Wright explained the subdivision of 13,529 s.f. and 5,167 s.f. in Magnolia. The remaining balance 60,686 s.f. in Magnolia The Landsman piece will be 18,685 s.f. after consolidated and this exceeds the Magnolia ordinance for lot size. No variance is required.

He further addressed points in the Board Engineer's comments regarding the subdivision and consolidation of lots. All easements have been shown on the revised plans as requested by Mr. Kreck, the Board Engineer.

Old Egg Harbor Road vacating by both Magnolia and Somerdale was explained by Mr. Wright.

A27 Mr. Wright spoke of King Street, a portion south of Central Avenue. This portion has to be vacated and the applicant requests it be vacated.

Mr. Maclas the Traffic Engineer had a visual display.

The Board Chairman advised the public that it looks like all testimony will not be completed this evening and the public will not be able to question the applicant until all testimony is given. The meeting as required will be continued. He did also inform the public that Somerdale took until 2:00AM to hear the application, and Magnolia had no intentions of staying that late.

Mr. Maclas stated he has a bachelors in Civil Engineering and a masters in Traffic Engineering. He has worked in civil engineering for 34 years, and has 30 years of traffic engineering experience. He is NJ licensed. The board accepted his credentials.

He stated he compiled a report dated November 14, 2006. He presented a visual display of the present site conditions and future proposed conditions. He noted the White Horse Pike State Highway, Evesham Avenue a county road, and Kennedy Boulevard in Somerdale. NJ Department of Transportation has jurisdiction for the requests for the access on the White Horse Pike and proposed traffic signal.

Exhibit 34 dated December 2006 from NJDPT approves the parameters and data given regarding the request for this site. They will have future hearings and meetings prior to giving their approval of the proposed conception.

Peak counts were used in the data discussed. Development data used was the 150 housing units and the renovated Lion's Head Plaza stores. He highlighted Evesham Avenue, Kennedy Boulevard to Evergreen Avenue and White Horse Pike access. He spoke of 6% of departure traffic will go through the residential streets of Washington and Monroe. Delays at peak evening and weekends are shown true in the study.

Options for Washington and Monroe were explained such as speed humps. Dedicated left turn thru lanes were spoken about, and widening on the new center side of the White Horse Pike which would be the developer's land.

The costs for any highway changes would be the responsibility of the applicant and DOT, not Magnolia Borough. It was noted that Citgo Gas Station is not part of the Lion's Head development and should not highway changes should not effect their gas pumps.

Thomas A. Thomas, bachelors in Planning, masters in City and Regional Planning from Rutgers. He has 4 years experience with county planning in NJ. His credentials were accepted by the board.

He was familiar with the 2005 and 2006 resolutions adopted by the governing body and planning board declaring this site in need of redevelopment. He confirmed the goals, 2 sets from the general land use laws and more specific goals for the future of Lion's Head Center such as environmental, employment, etc.

He spoke of the undersized portion of the site that is undersized for the area, depth per Magnolia code, but is not to be built upon except for the free standing sign.

He confirmed the reduction of parking space in this application. He stated most towns have revised their requirement to 9 foot x 18 foot spaces. He stated 9.5 feet x 18 feet gives room for office, retail and restaurants. He stated the benefits outweighed the negatives of granting the variance required, and does not impact the zoning code of Magnolia.

He stated one variance for the building itself does not effect the surrounding areas beyond the center or adjacent, it only has to do with the internal functions. The other for the land for the sign for a lot size for its use only and landscape area, and the last for the parking stall sizes.

All variances if granted they would still conform to Redevelopment Area and Plan.

At this time testimony was completed.

The Chairman confirmed the next Regular Meeting was the 4th Wednesday in January, January 24, 2007. and reorganization would have to take place as well at this meeting.

The applicant's attorney inquired of a special meeting prior to January 24, 2007. The date of January 10 was given by the applicant's attorney. Mr. Kreck stated he could not make that night. January 09, 2007 was offered next. J. Conroy stated there was a lot of information to review prior to the next meeting. There was a motion by J. Hannold and a second by R. Krouse for January 09, 2007 special meeting. All voted aye with the exception of J. Albrecht, J. Wolf, R. Krouse who voted no and J. Lattany who abstained. Special meeting passed 6 yes, 3 no, 1 abstain. The applicant agrees to renounce.

Mr. Kreck recommended Magnolia hire a traffic engineer to review the traffic study. Mr. Ward state he spoke to the Borough Solicitor, and the Governing Body has agreed and Mr. Bach contacted Mr. Ward stating a traffic engineer will be reviewing the study for the Borough.

Motion by J. DiBartololeo, second by J. Hannold to adjourn. All voted aye.



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