

FORT LEE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

July 26, 2022

Present: D. Conway, H. Joh, S. Tropea, L. Pacheco, J. Luppino, E. Hong, D. Sugarman

Absent: H. Liapes, J. Nitti

Also Present: J. Mariniello, Jr., Esq., D. Juzmeski, Neglia Eng.

Chairman Sugarman called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

NOTICE OF MEETING:

Chairman Sugarman stated: Let the minutes reflect that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in the following manner: On November 23, 2021 this Body, by Resolution, adopted a Schedule of Regular Public Meetings for 2021. The time, date, and location of said schedule was posted on the Bulletin Board at 309 Main Street. A copy of said schedule was mailed to the RECORD, JERSEY JOURNAL, STAR LEDGER, SPECTRUM, posted on the Borough's Website and was filed with the Borough Clerk. A written notice of the time, place and proposed Agenda was posted on the Bulletin Board at 309 Main Street and mailed to the RECORD, JERSEY JOURNAL, STAR LEDGER, SPECTRUM, posted on the Borough's Website and was filed with the Borough Clerk. Copies have been mailed to all persons who have prepaid the \$35.00 fee fixed for the year 2022 to cover the cost of mailing.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Mr. Conway, seconded by Mr. Tropea, and passed on a vote of 5-0 by members Conway, Joh, Tropea, Pacheco, and Sugarman to approve the minutes of the meeting of July 12, 2022.

Memorializations

Docket #20-22, JJR Properties, LLC, 2400 Fifth Street, Block 7154, Lot 9, Two Unit Dwelling

It was moved by Mr. Tropea, seconded by Mr. Conway, and approved on a vote of 5-0 by members Conway, Joh, Tropea, Pacheco and Sugarman to grant the applicant approval to construct a Two Unit Dwelling.

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Acceptance/Completeness

Docket #24-22, Babalis Enterprises, LLC, 433 Catherine Street, Block 4055, Lot 13, Two Unit Dwelling

It was moved by Mr. Luppino, seconded by Mr. Joh and approved on a vote of 7-0 by members Conway, Joh, Tropea, Pacheco, Luppino, Hong and Sugarman to deem the application complete. Mr. Cereste will call for a hearing date.

Public Hearings

Docket #12-09, Fort Lee A.C. Condominium Association, Inc., 2029 Lemoine Avenue, Block 14751, Lot 11, Amendment to Resolution – Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan – Office/Retail/Club Development

Chairman Sugarman stated we are unsure if we can go back 12-13 years and eliminate a condition. I strongly recommend you be in touch with the Parking Authority.

Chairman Sugarman stated this application is carried to the meeting of August 23, 2022. No further notice is necessary, time is waived for the Board to act.

Docket #32-21, Bhairavi Pandya, 256 Forest Road, Block 1953, Lot 1, Single Family Dwelling
(continued from the Public Hearing of April 26, 2022)

Mr. Cereste stated this matter was heard on April 26, 2022. There were some concerns. We reworked the plans and are providing a modified plan. We reduced the height of the ceilings, eliminated one garage, we reduced one full bath to a powder room, removed one bedroom and changed it to a library/office and we moved the retaining wall to the east. We addressed all the concerns of the Board.

Marios Lachanaris, Architect, 1610 Center Avenue, Fort Lee was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Mr. Lachanaris showed the landscaping plan, last revision date July 12, 2022 – the green area shows the grass. We eliminated one garage, moved the retaining wall to the east and reduced the height. There is site view now. The site triangle requirement is satisfied.

The ceiling height is now 8 feet and the pitch has been lowered. The building is now 29.5”. The basement level shows the two-car garage and planting strip. We eliminated the full bath and now have a powder room. One bedroom has been eliminated and turned into a library/office. There are no closets in this room. The third-floor ceiling height has been reduced.

Page 5 shows the ceiling height of the building and two separate doors for the two car garage.

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Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Conway stated the plan shows a maximum building height of 29.6’ but the height is 33.4’.

Mr. Lachanaris stated the height is taken around the building to the midpoint of the roof.

Mr. Juzmeski stated there are three different versions of the grass strip between the garages, what is proposed?

Mr. Lachanaris stated there will be stone curbing.

Mr. Juzmeski stated the engineering plans don’t show the easement is unobstructed.

Mr. Lachanaris stated we will add this on the engineering plans.

Mr. Conway asked what is the height of the existing building now?

Mr. Lachanaris stated 25.3’. The new building is 9 feet higher.

Mr. Luppino asked now that you are getting rid of one of the garages, will the house size remain the same?

Mr. Lachanaris stated yes.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the public.

Chairman Sugarman asked if any member of the public would like to come up, be sworn in and testify on the application.

Chairman Sugarman stated the plans were changed by eliminating a bedroom, full bath changed to half bath, eliminated a garage and came down on the height one foot.

It was moved by Mr. Conway, seconded by Mr. Joh, and denied on a vote of 5-2 by members Conway, Tropea, Pacheco, Luppino and Sugarman to deny the applicant approval to construct a Single-Family Dwelling. Mr. Joh and Ms. Hong voted to approve the application.

Docket #5-22, Seung Yang & Chan Park, 1303 Palisade Avenue, Block 1955, Lot 8, Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan – Mixed Use – Commercial Offices & Residential

Tom Skrable, Engineer, 65 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Exhibit A1-Engineering plans, 4 sheets, dated September 8, 2021, last revised June 2, 2022.

Mr. Skrable stated there is an existing single family home on the property. There is a house,

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garage, driveway, walkways and patios. The proposal is to put a small addition on it and remove the garage.

Chairman Sugarman stated there are different parking limitations depending on the type of office that is proposed.

Mr. Anlian stated this will be a commercial office. The Board can limit the approval to no Doctor's office. There is on street parking limited to two hours. There are other offices on the east side of Palisade Avenue.

Mr. Skrable stated this property is in the R2 zone. This is an oversized lot. We are going to leave the existing building and do an addition. We propose stormwater management improvements.

Sheet 2 shows landscaping on the westerly property line.

Sheet 3 is the lighting plan done by the manufacturer. The lights will be fully shielded, no spillage. The applicant agrees to adjust the lighting if there is an issue with spillage.

Sheet 4 is the soil erosion and sediment plan.

Chairman Sugarman asked about the parking spaces?

Mr. Skrable stated if there are two Doctors offices and tenants, 22 spaces are required. If this was a basic office use and tenants, 20 spaces are required. If this was other office use and tenants, 13 spaces are required. We propose 6 spaces including 1 handicap space.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Mariniello stated I think you need to tell us what type of office you want approval for because of the parking issues.

Mr. Anlian I will speak to my client.

Mr. Joh asked if there are two Doctors and 4 employees will two Doctors be working at the same time?

Mr. Anlian stated I have to talk to my client.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the public.

Nick Napolitano, 1322 Selden Place Fort Lee stated if there is a three-bedroom apartment, three parking spaces are required. There is 2,900 square feet of office space, three extra spaces are being provided. This doesn't make sense.

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Kathleen Tufaro, 1311 Selden Place, Fort Lee stated the letter I received said there will be one resident on the top floor and commercial space below. Depending on the use it determines the amount of parking spaces required. The requirement is 13-22 spaces.

Mr. Anlian stated we will clarify the use.

Hojoon Chung, Architect, 21 Grand Avenue, Palisades Park was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Exhibit A2-Architectural plans, 4 pages

Page 1 shows the plot plan, two entry points.

Page 2 shows the floor plans, 1,465 square feet existing, adding 964 square feet, total 2,429 square feet. The basement is for storage. The second floor shows the three-bedroom, three bath apartment, kitchen, dining room, living room and den area. The roof will have the rooftop units and they cannot be seen from outside.

Page A3-handicap ramp

Page 1-materials to be used, modern style and natural colors are to be used.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Juzmeski asked if there will be screening around the HVAC.

Mr. Chung stated it will be a metal panel.

Mr. Luppino asked if there will be a room on the roof.

Mr. Chung stated no, only the rooftop unit.

Mr. Luppino asked what is the height?

Mr. Chung stated 24.6”.

Mr. Pacheco asked what is the size of the bedrooms and den?

Mr. Chung stated the bedrooms are approximately 11 x 12 and the den is 13 x 12.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the public.

David Spatz, Planner, 60 Friend Terrace, Harrington Park was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Exhibit A3-Photo Board of Site and Surrounding Area

Top left-subject site looking from Bellemeade

Top right-from Palisade Avenue

Bottom left-towards the north on Palisade

Bottom right-across the street, shows commercial buildings

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Mr. Spatz stated this area is mixed. We need a use variance, side yard variance, lot coverage and parking variances are needed. The site is well suited for what we propose. We meet purposes of zoning. We are conforming with setbacks and height. The positive criteria is met and it does fit in with the neighborhood. We need 11 parking spaces for commercial and two for the apartment. The parking is in the rear and there is a driveway. Mixed uses are typical on Palisade Avenue. Drainage improvements are being made. The garage will be eliminated and we are adding landscaping.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board.

Chairman Sugarman asked on the west side of Palisade Avenue, how far away are the other commercial properties?

Mr. Spatz stated south, close to Cliffside Park.

Mr. Luppino asked if regular office space needs 13 spaces where will the other people park?

Mr. Spatz stated commercial operations are handled on zoom, there is less parking needed. Offices have less of a need for clients to come in.

Mr. Luppino asked you need 13 spaces and can't park on Palisade Avenue, then go to Bellemeade?

Mr. Spatz stated you can park in the surrounding area or on Bellemeade.

Mr. Luppino asked if there will be a loss of street parking?

Mr. Spatz stated no, not a significant amount.

Mr. Juzmeski asked if the required residential two spaces will be dedicated spaces?

Mr. Anlian stated I don't think they should be dedicated. People go to work and these spaces should be used.

Chairman Sugarman asked if the tenant comes home, where will they park?

Mr. Spatz stated on the street until a space is available.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the public.

Mr. Anlian stated this will be a professional business office, not a Doctor's office.

Chairman Sugarman stated this will be a condition of approval, if approved.

Chairman Sugarman asked if any member of the public would like to come up, be sworn in and

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testify on the application.

Angela Napolitano, 1322 Selden Place, Fort Lee stated we live behind this lot. Bellemeade is a quiet street, Selden is quiet. Parking is limited. Palisade Avenue is a very busy street. There is a restaurant and employees and patrons park on Bellemeade. The six spaces proposed is not sufficient. It does not fit in with the neighborhood. I hope the Board does not approve this.

Kathleen Tufaro, 1311 Selden Place, Fort Lee stated Selden and Bellemeade are quiet blocks. The auto repair shop and restaurant employees all park on Selden Place. There is no business use on this block. The other businesses were houses that were taken over and they all have their own parking. This property does not have enough room for parking. The other structures in this area are residential. There are no mixed uses in this area. The parking situation cannot work even at the minimum.

Thomas Lee, 208 Bellemeade Avenue, Fort Lee stated I live across from the applicant. There will be additional traffic. Two spots for residential will overflow. This is not the best use for this property.

Mr. Anlian stated parking is the primary issue. The economy has changed, everything is done remotely now. Doctor visits are done on the phone now. We need a parking variance. I think the proposal is a good one and will have a positive impact on the neighborhood.

Mr. Mariniello asked do they need 13 spaces?

Mr. Juzmeski stated yes, 13 spaces required, proposing 6.

Chairman Sugarman stated parking is the primary issue. I think the use and combination of use is an issue.

It was moved by Mr. Luppino, seconded by Mr. Pacheco, and denied on a vote of 6-1 by members Conway, Tropea, Pacheco, Luppino, Hong and Sugarman to deny the applicant Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan approval. Mr. Joh voted to approve the application.

Docket #13-22, Broadwest Corp., 2149 & 2151 Hudson Street, Block 6151, Lots 7 & 8, Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan – 99 Unit, Multi-Family Residential Dwelling

Mr. Cereste stated two residential dwellings are currently on the property. The lot is ¼ acre. 99 spaces on site proposed. This proposal is consistent with the area. Four D variances, conditional use, FAR, density and height variances are required.

Exhibits:

A1-site plan

A2-Architectural plan

A3-Parking and traffic report

A4-Building heights

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A5-aerial exhibit

Mark Vergona, Architect, 125 River Road #201, Edgewater was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

Mr. Vergona stated on the Board is T2 - aerial view of the building and surrounding area. The current use is two single family homes. The lot is 12,500 square feet. Sheet 1 of 2 prepared by Stonefield Engineering shows the surrounding area. Sheet T1 shows the rendering view from the east. This is from Google aerial view.

The lobby and service level is on the ground level. There are nine stories of residential and a penthouse level. The lobby is towards the middle of the property. The entrance is in the center. This building is modern and high end. There is also an outdoor pool. This is a compact building. Access to the garage is from the southern entrance and the northern entrance takes you to the loading area which has 11 parking spaces.

A1-elevation drawing – 9 stories of apartments and a penthouse level. 15% will be affordable units. Of the 15 affordable units, 20% will be 3 bedrooms, 20% will be 1 bedroom and 60% will be 2 bedrooms. There will be 51 studio apartments. The building is 143,000 square feet. The parking according to RSIS is met. We are providing 110 parking spaces.

A2-lobby floor plan. This shows the driveway, loading area, guest parking, vestibule, trash room, security, office, mailroom, package area, elevator and transformer room. Two sets of stairs in the building.

A3-typical garage level. Total of 99 cars can park in the garage.

Residential floor level – stairs, elevator, trash room, residential units wrap around the building. 10 foot setback is around the building. Studios and one bedrooms are compact but not tiny. All floors are similar. Top floor is the penthouse level-3,000 square feet of amenity area with a pool. There will be a lounge and party room on this level and a fitness center. Also, three studio apartments are proposed on this level.

Chairman Sugarman asked how many elevators are proposed?

Mr. Vergona stated two are proposed.

Mr. Vergona stated I reviewed Mr. Juzmeski's report. No signage is proposed at this time.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Juzmeski asked if the garages will be gated.

Mr. Vergona stated no.

Mr. Juzmeski asked if there will be an internal security system?

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Mr. Vergona stated yes.

Mr. Juzmeski asked how will they access the staircase?

Mr. Vergona stated with a key fob.

Mr. Juzmeski asked about heat coming off of the glass metal on the exterior of the building.

Mr. Vergona stated this will not be mirrored.

Mr. Juzmeski asked about the fire report and if a fire truck can be handled on the deck?

Mr. Vergona stated we can accomodate the weight of the truck and will look further into this.

Mr. Juzmeski asked if the ADA space is compliant?

Mr. Vergona stated yes.

Mr. Juzmeski stated the doors need to have egress.

Mr. Vergona stated we can do this.

Mr. Conway asked if cranes will be used.

Mr. Vergona stated yes, a tower crane.

Ms. Hong asked if there will be a detention system.

Mr. Cereste stated yes.

Mr. Mariniello asked if this building is oriented towards Acme?

Mr. Vergona stated yes, towards the smaller of the two Acme lots.

Mr. Mariniello what is the appearance of the building from Lemoine Avenue?

Mr. Vergona stated it will look the same.

Mr. Conway asked what is at the rear of the building?

Mr. Vergona stated Valley National Bank.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the public.

John Corak, Traffic Engineer, Stonefield Engineering, 92 Park Avenue, Rutherford was sworn in and his credentials accepted by Chairman Sugarman.

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Mr. Corak stated he visited the site. There are several buses in this area. The trip generation has been reviewed. 37-39 peak hour trips in and out of the site.

Chairman Sugarman asked about the number of Acme trips.

Mr. Corak stated I don't know.

Chairman Sugarman asked have you seen the traffic on Hudson and Bridge Plaza North? It's horrendous there.

Mr. Corak stated no.

Chairman Sugarman stated the size, traffic and density is overwhelming.

Mr. Corak stated this building is a lower traffic generator.

Sheet T1 – There are two curb cuts along Hudson Street. Parking is not allowed on the street here.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the Board.

Mr. Luppino asked in your study, from Fort Lee High School and if you lived here, you would make a left and go through Acme?

Mr. Corak stated that's probably what you would do.

Mr. Conway asked about loading and unloading. It appears the base of the building extends out. When construction begins where will the trailers park?

Mr. Corak stated the Engineer can answer this.

Mr. Vergona stated the trailers will park on Hudson Street or try to make an agreement with Acme.

Mr. Conway asked how long will construction last?

Mr. Vergona stated 18 months.

Mr. Juzmeski asked how will the trash be removed?

Mr. Corak stated by a private hauler. They will use a pick-up truck, not wheel it out to the street.

Mr. Juzmeski asked can the traffic signal be modified?

Mr. Corak stated there is one vehicle every 90 seconds. We can look into this.

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Mr. Juzmeski asked what is the impact on Acme and 2100 North Central?

Mr. Corak stated we looked at this project but not other developments.

Mr. Conway asked if there will be charging stations in the garage?

Mr. Corak stated yes.

Chairman Sugarman asked for questions from the public.

Chairman Sugarman stated this application is carried to the meeting of September 13, 2022. No further notice is necessary, time is waived for the Board to act.

Docket #18-22, Unlmted Development, LLC, 1355 Fifteenth Street, Block 2251, Lot 3, Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan – 130 Unit Multi-Family Building

Chairman Sugarman stated this application is carried to the meeting of August 23, 2022. No further notice is necessary. Time is waived for the Board to act.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Conway, seconded by Mr. Joh to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Garofalo

Linda Garofalo
Recording Secretary