

BOROUGH OF NORWOOD
PLANNING BOARD
October 29, 2024
SPECIAL MEETING

The Public Meeting of the Planning Board of the Borough of Norwood was held in council chambers on the above date.

Mr. Harper stated that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, pointed out the exits and asked everyone to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of the Board:

Mayor James Barsa	Absent
Councilman Joseph Ascolese	Absent
Mr. Christopher Jackson	Present
Mr. Walter Deptuch	Present
Mr. Allen Rapaport	Present
Mr. John Barry	Present
Mr. Travis Harper	Present
Ms. Kate Cerbasi	Present
Mr. Sal Nobile	Present
Mr. Paul Haberman	Present
Mr. Dominick Congiusti	Present
Ms. Heather Garcia	Present
Mr. Kevin Fischer	Present

Also, Present:

Mr. Robert Regan	Board Attorney
Mr. Michael Neglia	Borough Engineer
Mr. Scott Loverich	Borough Engineer

Mr. Congiusti made a motion to approve the October 17, 2024, minutes. Ms. Cerbasi seconded the motion and the Board unanimously agreed.

Mr. Harper advised the meeting will end by 10pm. If needed there will be additional hearings at a later date.

Ms. Cerbasi made a motion to approve the resolution for PB 24-03, 41 Virgil. Mr. Rapaport seconded the motion and the Board unanimously agreed on a roll call vote.

Mr. Bruce Whitaker, attorney for the applicant, gave a brief recap of the application and the last meeting. He advised that the meeting concluded after the testimony of the architect. The applicant is proposing a three (3) story building, with forty (40) units. Six of those units will be affordable housing. The streetscape will continue two and half (2.5) blocks down Broadway. There will be a private trash contractor and one (1) loading zone with the required signage. As part of the landscape plan, new trees will be added. There will be no pole lights. The applicant took the comments from the last meeting and made revisions to the plans.

Exhibit A9 – traffic study, dated August 16, 2024

The applicants Traffic Engineer, John Corak, was sworn in by Mr. Regan.

Mr. Corak said he has visited the site and the traffic that is in that area. The study is a set of standards from Traffic Impact for Site Development. This will help predict future traffic due to a new development. Various software helps to compute the analysis. As part of the analysis, traffic counts were performed at the intersection of Broadway and Livingston during the morning and weekday evening rush hours. They also studied the traffic on weekends. From those observations they compare the peak periods to historical data. Understanding what is happening at the intersection allows the engineer to measure how a roadway is performing. During the morning and evening peak hours, each movement is graded, and is in the B to D level. The intersection overall is operating at level C, with is efficient operation. Saturdays are rated level B which is also an efficient level of service. Traffic volumes traveling to and from the site are also forecasted. During the peak morning hour 27 vehicles are forecasted to leave the site over an hour, with 8 of those cars returning. In the evening hours, 24 cars enter the site and 4 cars leave the site. On a weekend peak hour, 4 cars leave and 4 cars return over an hour. The study does a future cast of the traffic with and without the building present. The level of service remains the same, B to D during the weekdays and C during the weekend.

Mr. Whitaker said the basis of this study said the A9 report states that the proposed building would not have an impact on the traffic. Mr. Whitaker said the study also shows the traffic for the B Zone. Mr. Corak said he analyzed what the B Zone shows during peak usage. Exhibit A17, a comparison table showing the traffic analysis, was presented. It is broken down by weekday morning peak hour, weekday evening peak hour, and Saturday peak hour. The evening and Saturday peak usage would generate more traffic in the B zone then the traffic from the proposed building. The proposed building shows the morning peak hours are similar to higher than evening and Saturday peak hours. Three times as much traffic is shown for a business in the zone

compared to the proposed building. The proposed building, in most instances, would have less of an impact on the roadway compared to the existing businesses.

Mr. Deptuch asked if the traffic study was performed on Sunday. Mr. Corak said he did study a study and is aware of the backup due to the church. It is an existing condition. Mr. Deptuch also noted the traffic on Sunday after 10am heading into New York for shopping should be considered. Mr. Corak said a handful of additional cars would not change the study.

Mr. Rapaport asked if the engineer was aware that there was no left turn coming out of the bank. He also asked if he was aware of where the schools are. The schools are to the left and they will need to make a left turn out of that building. Mr. Corak said for the county anticipates allowing full movement of the driveway. Mr. Rapaport said he has personally sat at that intersect for five or 6 cycles until he was able to get through the intersection, and that is without the building being there. Mr. Rapaport asked if the traffic going down Railroad Avenue has been studied. Mr. Corak said they are not forecasting the traffic on that roadway. Mr. Rapaport asked if the parking was part of the study and asked where the visitor parking will be. Mr. Corak said they are proposing 72 spaces for 40 units. They are anticipating to have an excess of parking, some of which will be designated visitor parking. Mr. Rapaport said he cannot see people parking along Livingston Street and walking to the building. Mr. Whitaker said they are not seeking a variance for parking as the 72 spots are approved by the state. Mr. Corak said in his experience, when visitors come to the property their first instinct is to park onsite. The holidays do not impact the apartments as much as single family residential. There are less cars in the lot on holidays.

Mr. Barry asked how digital commerce will impact the development. There will be numerous deliveries. Mr. Corak said the frequency of the deliveries could be less. It would most likely be Amazon vans, smaller Fedex trucks, USPS mail trucks. Mr. Barry said its more Door Dash or Uber Eats.

Mr. Nobile asked if the calculations of the delivery vehicles are part of the study. Mr. Corak said all vehicles are included in the study. Mr. Nobile asked how many vehicles in and out are projected per day. Mr. Corak said about 300 total in and out. Mr. Nobile asked what the vehicle track would be when they leave the building. Mr. Corak said the study did not involve mass transit. Mr. Nobile asked if the total number of vehicles in and out would be higher on the weekends. Mr. Corak said it would not vary by much. Mr. Nobile asked if the Grande was fully rented and if all parking spots were occupied. Mr. Corak said the building is fully rented and there are empty parking spots. The first spot is included, the second spot needs to be bought.

Mr. Neglia said he has a concern for charging for parking. Why would someone purchase a second parking spot when they can park on Livingston Street for free. Mr. Regan said he agrees with Mr. Neglia.

Mr. Haberman asked if residents can park in guest parking. Mr. Corak said that would be discussed with building management.

Mr. Rapaport said in the past there were problems with parking for a restaurant on Broadway. The staff was parking in a residential area. The spots were added to Livingston which helped alleviate that.

Mr. Loverich asked if a gaping analysis will be done regarding the left hand turn onto Broadway. Mr. Whitaker said they will stipulate to what the county requires. Mr. Loverich asked what the expected timing would be for someone making a left. Mr. Corak said the average wait time to make a left onto Broadway during the week is 19 to 22 seconds.

Mr. Whitaker asked if the proposal was for a convenience store how many vehicles would be estimated in and out. Mr. Corak said about 1,000 vehicles.

Mr. Rapaport made a motion to open the meeting to the public for questions on the traffic engineer's testimony. Mr. Haberman seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.

Mr. Jared Corey, Livingston Street, said the number of 1,000 trips in and out of a convenience store said it seems very high.

Ms. Giulia Nicolai, 101 Millbrook Circle, is concerned that the previous bank generated more traffic than the proposed building. She asked for the demographic of the age group of people living in the proposed building. Mr. Corak said it is not a demographic study.

Mr. Christopher Mirabito, 766 Blanch, asked if it is prudent to study traffic patterns and prepare for a maximum amount of traffic. Mr. Corak said he studies for a forecasted amount of traffic. Mr. Mirabito asked to have the record reflect the application might be derelict.

Ms. Deirdre Kessler, 35 Windsor Court, asked if a school bus was used as part of the traffic study and asked if a school can go in and out of the proposed lot. Mr. Corak said a school bus was not reflected coming on and off the site. The school bus is not permitted into a facility like the one proposed. Ms. Kessler asked if a child is in a wheelchair and needs to be bussed to a school how would they be transported. Mr.

Corak said an ADA compliant vehicle will be permitted on the site and would not impact the traffic study.

Mr. Nobile asked if the school buses entering Broadway were part of the analysis. Mr. Corak said all those vehicles are counted in the study. Mr. Nobile asked to see the data showing how many cars, trucks, and buses, broken down by vehicle was part of the study.

Mr. Cerbasi asked how the cars were counted. Mr. Corak said there are devices specifically build for this.

Ms. Garcia asked what happens when there is more than one delivery. Mr. Corak said the delivery lasting more than 5 or 10 minutes are scheduled through management. The loading zone can fit two vans back to back.

Ms. Jill Malesardi, 800 Blanch, asked about management not being on site and how the parking will be monitored. Mr. Corak said the superintendent would notice if there was a parking issue.

Ms. Cerbasi asked if the resident parking will be assigned by number. Mr. Corak said he assumes it will be.

Ms. Sherin Soliman, 148 Kenisngton, is there an estimate of how many adulta can live there. Mr. Corak said he is not able to answer that. Mr. Soliman asked how a left turn would be allowed on Broadway. Mr. Regan said the county will make that determination.

Mr. Joel Blank, 101 Rio Vista, asked if it was fair to compare a bank which is closed on Sundays to a residential complex. Mr. Corak said he believed it was.

Ms. Cerbasi noted that all data on exhibit A17 is scientific data. The choices of business used was the most popular businesses.

Mr. Colin Machleder, 200 Tappan, asked when the study was made and over what period of time. Mr. Corak said the counts were conducted with schools in session. It was conducted in 2024.

Mr. Nobile noted that people have different work schedules now and the study should be over the period of a week. Mr. Corak said the manual has been updated to capture those trends.

Mr. Frank Fanelli, 254 Livingston, asked if the businesses in the comparison are located in the same type of area of the proposed building. Mr. Corak said any vehicle on the

road is incorporated into the study. The data is from other sites, all of which are not corner lots.

Mr. Anthony Guercio, 491 Rivervale Ave, asked how many cars go past Livingston Street on a daily basis. Mr. Corak said an estimated number is 12,000 to 15,000 cars.

Mr. Nobile would like the Borough to have an independent traffic study, a more expanded study, to see actual data.

Ms. Delly Yaker, 346 14th Street, asked if the forecast took into consideration that children and young adults will be working to schools and will require more crossing guards and police presence. Mr. Corak said with his understanding the project is not a large generator of school aged children.

Ms. Deirdre Kessler asked if the study was conducted during school break of holidays. Mr. Corak said it was not.

Mr. Harper made a motion to close the meeting to the public for questions on the traffic engineer's testimony. Mr. Rapaport seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.

Mr. Regan read a statement from the land use manual to advise the Board on what they can and cannot consider when deciding on an application.

Mr. Gerry Puccio, 27 Greenwoods Road, Old Tappan, NJ was sworn in by Mr. Regan.

Mr. Puccio is the principal of the application. He advised he has been developing properties for the past 20 years. Mr. Puccio explained the operations of the Grande. The Grande is located at 455 Livingston St. There are 3 children in total in the building, one belonging to the superintendent. A lot of residents work in Westchester. There are 86 parking spots and about 40 spots are being used. The parking is assigned with the lease. One spot is assigned for each unit. A picture of the vehicle and copy of the registration is provided to the super when the lease is signed. A second parking space can be rented for a fee. Generally, he does not see people parking outside of the development.

Mr. Nobile asked what the duties of the super in a new building is. Mr. Puccio said they monitor parking, review the units to make sure there is no damage, maintenance, schedule move in and move out dates. Mr. Nobile asked if Mr. Puccio is involved in the architecture design of the building. Mr. Puccio said he is. Mr. Nobile said he feels the aesthetic is not what fits in this location. Mr. Puccio said there are trends in architecture and this style of architecture is popular today. You also want to have varied architecture throughout the downtown area to give it character. Mr. Nobile asked why the grading can be dug down so the building isn't so high. Mr. Puccio said its more cost effective to

not dig down and remove the dirt and functionally the building will not work if its sitting down on the ground.

Mr. Rapaport said a concern is the size of the building and asked if he would consider making it with less units. Mr. Puccio said the building makes sense as it is now but would be open to a discussion.

Mr. Nobile asked if units were removed would it change the design of the building. Mr. Puccio said it would increase the potential to change the entire site plan.

Mr. Rapaport made a motion to open the meeting to the public questions of Mr. Puccio's testimony. Ms. Cerbasi seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.

Mr. Bob Ghia, 22 Brickle Ave, Westwood, NJ, complimented Mr. Puccio on the Grande. He also agrees with Mr. Nobile that the proposed building does not live up to standards. He suggested adding a mansard roof to the third floor. Mr. Puccio said a mansard roof is not popular now and would not look good on this building.

Mr. Rapaport asked what it takes to maintenance the exterior of the building. Mr. Puccio said to power wash the building every few years.

Ms. Jill Malesardi asked if is there a way to soften the look and blend the residential into the downtown. Mr. Puccio said this will be the transition from the residential area to the downtown.

Mr. Harper made a motion to close the meeting to the public questions of Mr. Puccio's testimony. Mr. Rapaport seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.

Mr. Regan announced that the next date for this application to be heard will be December 4, 2024, at 7pm

Mr. Rapaport made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Cerbasi seconded the motion and the Board unanimously agreed.

Mr. Harper thanked the Board and adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lindsay Volpitta
Board Secretary

