

BOROUGH OF NORWOOD
PLANNING BOARD
September 4, 2024
REGULAR 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. Scott Loverich	Borough Engineer

Mr. Harper made a motion to approve the January 11, 2024, minutes. Mr. Rapaport seconded the motion and the Board unanimously agreed.

Mr. Rapaport asked the Board to confirm that they do not have a conflict with the applicant or any of his entities. There were no conflicts by the Board members.

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

Mr. Regan advised that all notices were in order. He also advised that the Mayor and Councilman cannot participate in this hearing due to the D variance.

Mr. Bruce Whitaker, attorney for the applicant, 400 Livingston St LLC, gave a brief overview of the existing property and what the applicant has proposed for the property.

The applicant is proposing a three (3) story multi-residential building which would have forty (40) units and be located in the business zone at the corner of Broadway and Livingston. The building would also have a lobby, community room, fitness room , and mailroom. There will be twenty-eight (28) one (1) bedroom units, ten (10) two (2) bedroom units and two (2) three (3) bedroom units. Of those units six (6) would be affordable housing units. The affordable housing units would consist of one (1) one (1) bedroom unit, three (3) two (2) bedroom units and two (2) three (3) bedroom units. These affordable housing units would count towards the Borough's current obligations.

The proposal is following the goals of the 2018 master plan, which included a commitment to provide a variety of housing types.

The applicant is seeking a D1 variance for the building as multifamily apartments are not permitted in a business zone. The applicant is also seeking a D2 height variance as the principal structure will exceed the 30 ft height requirement of the business district. In addition to the D variances, the applicant is also seeking C variances.

The applicant reviewed the letter from the Fire Department and will comply with all comments with one (1) exception. The Fire Department has asked for all electric vehicle charging stations to be in the open air area of the parking lot. One (1) of these charging stations is required to be attached to an ADA parking spot which will be in the parking area located under the building. The ADA parking spot is required to be close to the entrance to the building.

The applicant will present three (3) witnesses, the engineer, architect, and planner.

Mr. Regan asked if the applicant made an initial request to the Building Department for permits and was instructed to go to the Planning Board. Mr. Whitaker advised that the applicant was given a denial letter from the Construction Official.

Mr. Regan swore in the applicant's engineer as well as the Borough's engineers.

Mr. Jonathan Istranyi, a partner at Stonefield Engineering Design, was deemed qualified by Mr. Regan.

Mr. Istranyi advised the Board that there will be three (3) exhibits

A1 – aerial view

A2 – site rendering

A3 – site plan half sheet

The same exhibits were placed on an easel for the public to view.

Mr. Istranyi gave a brief explanation of the area and the proposed structure. Mr. Istranyi noted the former Bank of America property in on a county road. There is a BP service station across the street, and Borough buildings and industrial area farther east down the road. To the west is the fire station and to the south are residential single family homes. It was noted that at the intersection in question there are a few different land uses.

The existing features will be removed in order to construct the proposed building. There are two (2) trees on Broadway that will remain and be protected. There will be seventy-two (72) total parking spaces with most being under the building. There will be three (3) ADA compliant parking spaces, and twelve (12) electric vehicle charging stations. The parking spots will be 9ft x 18 ft.

The applicant had a pre application meeting with the county and has discussed the plans.

Pedestrians can access the main lobby from Livingston Street. The lobby will also slightly face the intersection.

As part of the application the applicant has proposed to continue the streetscape to Chestnut Street and Oak Street. This would include new sidewalks, curbing, an a brick paver band.

The building will be run by an off site management company. This management company will also assign parking spots.

There will be trash shoots located on each floor and the shoot will send the trash into dumpsters located in a trash room which will be rolled out for pickup on site by a private hauler. A loading zone will be located centrally on site to accommodate moving trucks and other vehicles that make deliveries. The minimum clearance for the under building parking area is twelve (12) ft.

The applicant is also asking for a variance for the sign of the building. The sign will be mounted adjacent to the lobby entrance on Livingston Street and be twenty (20) square feet in area. The relief is needed to have a residential sign in a business district. On the Livingston Street side, the lobby is two (2) to three (3) feet lower than the existing parking area.

The applicant will install a stormwater tank under the parking lot to slow down runoff.

The electric meters will be located on the Broadway side of the building in the electric room in the under building parking area. The gas meter will be in the parking area and can be mounted to the building facing Livingston Street if need be.

There are two (2) existing trees on Broadway that will be saved. One additional tree by Railroad Avenue will be removed and replaced by five (5) street trees that will be placed along Broadway and Livingston Street. There will also be a mix of arborvitae along the perimeter of the site and a six (6) ft solid board on board fence will be installed in the south east area of the property.

There will be no pole lighting. All lighting will be attached to the building or soffit lights in the garage. The lights will be LED fixtures that will operate dusk to dawn. The lights will be three thousand (3,000) to four thousand (4,000) kelvin and be a warm but not bright light. The garage lights will be on a sensor and provide sufficient light for the driveway entrance, lobby and under building parking area.

Mr. Regan marked the Neglia Engineering letter B1.

Mr. Istranyi noted the letter from Neglia Engineering and discussed the variances that will be required such as use, height, lot coverage, signage, height of stop sign, parking stall dimensions, parking setbacks, driveway design, loading zone, and lighting intensity.

Mr. Regan marked the Fire Department letter as B2.

Mr. Istranyi stated that the applicant will comply with all comments from the Fire Department, with the exception of having all electric vehicle charging stations in the open air parking lot. There is one (1) electric vehicle charging station that must be near an ADA parking space, which is located under the building.

Mr. Whitaker noted that the stormwater management report submitted stated there will be no stormwater runoff that would negatively affect the neighbor's property. All drainage improvements will be maintained by the property owner.

Mr. Rapaport asked how much water the retention basin could hold. Mr. Istranyi

said the retention basin is a storm tech plastic system encased in stone and wrapped in an impervious liner. The overall size of the retention basin is six thousand eight hundred (6,800) cubic feet, which is just shy of 50,900 gallons.

Mr. Rapaport said he was concerned about the rate of rain and from the roof how many drains there will be and at what force will the water be flowing. Mr. Istranyi said the rate is based off of the one hundred (100) year old storm which is sized at 1% any given year and equates to eight (8) inches of rain in a twenty-four 24 hour period. That would be as much rain as a very bad tropical storm or hurricane. The water doesn't sit in the basin, it will be released overtime.

Mr. Deptuch noted that the storms in the last two (2) to three (3) years have been dumping six (6) inches of rain in two (2) hours. Mr. Deptuch asked what happened to the stormwater basin with that amount of rain. Mr. Istranyi said most of the peak rain is over an eight (8) to fifteen (15) hour period.

Mr. Fischer asked if the water is released into pipes or into the ground. Mr. Istranyi said the water is released to pipes and connects to the stormwater inlet on Broadway.

Ms. Cerbasi asked if this stormwater catch basin could improve the issues that are on the street now. Mr. Istranyi said it could help to improve the issues as there is nothing in place on the property now.

Mr. Rapaport advised the applicant that the Borough recently had ADA accessible ramps installed on the corners of Broadway and Livingston Street and asked if those will be replaced. Mr. Istranyi said the ramps would be replaced or left alone with the sidewalk installed around them.

Mr. Rapaport asked if the applicant would use the same lighting that is on Livingston Street for the streetscape enhancements on Broadway. Mr. Istranyi said the applicant would agree to that.

Ms. Garcia asked what happens to the parking area when the residents have more than one (1) car. Mr. Istranyi said the management company will assign all parking spots.

Mr. Deptuch said the proposed parking are too small to fit a Suburban because they are undersized spaces. A normal parking spot is ten (10) x twenty (20) and the proposed spots are only nine (9) x eighteen (18). Mr. Deptuch feels the applicant did not make accommodations for larger vehicles. Mr. Istranyi said if a person has a Suburban or an F-350 they probably will not rent in this building.

Mr. Rapaport noted that the intersection of Broadway and Livingston is very busy and it will be difficult to make a left out of the parking lot to head towards Livingston Street. Mr. Istranyi replied that the applicant will yield to the county's decision regarding any stipulations to right turn only directions.

Ms. Garcia asked if there is a limit to how many people can reside in each unit, based on the number of bedrooms. Mr. Whitaker said it is not possible to put a limit on the number of people in a unit. Ms. Cerbasi stated that she believes there is a clause that allows for two (2) heartbeats per bedroom. Mr. Whitaker and Mr. Istranyi were unaware of that clause.

Mr. Nobile asked why the applicant didn't dig down for the parking lot. It would elevate the slope of the parking lot and the need for a height variance.

Mr. Neglia said he was aware of the drainage pipe plan to have two (2) pipes go into a manhole and that there was another manhole the applicant was not able to access. He would like the applicant to coordinate with the DPW, who will help the applicant gain access to that manhole to make sure there are no drainage issues.

Mr. Neglia also would like the plan to update the traffic flow and note the two (2) lane striping that is on Broadway. Mr. Neglia also believes that it will be very difficult to make a left turn out of the parking lot and asks the applicant to consider looking at an exit onto Livingston Street.

Mr. Neglia would also like it noted on the plan how many parking spots will be reserved for guest parking and where those spots will be located.

Mr. Loverich asked for the loading area to be designated with signage. Mr. Istranyi said the area will be striped with loading zone to alert people and signage can be placed in that area as well.

Mr. Loverich also asked that the lights be dimmable, to which Mr. Istranyi said they are.

Mr. Regan stated at this time the meeting will be open to the public to ask questions of the witness that pertain to the testimony that was given. There will be no statements allowed at this time.

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

Jennifer Larosa, 18 Everett Street, asked if there would be a community space in the building. Mr. Istranyi replied there will be a space on the lobby floor. Ms. Larosa asked if there was a plan for overflow parking once the visitor spaces were filled. Mr. Istranyi said it would be just like any other party that was held at a residence and ride share service was an option. Ms. Larosa stated that people in this community prefer to drive their own vehicles than use ride share.

Michael Panella, 166 Somerset Road, asked the engineer to provide examples of the project that did not need a variance. Mr. Istranyi said the lot area, frontage depth, impervious coverage, and side yard setbacks were all within the required range.

Robert Russenberger, 17 Hillside Avenue, asked if the under building parking was open air parking. Mr. Istranyi said there is a short driveway that leads to the under building parking area.

Colin Machleder, 200 Tappan Road, asked if there would be a filtration system for the stormwater basin so the trash and oils from residents do not end up in the streams. Mr. Istranyi said the stormwater basin is a closed system and does not leach into the ground.

Stephen Whaley, 360 14th Street, was concerned about the traffic and asked if there was a study done to show the current numbers of cars at the intersection and what the expected increase would be. Mr. Istranyi said the expectations show thirty-five (35) trips on weekday mornings, eight (8) vehicles entering and twenty-seven (27) leaving. In the evening the study predicted twenty-four (24) cars entering and fourteen (14) leaving for thirty-eight trips at peak hours. Mr. Whaley asked for the study figures for traveling on Broadway towards Livingston Street. Mr. Istranyi stated that peak morning, 7am-8am, showed one hundred seventy (170) vehicles traveling east and one hundred ninety-five vehicles traveling west, three hundred seventy-two (372) vehicles traveling north and two hundred ninety eight (298) vehicles traveling south. During peak times there are three hundred sixty six (366) cars traveling west on Broadway between 8am-9am and six hundred fifty (650) vehicles between 5pm-6pm.

Jason Argenti, 380 Livingston Street, feels that people will begin using Railroad Avenue as a cut through and that is designated as a no through traffic street. He asked if the applicant took into consideration the impact this will have to the neighbors of the building. Mr. Istranyi said he did not look into the Railroad Avenue cut through because it is unrelated to this application. Mr. Argenti also asked why the project has to be as big as it is and it would fit much better in a smaller size. Mr. Istranyi said the planner was better suited to answer those questions. Mr. Argenti asked what the height of the water table was in peak season. Mr. Istranyi said they tested three (3) test pits feet, and the average was ten (10) feet. Lastly, Mr. Argenti noted that the notice he received from the applicant listed the building height at 40.28 feet, not the 39.91 feet that

was stated in testimony. Mr. Regan said it is not an issue if the building is lower than the stated height. It would only be a problem if it were higher than the stated height.

Mr. Neglia suggested the engineer review their water table numbers as it differs from what Neglia Engineer is showing.

Roger Macaluso, 400 17th Street, asked if the walls of the building were taken into consideration when calculating the amount of rain water volume. Mr. Istranyi said they do not use the walls in their calculations as it the same amount of rain over the area. Mr. Macaluso asked what would happen if the retention tank overflowed. Mr. Istranyi said there are small holes in the tank that allow for drainage.

Mike Hunken, 800 Blanch Avenue, asked what date the water table was tested. Mr. Istranyi said it was tested on April 11th which is the correct part of the year to test as that is the month for seasonally high ground water.

Mr. Nobile said it would be helpful to see a diagram of the retention system. Mr. Istranyi there is a diagram in the construction details page of the plans.

Mr. Whitaker requested a five (5) minute break before continuing with the next witness. Ms. Cerbasi is concerned as it is 9:10pm and she feels with public questions it would take them past the 10pm stop time. Mr. Whitaker wished to continue.

Mr. Rapaort made a motion to carry the meeting to September 23rd. Mr. Deptuch seconded the motion and the Board unanimously agreed.

Mr. Regan stated that this application will be carried to September, 23rd, at 7pm. The applicant does not have to send out any notices.

The October meeting date has been moved to October 17, 2024. The Board unanimously agreed

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