

December 6, 2022

The meeting of the Wantage Township Land Use Board was held on Tuesday, December 6, 2022. The meeting was held in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public meetings act, P.L. 1975, Chapter 231. It was properly noticed and posted to the public.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Ms. Gill invited all persons present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Larry Bono, Bill DeBoer, Justin Dudzinski, Joanne Kanapinski, Joe Konopinski, Victoria Gill, Michael Walther, George Unverzagt, Joseph Greenaway, Chris Darmstatter. Absent: Ron Bassani, Jon Morris. Also present; David Brady, Attorney, Harold Pellow, Engineer, and Jeanne McBride, Secretary.

MINUTES

Mr. Konopinski made the motion, seconded by Mr. DeBoer to approve the minutes from the November 1, 2022 meeting, YES: Carried, NAYS: None.

APPLICATION

L-2022-05

Wantage Plaza Shopping Center / Mainland Sussex

205 Route 23

Block 7 Lots 2, 13.02 and 12

Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan and amendments to an approved site plan

Edward Minardi is the attorney for Mainland Sussex, from the law firm of Minardi & Minardi Law Offices.

The applicant is seeking indoor storage, that is climate controlled, for the Wantage Plaza building, very little changes will be made to the exterior of the building

Mr William Minardi was of Sherbrooke Dr., Lincoln Park was sworn in. Mr. Minardi is the property manager for 205 Route 23. Mr. Minardi gave a brief description of the property and the building's former tenants. He discussed the building subdivision and the vacancies that exist. Mr. Minardi described the problematic septic system, and the cost of the removal of the waste. The system cannot support another restaurant. There are other waste removal options, but truck removal is the most cost effective.

Mr. William Minardi described the self-storage concept. He explained they needed a use with very little water consumption. The proposed facility would be 70,000 feet. The units would be 5' x 10' or 20' x 20'.

On the north side of the building the applicant proposes, cars, trucks, and boat storage in a locked, gated area. The area once was a car storage for Franklin Sussex Auto Mall's overflow.

The self-storage facility would be indoor, climate controlled.

The outside would stay exactly the way it is with the exception of three entrances in the front. The building height and canopy would remain the same. Bollards would be installed in front of the electric doors.

The patrons of the facility would have codes to get in. Generally, it would be staffed from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM. A sales staff will be available within the building. There will be surveillance inside and outside, including the vehicle storage area.

No changes are planned for the former bank building.

Exhibit A101 which showed the old sign and the proposal for the placement of the new sign. Mr. Minardi discussed the maintenance and improvements to the pylon sign.

Mr. Brady swore in Peter Steck of Maplewood Ave, Maplewood NJ. Mr. Steck was accepted as an expert planning witness.

Exhibit A102 a report prepared by Mr. Steck on December 5, 2022. The report shows the existing pylon sign, and over 500 parking spaces. Retail space has become a difficult marketing space. The septic system has made this space very challenging. Mr. Steck discussed the surrounding zoning and the struggles of the building.

The portion of the building planned for self-storage is 70,000 square feet. The applicant will keep the front of the building the same. The outdoor vehicles will all be licensed vehicles. Instead of one sign for the long building they would like a pattern of signs. Facing the building, the right side will remain a traditional strip mall. The building is in the Highway Commercial zone, self-storage units are not permitted in any zone in Wantage. Many of the self-storage customers are merchants or residents. There is low traffic and parking demands. The lease regulates what can be stored in the facility. The outdoor area will be secured by fencing and screened by landscaping. Instead of signs for multiple tenants there will be multiple signs for one tenant. The signs will be fewer in number and square footage than the existing signs.

Meeting the negative criteria; no changes to the height or the free-standing sign are planned. It would be beneficial to the area, by drawing people to the existing businesses.

After some discussion, the board agreed no servicing of vehicles in the outdoor storage area. The area is for storage of registered vehicles only.

The windows will be opaque or frosted, something that looks like windows. Not black.

Mr. Bono, asked if weeds will grow out of the little used parking area, Mr. Speck explained this will put the building on sound footing. The parking area will be maintained. Mr. Minardi explained they wish to put the parking lot on a good maintenance plan. Over several years they will pave the whole lot. Both agreed they are not proud of the property right now.

Mr. Brady swore in the Engineer Joseph Miannecki of Midvale Ave, Towaco NJ, he was accepted as an expert. Mr. Miannecki described the property and the proposed building changes. Tractor trailers may be problematic in the rear. Mr. Bono explained fire trucks need to be able to access the rear of the building. The board discussed the delivery trucks for the existing stores and their access. The parking lot will get all new LED lighting.

Mr. Pellow discussed his report and the fence bottom rail. Mr. Pellow stated a rail makes the fence stronger than a tension wire. Mr. Miannecki stated he prefers a bottom wire for snowplow purposes. The applicant requested latex paint striping, Mr. Pellow requested thermoplastic paint on only the new pavement, not the existing, as they pave, they stripe with thermoplastic. Mr. Pellow stated there should be a schedule on when it is going to get done. Mr. William Minardi stated he would rather take the money and put it into the roof, he disagrees with thermal striping. The fence will be six (6) foot high, chain link with lattice.

Discussion regarding the Knox box and the placement, to which Mr. William Minardi agreed to wherever the Fire Department wants to place the box.

The rear of the building will be paved. Discussion regarding striping and building maintenance resumed. Ms. Gill asked about the tenants that will be displaced, The Minardi's explained they will do what they can, with the space that is available.

Ms. Gill opened the discussion to the Board regarding the striping of the parking lot. Mr. Minardi explained the cost would be approximately \$12,000.00 more. Discussion continued. The new pavement and striping will be directly in front of the building. The Board agreed to latex striping.

Discussion regarding the vehicle storage area, the number of vehicles and striping over the cracked parking lot. The vehicles must stay within the stripes and not block the path. All vehicles must be registered. The Board agreed to the plan submitted.

The applicant would like to leave the signage resolution from 2003 in place, in the event the building reverts back to a strip mall.

Ms. Gill asked for a motion.

Mr. DeBoer made the motion, seconded by Mr. Walther to approve the storage facility with the conditions agreed upon by the Board. Aye: Bono, DeBoer, Kanapinski, Konopinski, Walther, Dudzinski, Gill. Nays: None. Abstain: None.

There being no public, Ms. Gill asked for a motion to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DeBoer made the motion seconded by Mr. Bono to adjourn. Ayes Carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne M McBride, Secretary