

**PENNINGTON BOROUGH
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
May 8, 2019**

Mr. Reilly called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. and announced compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act.

Roll Call: Nicholas Angarone, Vice Chairman, Mark Blackwell, Deborah Gnatt, Eileen Heinzl, Mayor's Designee, Cara Laitusis, Alt. 1, William B. Meytrott, Anthony Persichilli, Alt. 2, Douglas Schotland, Winn Thompson, James Reilly, Chairman. Absent: Katherine L. O'Neill

Also Present: Edwin W. Schmierer, Mason, Griffin & Pierson, Planning Board Attorney; John Flemming, Zoning Officer; James Kyle, KMA Associates, Planner; Mary W. Mistretta, Secretary. Absent: Brian Perry, Van Note-Harvey Associates, Planning Board Engineer.

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC ADDRESS

Mayor Lawver wanted to show his appreciation and thanked Mr. Thompson for the many years he has served on the Planning Board.

CONCEPTUAL APPLICATION

Blackwell Memorial Home, Elizabeth B. Davis, 21 & 27 N. Main Street, Block 301, Lots 6 & 7, Town Center & O-R Zones, Application No. P19-001.

Robert N. Ridolfi, attorney representing the applicant, introduced Elizabeth Davis owner of Blackwell Memorial Home and Frank Falcone, Princeton Junction Engineering, P.C. Mr. Falcone stated that he has previously appeared before the Board and gave his qualifications which the Board accepted. Mr. Ridolfi explained the application and referred to the Conceptual Site & Minor Subdivision Plan, Princeton Junction Engineering, P.C., dated April 11, 2019. The applicant would like to enlarge Lot 6 which contains the funeral home and the residence of Ms. Davis by subdividing Lot 7. Ms. Davis is also the owner of Lot 7 which has a single family residence and is currently occupied by her daughter. Mr. Ridolfi explained that the funeral business has changed a lot and Ms. Davis would like to convert the existing home on Lot 6 to a catering/gathering facility to be used only by the funeral home clients. It was noted that funeral homes have started doing this and it would not be the first in the State. The driveway would be extended from the present driveway and proceed around the house and keep the existing exit. The proposed driveway will incorporate additional parking spaces and a total of 24 spaces would be available for memorial home clients and visitors.

Mr. Falcone stated that Lot 6 which is in the Town Center Zone is 35,795 sq. ft. and an additional 10,000 +- sq. ft. is proposed to be added from Lot 7 which is in O-R Zone. They have tried to provide more parking spaces in the plan which would be a benefit since most visitors have to park in the street and the Borough parking lot. There is usually less than one service per week and there are two full time employees at the funeral home. Mr. Reilly asked if the exterior of the house would be changed and Ms. Davis responded that the exterior would remain the same. The existing office on the second floor would remain and the gathering area would be located on the first floor. Mr. Meytrott commented that there is a parking issue and the additional parking would be a benefit. Mr. Thompson agreed stating that the parking was a good element of the plan.

There was discussion that funeral homes were not listed as a conforming use in the Town Center Zone and a use variance would be needed. Ms. Davis indicated that the funeral home has been located there and in her family since 1881. Mr. Flemming suggested that the applicant could ask the Board to determine if it would fit in with the category “other personal services.” Mr. Schmierer suggested that since it is not listed as a permitted use, the applicant should apply for a use variance for their own protection. Ms. Davis stated that a catering service would be used and cooking would not be done on the premises. Ms. Davis explained that the State Board does not allow any type of food or beverage served in the funeral home. She stated that not every client would use the service, but she would like to have it available. Ms. Davis stated that her calling hours are no later than 9:00 p.m. and usually are over by 8:00 or 8:30 p.m. Mr. Meytrott stated that he did not see any issue with the driveway and the area in the middle would help keep a little green space.

Ms. McManus, Borough Planner, suggested that lighting should be buffered and asked how people would go from the memorial home to the gathering area. Mr. Falcone stated that he would include a walkway. Mr. Flemming asked about architect plans and Mr. Falcone stated that there would not be any changes to the exterior. Mr. Reilly stated that the idea sounds like a good idea for business and the applicant should address the nonconforming use. Mr. Flemming suggested that the applicant could split the proposed house with the gathering area from the funeral home if they were concerned about a use variance. Mr. Schmierer stated that the gathering area would be considered an accessory use to the funeral home.

Mr. Reilly asked if there was anyone in the public who had comments or questions. Mr. Dan Pace, 9 Railroad Place, stated that he thought this was a good idea and would be very convenient for families travelling a long distance. Mr. Persichilli agreed and felt that the additional parking was a great idea. The applicant was asked if other businesses could make arrangements to use the parking area and Ms. Davis did not feel that this would be possible because of their liability insurance. The hearing ended at 8:25 p.m.

ZONING OFFICER

Mr. Flemming stated that he felt that the Exxon Station had taken care of the problem regarding the chasing lights. They have agreed to keep them stationery and one color.

Mr. Flemming stated that he has had inquiries about a potential bakery in town and will keep the Board updated. He stated that he has had questions from neighbors about the height of a new home being constructed on Laning Avenue. Mr. Flemming stated that he has received a letter from the owner's engineer and it seems that grading is the issue and he would like the Board Engineer to review the letter. Mr. Flemming stated that our definition of roof height should be reviewed and felt that our new planner should be asked to do a review of our definitions to see if they needed tweaking.

Mr. Blackwell stated that landscaping had been removed from the Exxon Station and asked if they were allowed to do this without replacing it. Mr. Flemming responded that it depended on whether it was required by a previous resolution.

NEW BUSINESS

The Board voted unanimously on a resolution in recognition of Winn Thompson's 31 years as a community leader in planning and zoning for the Borough of Pennington. Mr. Thompson started serving on the Zoning Board of Adjustment in 1988 and was appointed Chairman in 1996 and served in that position until the Zoning and Planning Boards were merged in 2000. He then served on the merged boards as Chairman until the end of 2017. Mr. Thompson also served as the Director and other offices of the New Jersey Planning Officials. The Board expressed their

appreciation of all the time and professional guidance he has given through the years and wished him well. A copy of the resolution will be retained with these minutes.

OTHER BUSINESS

Sustainable Jersey – Mr. Angarone explained the Sustainable New Jersey program and stated that the Borough received Bronze certification in 2016 which runs through 2019. The Environmental Commission and Green Team are now in the process of discussing what actions the Borough can take to renew the Borough's certification. Mr. Angarone handed out examples of guidance material for Sustainable Jersey Actions that may be appropriate for the Board to undertake, including *Make Your Town Solar Friendly*, *Wind Ordinance*, *Build-out Analysis*, and *Improve Public Engagement in Planning and Zoning*. Mr. Angarone noted that the *Build-Out Analysis* action could be informed by the proposed vacant land analysis. Additional actions discussed included: providing charging stations, working on brownfields - landfill, buildout concept. Mr. Angarone asked the Board if they had any suggestions. Ms. Laitusis suggested online information and newspapers and Ms. Heinzl suggested looking at opportunities regarding wind energy. Mr. Thompson suggested more bikeways to areas such as to the old Merrill Lynch campus to commute to work as more people are also using electric scooters as well as bikes. Ms. Heinzl stated that she has a meeting setup with Joann Held to run through ideas. Mr. Angarone stated that a link describing the program will be forwarded to the Board. Mr. Pace, a member of the public, suggested video streaming the public meetings. There will be further discussions regarding this.

Ms. Heinzl stated that Ms. Sterling asked her to remind members to be sure that they have filed their Financial Disclosure forms.

Ms. Heinzl reported that Council discussed Mr. Kyle's proposal to prepare a fair share housing plan. Council agreed to continue the discussion at the next Council meeting and ask Mr. Schmierer, Board Attorney, if he would join them.

MINUTES – Mr. Thompson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Heinzl to approve the minutes of the April 10, 2019 Planning Board meeting and the minutes were approved.

Mr. Thompson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. and Ms. Heinzl seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary W. Mistretta
Planning Board Secretary