

WESTAMPTON TOWNSHIP LAND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

REGULAR MEETING

OCTOBER 7, 2009 7:30 P.M.

MINUTES

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Westampton Township Land Development Board was held at the Municipal Building on Rancocas Road on October 7, 2009 at 7:30 P.M. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tim Ryan and the opening statement required by Sunshine Law was read. This meeting was advertised in the Burlington County Times on January 6, 2009 and posted in the Municipal Building. All guests were welcomed.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. All guests were welcomed.

Roll Call: Present: Mr. Applegate, Ms. Bergen, Mr. Blair, Mayor Camp, Mr. Carugno, Ms. Sampson, Mr. Welsh, Chairman Ryan, Mr. DiOrio, Mr. Bell, Solicitor Fred Hardt, Engineer Greg Valesi, Planner Harry McVey, Secretary Marion Karp
Absent: Mr. Maybury, Mr. DiOrio

The minutes of the September 2, 2009 meeting were approved as written.

Resolutions:

17-2009 Salt & Light Company, Inc., Block 1501, Lot 5 (593 Fort Drive) – variance (two family duplex for emergency shelter for the homeless) – continuance – was memorialized

18-2009 Edgewood Partners, LLC, Block 906.07, Lot 8 – signage for Hilton Garden Inn & Recovery Room Sports Bar & Restaurant – continuance – was memorialized

Old Business:

Edgewood Partners, LLC, Block 906.07, Lot 8. John Grossman, applicant's attorney and Jim Curran, the applicant's engineer were present. Mr. Grossman began with discussing the neon lighting proposed for the exterior of the Recovery Sports Bar and Grill. It was decided that approval for this lighting would have to be given administratively since they were not prepared to show the Board anything that was different than what was proposed before. They will submit architectural drawings to Gene Blair for his approval. The Board agrees to this process. This evening's discussion would pertain only to the on site signage for the project.

Two free standing signs are proposed; the first is 25 feet in height and is a monument sign located at the southwest corner of the site. The other is a five foot six inch high directional sign. Three façade signs on the restaurant are proposed as well as two façade signs for the hotel.

The monument sign has a base two feet in height. They showed two perspectives of what the sign would look like from Rt. 541. A height and area variance is necessary for the sign panels. This size is necessary so as to be visible according to Mr. Curran. The panels will be internally lit. Only the logo for the Recovery Bar/Grill will be lit.

Harry McVey, the Board Planner thinks that the height of the sign is appropriate but thinks that the location may not be the best. He thinks it is set back too far on the site and should be located closer to Route 541. Gene Blair thinks this is a pylon sign and not a monument sign; Harry concurs, this is why a variance is necessary. Gene doesn't see a need for this height based on the ground conditions. Harry thinks the sign is oversized; each panel is about 100 square feet. He suggests that a third panel for another hotel be approved at this time.

There is no one here to discuss the design of the sign since Craig Lynch is not present, nor is any other principal. There are no witnesses qualified to do this, according to Fred Hardt.

The Board asked if the Welcome to Westampton Township letters which are on the top of the pylon sign be increased from seven inches to twelve inches; as well as reducing the height of the sign so that it would be agreeable to the Board. The attorney stated that he could not give permission for this kind of a change. The Board wanted to know if the Westampton portion would be lit; according to the detail, it is not. Each of the three panels would be five feet in height. The total height of the sign would be approximately 20 feet. Harry McVey would like to see the sign moved closer to Route 541. The Board decided that it would consider this particular sign at the next meeting.

The directional sign is ten feet wide. Harry would prefer to see made a bit smaller but is okay with this size. This could be lit with a white background since it is a much smaller sign, according to Harry.

The restaurant façade signs consist of the logo for the restaurant on the north elevation, 24 square feet in size. The west elevation and south elevation will have a larger façade sign, 37 square feet in size. Harry thinks they serve a purpose and quickly identify the restaurant without over whelming it. He actually thinks the sign facing the intersection be increased to 50 square feet in order that drivers see it easier. Other than that, he is satisfied with the façade signage proposed for the restaurant.

Façade signage for the hotel will be 89 square feet in size on the west elevation, and 129 square feet on the west end of the south side. The sign that faces Route 541 is appropriately sized according to Harry and is necessary. He does not like the sign on the rear of the hotel (129 square feet); he doesn't feel that this sign is necessary and is inappropriate for this location at this point. Mr. Curran explained that the building from the south is indistinguishable and resembles an apartment building and that this sign would help identify the hotel.

Mayor Camp made a motion to continue the application until the next meeting. Ms. Sampson seconded the motion.

Greg Valesi, Board Engineer stated that the applicant's engineer is not prepared to respond to questions from the planner; there is no one representing the hotel at the hearing to testify. They need someone who has knowledge regarding the justification for the signs. There must be someone that is prepared to justify why the relief is necessary.

All Board members voted yes; the application would be continued until November 4, 2009.

Salt & Light Company, Inc., Block 1501, Lot 5. Pat McAndrew, attorney was present. Bob Hall, professional planner and Kent Pipes were sworn in by Fred Hardt. It shall be noted that Mayor Camp could not vote on this application since it is for a use variance. This identical application had been brought before the Board at an earlier time but was subsequently withdrawn due to overwhelming negative reactions from owners of neighboring properties.

The property in question is located on 593 Fort Drive in the Holly Hills subdivision. Kent Pipes gave a brief overview of the Salt & Light Company and how it works. The house is a raised ranch; he is proposing to convert the home into a two family dwelling. The top unit will have 3 bedrooms, a bathroom, kitchen and a living area. The bottom floor will contain 2 bedrooms, a kitchen, full bath and a living room/dining room area. The top floor of the home is currently occupied and has been running without incident according to Mr. Pipes. This is a Class 3 facility and is a 24 hour living situation; families may live here for as long as 24 months. This home's first occupants were a displaced Westampton family.

The first step is the screening and placement process. There is a staff of seven full time social workers; one would visit the property once a week. There is a full time maintenance crew to shovel snow, cut grass and do general maintenance. These properties will look like any other house in the neighborhood according to Mr. Pipes. The only exterior change is to the garage door, which now contains a window since it's conversion to a bedroom. The house has an expanded driveway already; it can accommodate four cars. Less than one tenth of the clients own and operate automobiles. They feel that four parking spaces are more than adequate.

A variance is necessary to provide separate lockable living space. Each unit will count towards our COAH share and will be deed restricted. The property is tax exempt. Second floor is all egress windows; a fire wall is not required according to Gene Blair.

Since the structure has been occupied, there have been no complaints, according to Gene Blair. Mr. Pipes explained that he held a few open houses for the neighbors. They have replaced the old asbestos shingles, put in new windows and painted the home. It is impossible to pick out from amongst the other homes on the block.

They are exempted from landlord-tenant law as Mr. Pipes explained. This increases their ability to control what is going on in the property.

Ms. Sampson asked what kind of back ground checks they perform.

Bob Hall, applicant's planner, stated that there will be no negative impacts from the grant of this variance. There will be no exterior changes to the outside of the building. He showed the Board a diagram of homes in the neighborhood that have converted their garages as they have done in this unit; there are approximately 14 in the immediate area. There is no expansion of the building planned. He thinks is it consistent with the goals of the Township's Master Plan.

At this point, the meeting was opened to the public for comment. Janet Curran asked if there was another way out of the home beside the front door. There is a sliding glass door that exits onto a rear deck; however, the deck does not have stairs leading down to the first level. They have tried to limit exit and entrance doors to the front of the home. There being no further comment from the public, the meeting was closed.

This supports an inherently beneficial use, as supported by the courts, according to Fred Hardt.

Mr. Applegate made a motion to approve the use variance; the motion was seconded by Mr. Blair. All Board members voted yes.

New Business

Wawa, Inc., Block 203, Lots 4 & 5. Tim Prime, attorney was present on behalf of the application. Scott Smith, planner and surveyor, was sworn in before the Board by Fred Hardt.

The site is located at the corner of Springside and Woodlane Roads. Mr. Prime gave a brief history of the site. Wawa had purchased surrounding land and added it to the existing lot which contained the Wawa store, making the lot in total approximately 4 acres in size. The store was analyzed recently and the company has decided not to build the additional parking lot which was approved years ago. The company has decided to subdivide the land once again. Lot 5 will be 1.12 acres and the remainder lot is about 2.89 acres, no construction or use is proposed at this time. Wawa will sell the lot in accordance with the existing zoning.

The applicant agrees with all conditions in the Board engineer's and planner's report. The subdivision will be filed by deed. They will submit the application to the Burlington County Planning Board for approval. There are no variances associated with this subdivision. Sidewalk and trees will be installed along the existing lot along Springside and Woodlane Roads; they do not want to install this on the remainder lot since it is undeveloped at this time. The Board could impose these requirements when the lot

comes before the Board for development at a later date.

Harry McVey agrees to allow the applicant to waive installation of the sidewalk and trees on the remainder lot since it is to remain undeveloped at this time. The sidewalk will consist of an eight foot wide bike path, to match what is already installed along Springside Road.

Mayor Camp asked if the for sale sign was for the remainder lot; Mr. Prime answered that it was.

The meeting was opened to the public for comment. Janet Curran asked why the parking lot wasn't being expanded. Mr. Prime answered that the company has evaluated the store and the emphasis is on the stores which dispense gas; they aren't doing any improvements to the original or "legacy" stores.

Mr. Blair made a motion to approve the subdivision; the motion was seconded by Mr. Welsh. All Board members voted yes.

Discussion of Kashi Homes project. Harry McVey asked that the Board clarify a few items in the resolution. There is an existing shed on the site which would require a variance; the Board is in favor of granting the variance to allow it to remain. Secondly, the trash enclosure has not been included on the site plans although Harry remembers the Board requiring that they provide one. Mr. Kashi explained that their cleaning crews would take the trash with them when they come to clean weekly; there is no need for a dumpster. The Board is in favor of granting a waiver to allow for this; the resolution would be modified to reflect this.

The meeting was opened to the public for comment. There was no comment and the meeting was closed.

Comments from Board members & professionals:

Greg Valesi – wanted to advise the Board regarding the Lancaster Drive road improvement project. It would begin soon. The project was fully funded through a DOT trust fund grant.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Karp, Secretary
Westampton Township Land Development Board

