

**BOROUGH OF WOODCLIFF LAKE
PLANNING BOARD
MAY 11, 2020
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. at Borough Hall by Chairman Friedberg.

ADEQUATE NOTICE STATEMENT:

The -Chairman announced that the Meeting was in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Law, P.L. 1975, Chapter 231. Notice of this meeting was posted in two newspapers, The Record and The Ridgewood News. The public was advised of the Planning Board's rule that the meetings will be concluded by 11:00 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL:

Corrado Belgiovine	Arrived at 8:10
Jane Ann Whitchurch-Carluccio	Present
Nilufer DeScherer	Present
Cheryl Dispoto	Present
Stephen Falanga, Councilman	Absent
Robert Friedberg	Present
Josephine Higgins	Present
Jennifer Howard	Present
Brian LaRose	Present
Thomas Panso	Present
Carlos Rendo, Mayor	Present
Ian Spelling, Councilman	Present
Brian Eyerman, Attorney	Present
Evan Jacobs, Engineer	Present
Brian Intindola, Traffic Engineer	Present
Richard Preiss, Planner	Present
Meg Smith, Secretary	Present

RESOLUTION OF APPROVAL

**Estate of Paul and Linda Sacchieri / Maryann DeGeorge Executrix Block: 2005.01 Lot: 13
107 Woodcliff Avenue R 22.5 Zone**

A motion was made by Mr. Panso and seconded by Ms. Higgins to approve the Resolution granting variances for residential subdivision consisting of four (4) single family homes and Major Soil Moving Permit approval.

On a roll call vote the motion was approved by Ms. Higgins, Councilman Spelling, Ms. Whitchurch-Carluccio, Ms. DeScherer, Mr. Panso and Chairman Friedberg. Mayor Rendo, Mr. Belgiovine, Ms. Dispoto, Ms. Howard and Mr. LaRose abstained from the vote due to absence one or more of the application meeting(s).

APPLICATION (New)

Brighton Norse Realty, LLC
520 Chestnut Ridge Road

Block: 202 Lot: 4
B-3 Zone

Request for amended Preliminary and Final Site Plan Approval

Mr. Eyerman stated that this was the first virtual meeting for the Planning Board and stated that there are challenges and limitations with an application presented at a virtual meeting.

Ms. Knarich, attorney for the applicant, recognized Mr. Eyerman's concern but stated that the applicant understood the concern and would like to continue with the application at tonight's virtual meeting.

Ms. Knarich asked to confirm proof of notice and publication was submitted and approved for the record. Ms. Smith stated that proper proof of notice and publication was submitted for this application.

Chairman Friedberg recused himself from this application with a conflict.

Ms. Knarich stated that this property is in the B-3 Zone and is a multi-tenant shopping center with 1 larger tenant space and 5 smaller tenant spaces. This application proposes dividing the current larger vacant tenant space, previously known as the Acme Supermarket, into two smaller tenant spaces. This application also proposes construction of an additional loading zone for the new tenant space and additional parking spaces.

Mr. Moche, Partner of Norse Realty Group, which owns 500 – 520 Chestnut Ridge Road was sworn in and provided background of the property. This property originally held the flagship store for A&P supermarket. Acme took over for the A&P as the anchor tenant store. Acme / A&P was responsible for leasing the sub-tenant spaces and for property maintenance.

Mr. Moche stated that this application proposes redevelopment of this property with Whole Foods as the anchor store. Mr. Moche stated that the stability of the supermarket business and the strength of the Whole Foods owner, Amazon, makes this an attractive tenant.

Mr. Moche stated that Whole Foods store hours are 8am to 10pm. Deliveries are made 7 days a week usually via 26 foot trucks but sometimes with tractor trailers. Trash pickup is likely 2 to 3 times a week with some trash compacted on site. Whole Foods is expected to have 170 to 200 total employees with 3 shifts a day and 50 to 70 employees per shift.

Mr. Moche stated that the current Acme lease expires the first quarter of 2021. The landlord,

Brighton Norse Realty, would maintain the property during the redevelopment period and Whole Foods would then need to do interior renovation to customize the space.

Mayor Rendo stated that this application proposes the Whole Foods space to be approximately 45,000 square feet with the balance of 15,000 square feet to be a new tenant. Mayor Rendo questioned if Mr. Moche had any idea who this new tenant would be.

Mr. Moche stated that there is no signed lease for this tenant space at this time and stated that each tenant is evaluated as they present themselves.

Ms. Knarich asked Mr. Moche if he anticipated this tenant to be a permitted use.

Mr. Moche confirmed that he expected the new tenant to be a permitted use.

Mr. Belgiovine stated that this should not be a medical use.

Mr. Moche confirmed that it would be retail and not medical.

Ms. Higgins confirmed that Acme lease was until 1st quarter 2021 and asked who would take care of the macadam.

Mr. Moche stated that once the Acme lease is over Brighton Norse would be responsible for the property. Mr. Moche explained that the redevelopment proposed includes replacing fixture heads on the lights and re-paving and re-striping.

Vice Chairwoman Whitchurch-Carluccio questioned when the construction will commence.

Mr. Moche stated that the construction will begin when the tenant vacates.

Mr. Preiss questioned whether Acme is being utilized for storage or any other use at this time.

Mr. Moche stated that the Acme space is not being used for storage and only houses leftover fixtures.

Mr. LaRose questioned whether any of the existing tenants would remain.

Mr. Moche stated that the leasing agent was reviewing tenants and he believes that some tenants are staying.

Mayor Rendo questioned if there was any opportunity to begin construction prior to 1st quarter of 2021 with the lease expiration.

Mr. Moche stated that there was still a lot of work to do prior to construction.

Mr. Belgiovine stated that Mr. Preiss review letter outlined several maintenance issues and asked if these concerns would be addressed as part of the renovation.

Ms. Knarich stated that these concerns will be addressed and will be discussed by the architect and the engineer.

Mr. Moche stated that Brighton Norse takes pride in the management of their properties and will address concerns.

Mr. Tuller, architect for the applicant, was sworn in and reviewed existing conditions of Acme tenant space. Mr. Tuller stated that Acme currently utilized 60,000 square feet with 2,000 square feet in the mezzanine level. Mr. Tuller explained that Whole Foods will occupy approximately 45,000 square feet and is keeping the 2,000 square feet in the mezzanine level. The new retail space will occupy approximately 15,000 square feet.

Mr. Tuller stated that proposed renovations to the existing dock at the southeast corner will include new exit door and exit stairs. Also proposed is a compacter and composter, new vendor ramp and a new loading bay for new sub-tenant.

Mr. Tuller explained façade renovations to include cultured stone, pillars with stone element and a tower on the south side of the building. New canopies will project approximately 10 feet from the building. A tower will be kept on the south side to echo original design and to balance with tower on the north which functions as Whole Foods secondary entrance.

Ms. Knarich asked if renovations will comply with height restrictions and it was confirmed that the new height is below the 36 foot height restriction.

Mr. Tuller stated that the new façade will end on the side of the tower. No changes will be made to the rear façade of the building. Color scheme of new façade materials will be an earth grey tone compatible with existing red brick. Remaining existing façade will be cleaned and repaired to look like new.

Mr. Preiss expressed concern that new materials will be visible from the parking lot and was not sure that new and existing facades will match – brick vs. stone. Mr. Preiss stated that it would be nicer if the rear and sides of the building were more compatible.

Mr. Eyerman suggested paint as an option to make the façade more compatible.

Mr. Tuller stated that he believed the existing clapboard with new grey/ earth tone stones would be compatible.

Mr. Belgiovine questioned whether the existing clapboard could be cleaned up.

Mr. Tuller stated that the intent was to clean up the clapboard and make it presentable and stains on the existing façade will also be cleaned.

Mr. Eyerman questioned if there would be any new lighting on the building.

Mr. Tuller stated that there would only be soffit lighting.

Mr. Tuller discussed equipment currently on the roof and stated that some equipment will be kept and some will be replaced. Mr. Tuller stated that some of this equipment is currently visible from the street and changes to equipment will not increase what can be seen.

Mr. Preiss stated that raising the screening around the equipment will better buffer equipment that is visible. Mr. Preiss stated that he was mostly concerned about buffering the view to Chestnut Ridge Road and that this buffering can be added as a condition of approval.

Mr. Preiss requested drawings for compliance of roof top equipment and screening.

Ms. Knarich stated that the applicant agrees to provide these roof top drawings with screening.

Mr. Tuller stated in response to Engineering letter that they do not yet have the information requested for the new front and rear doors.

Mr. Preiss questioned proposed signage.

Mr. Tuller stated that signage was not part of this application.

Mr. Preiss stated that a sign plan should be submitted and approved before construction.

Ms. Knarich stated that she does not have signage information from Whole Foods yet but will submit before construction.

Ms. DeScherer stated that the applicant will have to return to the Planning Board for signage approval.

Mr. Eyerman stated that a new application would need to be submitted for signage.

Ms. Knarich agreed that the applicant would return to the Planning Board with an application for signage.

Ms. Dispoto questioned if the Board can be given paint color to mask the red brick.

Mr. Tuller stated that paint poses a maintenance issue.

The phone number for the Council meeting room was provided to the public to call in with any questions of the applicant or applicant professionals. No phone calls were received.

Mr. Streker, Engineer for the applicant, was sworn in and provided his background information.

Mr. Streker explained that this property has 2 access points. Current renovation plan proposes an updated façade and dividing current Acme space into 2 retail spaces. Mr. Streker stated that there are currently 5 other tenant spaces.

Mr. Streker stated that renovation would also include maintaining existing driveways and

reconfiguring and opening circulation areas. This reconfiguration would increase 395 existing parking spaces by 11 additional spaces for a total of 406 parking spaces. This would increase existing coverage from 82.7% to 83.4% where 60% is allowed.

Mr. Streker stated that plantings will be replaced and mulch added to enhance the north entrance.

Mr. Streker stated that the pole mounted lights will be replaced with LED fixtures. These lights will be shielded at the perimeter of the property.

Mr. Skeker discussed truck circulation and stated that trucks will enter the north driveway and circle around to the back loading docks. To exit the trucks will pull out and exit the shared driveway.

Mr. Streker stated that the damaged bollard at the corner of the loading dock will be repaired or replaced. The guide rail also needs to be repaired and the applicant has agreed to this.

Mr. Streker stated that the increase in impervious coverage was due to the new vendor ramp in the rear loading area and the north driveway parking reconfiguration. He stated that existing stormwater management is located under the parking area.

Mr. Streker stated that they had received a no interest letter from the county.

Mr. Streker addressed Engineering comments stating that permission from Bergen County Soil was not needed because the disturbance would not exceed 5 thousand feet. Mr. Streker stated that no NJDEP approval was needed.

Mr. Streker addressed the Fire Department review letter and stated that detailed drawings for fire department connections near the front entry doors will be provided when available.

Ms. Knarich confirmed with Mr. Streker that there would be no change in utilities.

Ms. Knarich asked Mr. Streker to address any additional concerns in the Engineering and Planners review letters.

Mr. Streker stated that applicant may need to shift an ADA parking stall due to the shift in the entry.

Mr. Belgiovine questioned if electric charging stations are being considered.

Mr. Streker stated that he had no request for electric charging stations.

Mr. Jacobs, Board Engineer, stated that there will need to be an application for Soil Movement and since impervious coverage was more than 400 square feet that stormwater management will need to be reviewed.

Mr. Jacobs requested additional information on lighting to determine that lighting proposed will be enough for the area needed.

Mr. Preiss questioned the landscaping plan. He stated that during his on-site visit that the landscaping along the property lines and at the parking end aisles was in poor condition. He stated that planting beds need to be replaced. Mr. Preiss stated that a condition of approval should require an upgraded landscape plan.

Mr. Preiss stated that additional shade trees can be added in the landscape island near the north entrance. He stated that the bollard in the rear loading area needed to be replaced and several other bollards need to be repaired. The parking areas need to be re-surfaced and re-stripped.

Ms. Knarich stated that the applicant will agree to upgrade and provide additional landscaping.

Mr. Preiss asked for the detail of light fixtures to be used and was directed to Exhibit A-5 for a picture of the lighting fixture.

Mr. Panso asked if the applicant was re-surfacing the whole parking lot.

Mr. Moche stated that spot repairs and crack repairs will be done and the whole lot will be seal coated.

Mr. Preiss stated that there are areas where water is ponding.

Mr. Streker had not seen ponding when he was on-site.

Mr. Preiss stated that some areas had heavy deterioration. These areas are typically where the trucks travel and these are usually the areas that have ponding.

Mr. Jacobs offered to walk the property with the applicants engineer to evaluate this problem.

Ms. Higgins asked if the applicant will be replacing the cement base of the light fixtures.

Mr. Streker stated that the light fixtures on top of the poles will be replaced and the poles will be painted and fixed as necessary. Mr. Streker stated that there was no plan to remove or replace the cement base.

Ms. Higgins questioned the 3 doors in the loading area and stated that they don't match.

Mr. Streker stated that there would be 3 new doors.

Ms. Higgins questioned where customers would pick up food.

Mr. Moche stated that there was no plan for curbside pickup.

Councilman Spelling stated that this should be a major consideration with the current situation.

Ms. Knarich agreed that moving forward that the applicant needed to plan for curbside pickup or drive thru area but she currently has no details for this.

Mr. Belgiovine questioned if Whole Foods has approved this plan.

Mr. Moche confirmed that Whole Foods has seen this plan.

Mr. Eyerman stated that if Whole Foods does not occupy the space then the applicant would need to submit a new application to the Planning Board.

Mayor Rendo stated a concern with no signed lease provided and no one representing Whole Foods present at the meeting. Mayor Rendo is concerned with a switch in tenants after approval has been given.

Mr. Eyerman stated that if approved this application would be subject to Whole Foods tenancy.

Ms. Knarich stated that the specs for building design are different for each supermarket and that this plan was developed and designed specifically for Whole Foods.

Ms. Dispoto stated that she preferred it be a condition of approval that Whole Foods is the tenant.

Mr. Preiss stated that this application was designed for Whole Foods and it is likely since there is no plan for interior layout or signage that they will need to return to the board with an amended application with revised site plan.

Mr. Preiss stated that Whole Foods will not be open for about 1 ½ years. Mr. Preiss also stated that if pickup is needed that he believed parking to the rear and side of the building could be used.

Mr. Preiss questioned the end if the parking aisles and asked if it was for cart corrals.

Mr. Streker stated that it was for cart corrals.

Mr. Preiss stated that fencing in these areas need to be replaced.

The phone number for the Council meeting room was provided to the public to call in with any questions of the applicant or applicant professionals. No phone calls were received.

Mr. Harter, Traffic Engineer for the applicant, was sworn in and provided background information.

Mr. Harter explained that using a conservative approach and the Ridgewood Whole Foods information and trip generation that he looked at weekday, evening, and Saturday traffic flow. He stated that he also looked at lunchtime because Whole Foods has considerably higher weekday lunch time traffic.

Mr. Harter stated that levels of service deteriorate with additional volume but that there were no "F" levels of service. Mr. Harter stated that there was ample room to accommodate queuing in the lanes. Mr. Harter stated that a request was made to the County to change the timing of the traffic light but that their request was turned down.

Mr. Harter stated that there was sufficient parking on-site for the plan presented.

Mr. Harter did not have any formal recommendations for food pickup but suggested that if pickup was needed that parking for this should be away from the front of the store. Mr. Harter also suggested that possibly cars for pickup could follow the truck route around the building and allow pickup at the southeast side of the building.

Ms. Knarich confirmed with Mr. Harter that there was adequate parking for this use and that the site can operate from a traffic stand point.

Mr. Preiss stated that parking spaces on the side and the rear can be designated for employees and curbside pickup if necessary.

Mr. Moche stated that he believes that these spaces are unofficially designated for employee parking.

Mr. Preiss questioned if these spaces would have signing to designate them. Mr. Preiss also stated a concern with vehicles backing out of spaces with truck traffic. If these spaces were designated and signed for employee parking then there would be less turnover and it would be a safer situation.

Mr. Moche agreed.

Mr. Intindola, Board Traffic Engineer, stated that the applicant used a conservative approach and went out of their way to provide local information. He stated that he was hoping that the County would change the timing of the traffic light.

Mr. Intindola stated that the end of the pavilion as it approaches the crosswalk may not meet ADA standards. Mr. Intindola stated that this area may need re-grading.

Ms. DeScherer asked Mr. Harter for recommendations for curbside pickup.

Mr. Harter stated that he believed that there were 2 main options. One would have customers drive the perimeter to the southeast corner by the loading area. The second would be designated and signed spaces. Mr. Harter stated that this would need to be thought thru and had not been proposed before tonight.

Ms. Higgins stated that the traffic lanes narrow in the back of the building and she is concerned regarding congestion at lunchtime.

Mr. Harter stated that this would need signing and pavement markings.

Ms. Dispoto stated that Whole Foods uses Amazon lockers in store for pickup and may not need to do a curbside pickup plan.

The board voted to extend the Planning Board time restriction by 30 minutes to try to complete the testimony for this application. With the exception of Mr. Panso, all board members voted in favor of the time extension.

The phone number for the Council meeting room was provided to the public to call in with any questions of the applicant or applicant professionals. No phone calls were received.

Ms. Knarich summarized the application.

Mr. Belgiovine stated that replacement of some lighting poles and parts may not give a high-end appearance.

Ms. DeScherer stated that she would like this renovation sooner than later and asked for estimated open date.

Mr. Moche stated that exterior construction will take approximately 26 weeks and then the property could be turned over to Whole Foods. Whole Foods would need several additional months for interior renovation.

Ms. DeScherer questioned timing for signage application.

Mr. Moche stated that they would want signing to be based on other tenant spaces which is not yet available.

Mr. Preiss suggested signage to be similar to signage at Tice's Corner. Mr. Preiss stated that consistency doesn't mean that all signs had to be the same.

Ms. DeScherer asked if there is any chance of an early end to the Acme lease.

Mr. Moche stated that there was still a lot of planning and work to do for this redevelopment. He does not believe that they can accelerate the process but wanted the board to know that they are very motivated to get this done.

Ms. Higgins questioned if the sub-tenants will remain open during construction.

Mr. Moche stated that these are Acme's sub-tenants and he thinks it is unlikely that they will remain open during construction.

A motion to approve the request for amended preliminary and final site plan approval of 520 Chestnut Ridge Road was made Councilman Spelling, seconded by Mr. Belgiovine. On a roll call vote the motion was approved by Mayor Rendo, Ms. Higgins, Councilman Spelling, Mr. Belgiovine, Ms. Whitchurch-Carluccio, Ms. DeScherer, Ms. Dispoto, Mr. Panso, Mr. LaRose and Ms. Howard. Chairman Friedberg had recused himself from this application.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes – March 9, 2020

A motion to approve the minutes of the March meeting was made by Ms. Whitchurch-Carluccio and seconded by Ms. DeScherer. All board members were in favor of the motion with the exception of Mayor Rendo, Ms. Dispoto, Ms. Howard and Mr. LaRose who abstained due to absence at this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion from Mr. Belgiovine, and seconded by Ms. DeScherer, and carried by all.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meg Smith
Board Secretary