

MINUTES

CRESSKILL PLANNING BOARD

AUGUST 14, 2012

Mr. Vaccaro opened the meeting at 7:38 PM and announced the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act had been fulfilled.

Members present at roll call:

Mayor Romeo, Councilwoman Tsigounis, Mr. Vaccaro, Ms. Bauer, Mr. Galdi, Mr. Morgan, and Mrs. Schultz. Also present were Mr. Paul Azzolina, Borough Engineer, and Mr. Steven Schuster, Board Attorney.

Mr. Morgan made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 24, 2012, meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Galdi. All present were in favor of the motion. Motion approved.

Correspondence

Pamphlet from Rutgers Continuing Studies Center for Government Services for the Fall 2012 Planning and Zoning Program. File.

Memo from Ms. Barbara Nasuto to the Planning Board regarding the 74 Prospect Street escrow account. The memo states that they have not started any construction. Letter was given to Mr. Azzolina for him to check on it.

Vouchers from Mr. Steven V. Schuster for services rendered relative to the Cresskill Planning Board for Application #1412, Jacob Vivat, in the amount of \$1,076.40. Mrs. Schultz made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Morgan. All present were in favor. Motion approved.

Voucher from Hakim Associates for services rendered for the period of 5/1/2012 through 6/30/2012 to coordinate with the Borough and COAH on preserving affordable housing trust fund in the amount of \$715.00. Voucher from Hakim Associates for services rendered for the period of 5/1/2012 through 6/30/2012 to coordinate and confer on nursing home application with the Board of Adjustment Chair in the amount of \$65.00. Mr. Morgan made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Galdi. All present were in favor. Motion approved.

Letter from Ms. Cathy Takourian, Studio LC, to this Board stating that the frontage of her new location at 15 Broadway, Unit 11, is 21 feet. The sign is approximately 12" x 48", conforming to the existing signs on the building. Letter given to Mr. Schuster to check that it conforms.

Letter from Vizha and Jan Szumanski to Mrs. Quinn stating the following: "As per our previous discussions and latest review of your architectural plans, I wanted to send you a quick note in support of proposed carport. We think that it will not only add character to our street but also provide you and your family with the protection against the harsh winter eliminates. Please accept this letter as our approval for you to move forward ASAP. If you need anyone from the town to reach out to me please feel free to do so." File for Application #1423.

Subdivision Committee

Councilwoman Tsigounis had nothing new to report.

Report from the Borough Engineer's Office

Mr. Azzolina noted that he received revised drawings on Application #1422, 128 Heather Hill Road, Refined Homes LLC, but he has not had a chance to review them yet.

Mr. Azzolina also received a call from the attorney for the Alvarez property. He asked if the Board would have any objection to them phasing their construction basically to construct the landscape component of it, the garden and three accessory buildings, first. As the attorney explained, the design of the house is probably something that may take up to a year, but if the Board is OK with it, they would like to build the three small accessory buildings and the garden area. He indicated that they would also be constructing all the landscape improvements in this area of the property, the fencing as well as the plants. The plan was approved. Mr. Azzolina doesn't know that there is anything that would necessarily prohibit him from doing it, but he wants to be as proactive as possible and ask rather than go ahead and do it and find out that it is a problem.

Mr. Azzolina feels that the house is rather elaborate and the architect is in California so they probably have some logistic issues. The Board has no problem with them proceeding with the garden and accessory buildings.

Resolution for Application #1422, 128 Heather Hill Road, Refined Homes, LLC, was introduced by Mrs. Schultz, seconded by Mr. Galdi. On Roll Call: Mayor Romeo, Councilwoman Tsigounis, Mr. Vaccaro, Ms. Bauer, Mr. Galdi, Mr. Morgan and Mrs. Schultz all voted yes. Mr. Calder was absent. Motion approved. The original resolution shall become a permanent part of these minutes.

Resolution for Application #1414, 158 Truman Drive, Abigail Alvarez, was introduced by Mr. Galdi, seconded by Mr. Morgan. On Roll Call: Mayor Romeo, Councilwoman Tsigounis, Mr. Vaccaro, Mr. Galdi, and Mr. Morgan all voted yes. Mrs. Schultz abstained. Motion approved. The original resolution shall become a permanent part of these minutes.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Public Hearing – Application #1423, 5 Michelle Court

Mrs. Virginia Quinn, 5 Michelle Court, Cresskill, and Mr. Phil Reicherz, 5 Michelle Court, Cresskill, were sworn in by Mr. Schuster. Mr. Reicherz explained that with their ever extending family they are constrained by their driveway and don't want to get any tickets by parking on the street and feel that their neighbors are getting a little concerned about the amount of cars that are in the street and the amount of people that are stopping by. Also, as they get a little older, they would appreciate being covered from the snow, sleet and rain so they figured the best thing to do is just cover over the side of the driveway closest to their neighbor. Prior to even starting the project, they actually sat down with the neighbor and

explained what they were doing. He was in favor of the project. Generally speaking, for the most part, they are getting the cars out of the street. There will be a little bit of storage as well, which will block the backyard, so it would be coverage along with some privacy.

Mr. Chris Blake, 155 N. Washington Avenue, Bergenfield, was sworn in by Mr. Schuster. He is a licensed architect and was accepted as an expert architect. Mr. Blake noted that the reason they are here is to build an open carport and there is a little storage. Ten to 15% of the perimeter will have a little bit of a wall for a shed. It is going up to the side of the house. It has a gable roof so it matches the architecture of the house. It has two columns holding up the ends of the carport with a stone base and some nice decorative woodworking features that match some of the character of the original house as well as some of the work they have been doing to the house. It will really look like an extension of this colonial house. It just extends towards the side yard. It extends over the existing driveway so it naturally serves as a function of covering the cars. They are making the carport 18 feet wide, so it is adequate for two cars. It is tight for two cars. The reason they are asking is because they are in the side yard setback. They are constructing the building .38 feet, about 4-5 inches, away from the neighboring property, but only at one point. The property line is skewed from the angle of the house. It stretches out to four or five feet at the front of the carport. That is reason they are here.

Mr. Blake noted that the reason this is all happening is obviously because the original driveway has been there since day 1. The client didn't want to reconfigure the whole property to rearrange the driveway and the access to the house and change the decks and landscaping and all those kinds of things that go along with moving the driveway to another position. It is a corner property and they have two front yards. That is a little bit of a restriction as well. The side they are building up to is in close proximity to the neighbor and is a pretty heavily densely landscaped area. There are some evergreens that are very tall and some very nice landscaped features so he thinks it already gives itself some privacy to the neighboring house.

Mr. Blake explained that the carport is not even a one-story structure. It is very low. It is about 13 feet at the highest point of the peak. It is all open and there is no bulkiness blocking the neighborhood or anything from the street, it is just to have a roof over the cars. As one can imagine, the cars are going to be there regardless of if this is approved or not. It really is a functional thing that helps the existing driveway and the existing cars to have a place to be more functional. The hardship is the fact that the existing driveway is already over there. Hillside Avenue is a little bit more of a busy street and you don't really want to put the driveway and the car access on Hillside Avenue. With the way the property is laid out, it is just naturally where the driveway is. If you put it in either one of the front yards, it would block the sight lines on the corner and it would be too close to the property lines.

Mr. Schuster asked if everybody else in the neighborhood either had garages or coverings for their vehicles. Mr. Blake noted that they did. He noted that the driveway and impervious coverage is not excessive on this property. He noted that except for the very minor infraction that the existing house is over a little bit on the FAR and a little bit on the impervious, they really do comply with most of the ordinance requirements and it is really not adding anything to the ordinance requirement. This will be attached to the side of the house.

Mr. Schuster noted that it will improve the aesthetics. Mr. Blake agreed and stated that it will improve the aesthetics by camouflaging the cars as much as possible. He also stressed the fact that the columns and woodwork and things like that are attractive and it will look like it belongs with the house. It will have design elements that accentuate the "big bulky box" of the original house.

Mr. Morgan asked about how close the rear column was to the property line. Mr. Blake noted that the rear column was very close to the property line but the front column is about four to four-and-a-half feet from the property line. The trees and landscaping actually does a lot so it looks like there is actually more property than there is. The landscaping is mostly the neighbors. Mr. Blake stated that it is really just a simple open air covering.

Mr. Vaccaro opened the meeting to the public. No public wished to be heard. Mr. Galdi made a motion to close the meeting to the public, seconded by Mr. Morgan. All present were in favor. Motion approved.

Mr. Schuster asked about the footings. Mr. Blake explained that there would be footings for the two columns on the outer edge.

Mr. Galdi made a motion to approve, because of the inconsistencies that have taken place, they went before the correct Boards to get approval to do it, they went through an awful expense to try and meet the criteria. There is a hardship involved with why they needed it, they can't park on the road, and taking everything into consideration, he doesn't see how we can add to their hardship by having them take something down that was approved and is three quarters of the way up and he feels we would be doing them a big injustice. Also, with the neighbor sending in a letter saying that they have no objection to it, he doesn't see why we shouldn't approve it and have them continue with it so it can meet their criteria and enjoy their property. Mr. Morgan seconded the motion. On Roll Call: Mayor Romeo, Councilwoman Tsigounis, Mr. Vaccaro, Ms. Bauer, Mr. Galdi, Mr. Morgan and Mrs. Schultz all voted yes. Motion approved.

Other Business

Mr. Morgan stated that we had a little problem here tonight because our building inspector screwed up. He feels that something should be done to keep us from this pressure that we were put on tonight because of his screw up. He recommended a letter of reprimand or something should be in his file to keep him from giving out permits that should not be permitted. He put this lady through a lot of stress and we don't want our people put under that stress. He suggests that a letter of some kind be written to tell him to be a little more attentive to his work. Mr. Schuster noted that one of the things about these things is he has a certain discretion and it is a matter of how he interprets certain things. On one hand he understands Mr. Morgan's point that here we have to clean up something that is really not our doing, but on the other hand, he doesn't know all the details. Mayor Romeo stated that Mr. Rossi readily admitted that he misread the plans. He thinks what we have to do is send a letter stating that he needs a little more diligence in reviewing the plan. Take an extra week if he has to so we don't rush it through. He didn't see that it was connected. He thought it wasn't connected and that is what started the whole thing. He thinks sending him a letter and putting him on notice and telling him to take extra time to review plans is OK. Mayor Romeo and Mr. Vaccaro will send him a letter stating that they have resolved this problem and that in the future to take extra time to review the plans.

Mr. Vaccaro opened the meeting to the public. No public wished to be heard.

Motion was made by Mr. Galdi to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 PM, seconded by Mrs. Schultz. All present were in favor. Motion approved.

The next four regular Planning Board meetings are scheduled for August 28, September 11, September 25, and October 9, 2012, at 7:30 PM in the Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn M. Petillo
Recording Secretary