

MINUTES

CRESSKILL PLANNING BOARD

SEPTEMBER 24, 2013

Mr. Vaccaro opened the meeting at 7:44 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, Mr. Calder and Mrs. Schultz. Also present were Mr. Azzolina, Borough Engineer, and Mr. Steven Schuster, Board Attorney.

Mr. Galdi made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 10, 2013, meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Morgan. All present were in favor of the motion. Motion approved.

Correspondence

Letter of Introduction from Mr. Edward Rossi, Construction Official, dated September 11, 2013, sending Mr. Avi Lavon to this Board for Approval. Mr. Lavon's Application #1431 for 79 Cedar Street was previously approved by this Board. He wishes to amend the application and is seeking a height variance. Mr. Lavon was advised to submit his application for the amended height.

Notice from Ms. Pam Donahue, BOH Secretary, regarding the Flu clinic on November 6, 2013, from 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM. File.

Notice of Hearing from the Borough of Alpine for Montammy Golf Club, who has applied for final site plan approval for the construction of three new accessory maintenance buildings and relocation of a portion of the parking area. File.

Subdivision Committee

Councilwoman Tsigounis noted that a revised plan for Application #1431, Avi Lavon, 79 Cedar Street, was received on September 20, 2013.

Report from the Borough Engineer's Office

Mr. Azzolina noted that the revised plan for Application #1431, Avi Lavon, is under review.

Application #1434, 90 Roosevelt Street, Vadav & Maayan Gottesman, is incomplete. There are several planning inconsistencies between the architectural and engineering drawings that he spoke to the architect today about. They are going to resolve them before the next meeting.

Application #1435, Jane Lee, 182 Madison Avenue, has several issues dating back to the original subdivision application by the original subdivider, Ms. Tonuzi, who then sold it to Ms. Lee. There were several conditions of approval that were never acted upon by Tonuzi. He discussed it with the County Planner to see if it is now their obligation or whose obligation it is. His direction to Ms. Lee is to resolve the County issues first because that may impact their thinking on the application if they are going to be held responsible for putting curbing across the entire frontage, sidewalks across the entire frontage and drainage connections that they are proposing, it is pretty costly. He recommended that they resolve those issues with the County first and then come back to this Board. Right now this application is in a holding pattern.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Other Business

None.

Mr. Vaccaro opened the meeting to the public. Mr. Tom McMullen, 24 Merrifield Way wished to be heard. He wanted to speak about one of the issues related to Mr. Avi Lavon. They live at 24 Merrifield Way, one of the oldest houses in Cresskill and arguably the property most affected by the proposed buildings. They have lived there close to 40 years. They are reasonable people.

They've been in conversations regarding these plans with both Mr. John Brennan, their soon to be departed neighbor, and Mr. Avi Lavon, to allay some of their concerns. For John and Leslie, they would like this to work.

He submits, as he did on 9/10, as a matter of fact, that one house could be built on the property without variances. The obvious and rhetorical question is why not, instead of a plan that requires 4 variances? Yes, he understands economic value.

They have spoken to the builder and were hoping that they could move the middle plot line North to gain a more uniform frontage AND give them a little space between their house and the Southernmost building, but it doesn't seem possible.

Now, they do believe that this side yard line, while legal, will be detrimental to their privacy and in terms of light and air. At 66 years of age he doesn't want to be looking into someone else's bathroom, and he suggests whoever is there doesn't want to be looking into his. They have spoken to John and Avi and they do believe appropriate trees and bushes to be executed by the builder would help to some extent, but he hasn't committed to anything yet to him.

Also, they had rats the last time there was a major construction in the neighborhood and hope this doesn't happen with this construction, once agreed.

And of course they worry about drainage, given they have never had water in their basement, but have been assured the plan deals with this effectively.

While Mr. Lavon said in his dining room that drainage, rats, and side plantings like Arborvitae trees would be taken care of, he, at this time asks who is to police that?

They recognize the members of the Planning Board deal in these plans, but he submits that they represent not just pieces of paper but people's lives interwoven into the lines and numbers. Quality of life if you will.

In conclusion, they want this to succeed for the Brennans. They only ask for some consideration/side space relief that would make sense and the builder.

Mr. Schuster noted that this probably won't be on for at least four weeks, but it is good to get this on the record. Mr. McMullen noted that his property is pretty much on the curb on the next property and the Brennans property runs down from his. Mr. Schuster asked Mr. McMullen if he wanted shrubbery for screening and Mr. McMullen noted that he did want shrubbery and understands that someone can come in and tear it down.

Mayor Romeo noted that Mr. Lavon is coming back in four weeks for Cedar Street not for Merrifield. He probably won't be back in for Merrifield until November or December. If variances are required he will get a notice. Mr. Azzolina stated that if it is a straight site plan without variances, he won't receive a notice. Mr. McMullen is glad that he got a chance to put his thoughts on the record.

Motion was made by Mr. Galdi to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 PM, seconded by Mr. Morgan. All present were in favor. Motion approved.

The next four regular Planning Board meetings are scheduled for October 8, October 22, November 12, and November 26, 2013, at 7:30 PM in the Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn M. Petillo
Recording Secretary