

MINUTES

CRESSKILL PLANNING BOARD

FEBRUARY 14, 2023

Mr. Ulshoefer opened the meeting at 7:36 PM and announced the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act had been fulfilled.

Members present at roll call: Mayor Romeo, Councilwoman Schultz-Rummel, Mr. Ulshoefer, Ms. Bauer, Ms. Furio, Mr. Malone, and Mr. Rummel. Mr. Berger arrived at 7:38 PM. Also present were Mr. Paul Azzolina, Borough Engineer, and Mr. Dean Stamos, Board Attorney.

Ms. Furio made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2023, meeting, seconded by Mr. Rummel. All present were in favor of the motion. Motion approved.

Correspondence

Letter of Introduction from Mr. Bob Rusch, Construction Official, dated January 10, 2023, sending a representative for Elgen Staffing LLC to this Board for approval. They would like to expand their office at 300 Knickerbocker Road, Suite #3700. No one was present.

Subdivision Committee

Nothing to report.

Report from the Borough Engineer's Office

Mr. Azzolina is reviewing Application #1586, 158 Truman Drive, Monica Alvarez, c/o Matthew Capizzi, that was received on January 11, 2023. The application is classified as a "Major Development." He is looking at the stormwater management component of this application. He will report on this at the next meeting for a hearing, if necessary. The plan as presented states that there are no variances needed. There are a couple of things that he needs to discuss with the Fire Chief to determine the access. There is a section in the code that allows for a 33 foot height in the R-40 Zone so long as there is adequate firefighting access. This is a big site and he wants to make sure that they are comfortable with being able to fight a fire.

Site plan Application #1587, 101 Heather Hill Road, 101 Heather Hill Road LLC, is substantially complete as presented. They do require a variance. There are a couple things of note about that application that he wants to make the Board aware of, which is actually similar to another plan that is also under review. It is the same architect. Mr. Azzolina pointed out the basement of the structure. Typically, under the garage is unexcavated. They have actually created living space under the garage. It is not detailed how the structure is going to be. You can certainly do it, but it is the first time he is seeing it on these types of plans. You actually have two basement levels here. You have the basement level and then three steps down another portion of the structure that is underneath the garage.

Mr. Malone asked if it had to be reinforced because of weight. Mr. Azzolina noted that it is scaled like an 18" thick slab. You have to design it substantially to support the weight of two vehicles. The garage is on the first floor. It is a little bit unusual. It is next door to the home that was reviewed by the Zoning Board

first. Mayor Romeo asked Mr. Azzolina to explain it in more detail. Mr. Azzolina explained that typically under the garage is unexcavated. In this one he is digging down 10-11 feet in order to create this space. Mrs. Schultz-Rummel asked about the water table. Mr. Azzolina stated that that is all part of the stormwater management review. This property is towards the bottom of the hill. They definitely need to be aware of the water table.

Application #1588, 171 Magnolia Avenue, Tenaflly Rentals 2 LLC, is actually the same plan, pretty much, as the Heather Hill plan. This is on the corner of Magnolia and 9th Street. It is the same architect. It is a different owner. They are also digging under the garage. The former house fronted on Magnolia and they are proposing to front this house on 9th Street. It is a similar home and similar type site design where they are constructing retaining walls. There are existing retaining walls on this property as well on the other application on Heather Hill. They are leveling off the backyards basically. They are bringing in some fill and building retaining walls. Visually it will look a little bit different than the way it looks today. They are 28 feet high, but the plain is being raised a little bit. This property is on a pronounced slope as you are heading east to west. On the Heather Hill application, there is a retaining wall in the backyard that is currently two feet tall and it will be close to four feet tall. It won't have a drainage impact, it is just going to have a visual impact for the people behind them.

Mayor Romeo asked if they were filling in the backyard and if they can do that. Mr. Azzolina stated that there is nothing in our code that says they can't. You can't create a drainage problem, but they are not creating a drainage problem. They are controlling the water from the impervious surfaces, which are the roof and driveway. It will just be a little bit higher from the people behind them. Ms. Furio asked if there was a code for that amount of soil being moved. Mr. Azzolina said that we do not have anything in our code that would preclude somebody from doing that. Mayor Romeo asked if the County would be involved in this. Mr. Azzolina stated that they would not. The Bergen County Soil Conservation District reviews and approves plans for the demolition, but there really is no volumetric concern and our soil movements ordinance in this town is pretty weak as compared to other towns. Ms. Florio stated that going from a two foot wall to a four foot wall is a lot of cubic yardage.

Mayor Romeo asked about the side yards. Mr. Azzolina stated that it would be the same thing. The retaining wall that is on the east side of the dwelling is going to be two feet higher than it is today. There is about an 18" high wall there today and it is going to be 3-4 feet tall along that sideline. Mr. Malone asked if they were raising the grade to have a taller house. Mr. Azzolina noted that it is not necessarily to have a taller house, but to create a usable backyard. This property doesn't back up to the brook. There really is no detrimental impact to the adjoining property owners drainage wise. It is just a different visual.

Mrs. Schultz-Rummel asked about the whole change of address thing since Application #1588 is now going to be fronting the house on 9th Street. Mr. Azzolina stated that you do have that section in the code that says once the front yard has been selected it has to remain. Here you are going to have that discussion. They require variances so once the application is deemed complete, which it is not yet, he will have that discussion with them as well.

Mr. Azzolina noted that basically Application #1587, 101 Heather Hill Road, is substantially complete and can be scheduled for a Public Hearing if the Board wishes. Mr. Capizzi is the attorney. Mr. Stamos noted that he communicated with him and he was asking for February 28, 2023, for the hearing. Mr. Azzolina said that he spoke to someone from his office last week and he was looking to do the 28th for 101 Heather Hill Road. Mr. Stamos will notify Mr. Capizzi's office tomorrow. The Public Hearing will be scheduled for February 28, 2023.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Mr. Jeff Kurtz, purchased the property at 130 Broadway, which is a 67,000 square foot building that currently houses Unilever as a tenant. It is a single tenant for storage. They look to take the front piece and occupy it personally as a business or storage of cars that will be sold from time to time. Mr. Kurtz grew up in Cresskill and stated that it is really to store his personal cars and his father's personal cars. They now own the building so they will use it for their own personal space. From time to time they will trade and sell cars out of that space. Mayor Romeo thought that we already approved this. Mr. Kurtz stated that we did, but were told by the Building Department to come before the Board to get it approved as a new business. Mayor Romeo said that they were just continuing to do what they were doing. Ms. Petillo will call the Building Department and inform them the Planning Board approves the occupancy.

Other Business

None.

Mr. Ulshoefer opened the meeting to the public. No public wished to be heard. Mr. Ulshoefer closed the meeting to the public.

Motion was made by Mr. Malone to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 PM, seconded by Ms. Bauer. All present were in favor. Motion approved.

The next four regular Planning Board meetings are scheduled for February 28, March 14, March 28, and April 11, 2023, at 7:30 PM in the Borough Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn M. Petillo
Recording Secretary