

Ridgewood Planning Board
Regular Public Meeting
August 6, 2024
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The following minutes are a summary of the Planning Board meeting of August 6, 2024. Interested parties may request an audio recording of the meeting from the Board Secretary for a fee.

Call to Order & Statement of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: Mr. Joel called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

Roll Call – The following members were present: Rob Willis, John Young, Councilwoman Perron, Richard Joel, Dianne O’Brien, Fran Barto (7:50 p.m.), Michael Stern, James Van Goor and David Refkin. Also present were Stephen Wellinghorst, Esq., Board Attorney; John Barree, Village Engineer; Christopher Rutishauser, Village Engineer, and Jane Wondergem, Board Secretary. Darlene Johnson and Sergio Alegre were absent.

Public Comments on Topics not Pending Before the Board – There were no comments at this time.

Committee/Commission/Professional Updates for Non Agenda Topics – Councilwoman Perron gave a Council update regarding the following:

- The Council voted to legalize an after-the-fact Green Acres Diversion at 259 North Maple Avenue and Graydon Parks in order to hook up to the PFAS treatment facilities.
- Student interns created an inventory data base which will be on the website giving the history, features and amenities of each park in the Village.
- An LSRP engineering service was hired to address contamination at the Schedler property.
- Sidewalks were installed on E. Glen Avenue between Oak Street and Maple Avenue.
- An engineering firm was hired as support in replacing the underground storage tanks at the DPW facility on Chestnut Street.
- Verizon Wireless has started installing their 5G network nodes and additional equipment on existing utility poles.
- A residential flood advisory committee, which will include 6 residents who have experienced flooding and a 7th member who will be a Liaison from the Green Ridgewood Committee, will be established and applications are now being accepted.
- At the August 7th meeting Council will discuss the installation of sidewalks on Clinton Avenue, parking on Overbrook Road, the proposed pavilion at Habernickel Park, an award of a contract for lighting at Vets Field, a contract for archeological study at the Schedler property, planting trees at Cottage Place lot, and loosening up the Certificate of Occupancy ordinance to make it easier for applicants.

Algonquin Estates LLC – An application for Minor Site Plan and variance approval to renovate and expand an existing professional office building at 118 Prospect Street, Block 3708, Lot 5, in a P-Zone.

MaryAnn Virgona, Esq., entered her appearance on behalf of the applicant and made opening remarks explaining that the applicant purchased the property in September of 2023 and is planning on renovating the building as it is in a state of disrepair. Ms. Virgona briefly described what is proposed and stated that the Historic Preservation Commission had reviewed and approved of the proposed renovations. The applicant is requesting a parking variance.

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Matthew Grossman, a member of the LLC, was sworn and testified regarding the intended use of the building, which would be as a medical office for two different doctors receiving patients on different days. Dr. Grossman said there would likely be two other employees and the hours would be generally from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Deliveries would be once per month and there would be minimal medical waste. Dr. Grossman said that there would not be a second tenant at this time.

Ms. Barto arrived to the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

There were no questions for Dr. Grossman.

Joseph Cestaro was sworn and his credentials as a licensed architect accepted. Mr. Cestaro testified regarding the plans he prepared dated 3/5/24, which were marked as Exhibit A-1. Mr. Cestaro described the existing conditions and floor plans and described what is proposed and showed elevation drawings. Mr. Cestaro stated that they propose to construct a new front porch and façade. The mansard roof will remain and any new construction and siding will match the style of the existing building. Mr. Cestaro described the foundation plan and that an elevator will be installed in the new part of the building. The attic will be slightly expanded with dormers and the mechanicals will be placed there. A generator will be installed.

Mr. Barree asked about the parking and confirmed that only part of the building is to be used for the applicant.

There were no questions from the Board or the public.

Robert Costa was sworn and his credentials as a licensed engineer accepted. Mr. Costa testified regarding the site plan he prepared which was marked as Exhibit A-2.

Mr. Costa explained that the proposed elevator will not go up to the 3rd floor. Mr. Costa stated that the parking lot will be restriped and a seepage pit will be installed. They will install two E-V ready parking spaces. Mr. Costa testified that the code calls for 16 spaces and the applicant is providing 11 spaces, however, there is parking available across the street and they are near the parking garage. Mr. Costa stated that the parking spaces will be 9 feet by 18 feet where 9 feet by 20 feet is required. Mr. Costa said the applicant would like to put a fence on the wall for safety and that will require a variance for height. Mr. Costa showed where the generator would be located.

Board members asked about a landscape plan. Mr. Costa stated that the property needs to be cleaned up and a landscape plan will be submitted to the planner. Board members asked about lighting and Mr. Costa said there is lighting on the existing building. Board members asked about existing trees and Mr. Costa said no trees would be removed. Board members asked about the E-V ready spaces. Board members asked about the size of the spaces. Mr. Costa stated that they do not have the depth to put the standard 20 feet.

Board members asked if the applicant would be willing to use permeable pavement where they will need to repave. The applicant stated they would use permeable pavement.

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Mr. Rutishauser asked about the height of the fence on the wall. Mr. Costa stated they would want to install a 3 foot fence on the 4 foot retaining wall. The Board will consider that variance with this application. Mr. Barree suggested that they request a variance for the total of 7 feet in height.

Mr. Rutishauser and Mr. Barree went over their reports stating that any issues have been addressed.

There were no questions or comments from the public.

Ms. Virgona confirmed that the drainage report and the Historic Preservation Commission report were part of the application.

Ms. Virgona made closing remarks and the hearing was closed.

Following Board deliberation Mr. Van Goor made a motion to approve the application with the additional variance for the fence/wall height, that a landscape and lighting plan be submitted for approval by the Board professionals and that permeable pavement is used. Mr. Stern seconded and the application was approved.

1200 E. Ridgewood LLC – An application for Preliminary and Final Site Plan approval and variance relief to make site modifications at 1200 East Ridgewood Avenue, Block 4205, Lot 7.01, in an OB-1 District.

Katie Razin, Esq., entered her appearance and made opening remarks.

Andrew Missey was sworn and his credentials as a licensed civil engineer accepted.

Mr. Missey testified regarding the site plan he prepared and described the existing conditions on the property. Mr. Missey stated that there are no modifications to the building being proposed.

Mr. Missey testified regarding the existing number of parking spaces on the property, the number of ADA parking spaces, and the existing circulation of the property. Mr. Missey stated that what is proposed is to add lift gates at the designated physician and staff parking area at the front of the building. Mr. Missey stated that 19 spaces will be installed where there are currently 15 spaces and that all of these spaces will be ADA compliant in respect to dimensions and to grade. Mr. Missey stated that 8 parking spaces will be added in an area which is currently landscaped at the rear of the property. Mr. Missey said two E-V ready spaces will be installed, one will be an ADA parking space.

Mr. Missey testified regarding the driveways and that one of the existing driveways will be made ingress only and the other will be egress only and the pavement will be restriped and directional markings will be added to improve the circulation pattern. A valet lane and new valet stand will be added closest to the building for those who want to use that service.

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Mr. Missey testified that a fence is proposed for a portion of the rear of the lot to separate the parking lot from the Saddle River County Park bike path to prohibit use of the parking lot by those using the bike path.

Mr. Missey described the proposed improvements as shown on the Refuse Enclosure Shift and Reorientation Sketch, marked as Exhibit A-1.

Mr. Missey said there would be no change to site lighting and they have applied for a ministerial soil movement permit from the Engineering Department.

Mr. Missey identified the two variances being requested as the maximum coverage by improvements and the parking requirement. Mr. Missey said that although a variance is needed for the coverage by improvement, what is proposed is slightly less than what currently exists. In regards to the parking requirement, 380 spaces are required and they propose 373 spaces, including the E-V parking space credit.

Mr. Missey testified that six trees will be removed and the applicant will comply with the Village tree ordinance.

Ms. Razin had Mr. Missey address the concerns from the engineering report, stating that no wetlands exist on the property and documentation can be provided, a curb cut permit will be obtained from the engineering department, traffic control signs will conform, in regards to the proposed fence being located in the floodway and that they will submit for NJDEP approval, a Bergen County Soil Conservation District permit will be obtained and they will consider plantings that are not attractive to deer.

Board members asked why the parking spaces would be E-V ready rather than available. Mr. Missey said that in three years the demand will be there and the charging equipment is always improving, however, the duration of a visit to this facility would not be the length of time to charge. Board members asked if the site improvements will make the flooding situation worse and if permeable pavement was considered. Mr. Missey said that the applicant would use permeable pavement for the eight parking spaces proposed at the rear of the lot. Board members asked what type of fence is proposed, Mr. Missey said a split rail fence would be installed.

Board members asked about the lift gate and Mr. Missey showed the specs of the proposed equipment, which was marked as Exhibit A-2.

Mr. Rutishauser asked for clarification of the location of the E-V ready spaces and if they were in the flood hazard area. Mr. Missey identified the location and stated that they will be in the flood hazard area.

Lynsey Knight was sworn and her credentials as a professional planner accepted. Ms. Knight explained that she visited the site and reviewed the master plan in preparation for her testimony. Ms. Knight stated that the use of the property is not changing. The justification for the parking

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variance is that they are increasing the number of spaces from 361 to 373 and adding E-V ready spaces. In regards to the variance for coverage by improvements, where 65% is the maximum permitted, 71.4% exists and 71.35% is proposed. Ms. Knight stated that the lot is irregular and the applicant is working with what already exists on the property. Ms. Knight said the applicant is making the ADA spaces compliant and making the valet parking more visible.

There were no questions for Ms. Knight.

There were no questions or comments from the public.

Ms. Razin made closing remarks and the hearing was closed.

Following Board deliberation, Ms. O'Brien made a motion to approve with the conditions discussed. Mr. Young seconded and the application was approved.

Adoption of Minutes: The minutes from June 18, 2024 were adopted as drafted.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Wondergem
Board Secretary

Date Approved: August 20, 2024