

MEDFORD TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MEETING

October 26, 2022 @ 7:00 p.m.

Police Administration Building-91 Union Street

Chairman Hartwig called the Planning Board Meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and read the Statement of Conformance with the Open Public Meetings Act and the Municipal Land Use Law.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL:

Present: Bielec, Czekay, Hartwig, Herman, Juliano, Kornick, Watson, Perks, Devlin
Absent: Braatz, Ross,
Professional Staff: Attorney Anthony Drollas, Engineer Christopher Noll, Planner Scott Taylor, Secretary Kimberly Moore

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

MINUTES:

September 28, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes – Ms. Herman made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes with one correction. Vice Chairman Juliano seconded the motion. Mayor Watson & Ms. Bielec abstained. A voice vote of the remaining Board members in favor of adoption was unanimous.

September 28, 2022 Executive Session Minutes – Ms. Herman made a motion to adopt the executive session minutes. Vice Chairman Juliano seconded the motion. Mayor Watson & Ms. Bielec abstained. A voice vote of the remaining Board members in favor of adoption was unanimous.

CORRESPONDENCE: Chairman Hartwig announced that the Auto Zone application was being continued by mutual consent of the applicant to the November 14, 2022 meeting, without the requirement to re-notice.

Chairman Hartwig also noted that the Council has asked the Planning Board to review the Burlington County Proposed Farmland Preservation Targeted Acquisition List that was included in the Board packets. Please send any comments to Ms. Moore.

REPORTS: Chairman Hartwig reported that insufficient escrow balances over 6 months would continue to be listed on the monthly agenda. He acknowledged that there are now five escrow balances, which may never be collected, which is unfair to the professionals who are not compensated for services rendered. He thanked Ms. Moore for her continued efforts to collect the arrears.

MEMORIALIZATION:

Eagle Auto Body, 301/7, 7.02, 35 Fostertown Road, SPR-5753AF. Resolution #13-2022.
Amended Preliminary & Final Site Plan approval for auto storage building with another building for an on-site car detailing service. **Zone: PI**

Recorded Vote:

Ayes: Czekay, Hartwig, Herman (M), Juliano (2), Perks, Devlin
Nays: None
Abstentions: None
Motion carried: 6- 0 – 0

APPLICATIONS/OFFICIAL ACTIONS:

Auto Zone Northeast, LLC, 404/31, 185 Route 70, SPR-5760

Applicant is seeking Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan with bulk variance approval to construct an Auto Zone building with parking and a drainage basin. **Zone: HC-1**

***See above—continued to the November 14, 2022 Meeting*

The Estaugh/Medford Leas, 805/various lots, SPR-5762

Applicant is seeking Major Site Plan approval to expand its existing Nature Center and Berm parking areas. **Zone: GMN**

SWORN: Gary Zangerle, Esq.
Gary Vecchio, Engineer, Taylor Wiseman & Taylor
John Martin, Architect
Jeremy Vickers, CEO, Medford Leas

Submission Waivers: A total of ten (10) submission waivers were requested as delineated in Mr. Noll’s review letter dated October 18, 2022. Mr. Noll did not recommend approval of the 200’ list, but Mrs. Moore confirmed she has the list as prepared by the Assessor. Mr. Noll also did not recommend the waiver of the certification of taxes paid to date, however Mrs. Moore was able to verify they are current as per the Tax Collector. Lastly, Mr. Noll recommended that as a condition of approval that the applicant file the plans with all other entities having jurisdiction over the proposed development (i.e. the County Planning Board).

Ms. Herman made a motion to approve the submission waivers as submitted, with the following conditions: (1) the 200’ list will be included on the conformance plans; (2) the certification of payment of taxes as a condition of approval; and (3) the plans are filed with all other required outside agencies. Vice Chairman Juliano seconded.

Recorded Vote:

Ayes: Bielec, Czekay, Hartwig, Herman, Juliano, Kornick, Watson, Perks, Devlin
Nays: None
Abstentions: None
Motion carried: 9 - 0 – 0

Mr. Vickers was first to testify. He described the 168-acre campus with 600+ residents, most living in independent housing with additional assisted living and nursing home residency. The main entrance is from Route 70, with a second entrance off Wilkins Station Road. The application is to make improvements and to expand the employee parking area and the nature center/tennis area grounds and parking. This will include paving and added lighting. Work is expected to commence immediately upon receipt of board approvals and permitting.

Mr. Vecchio was next to testify. Exhibit A-14 was distributed at the meeting, along with a display board aerial, showing the proposed two projects. The northern portion of the property is where the nature center is located, and it is not very "organized." The southern portion of the property, closest to Route 70, is where the employee parking is proposed to be widened allowing for expanded parking on both sides.

Exhibit A-15 dated 10/18/22 was distributed, which is a proposed site plan for the nature center area. The current parking area is stone, and is proposed to be paved. A basin is proposed to be added to conform to current stormwater management regulations. The proposed containment bins are planned to hold mulch and stone used throughout the campus, and a compost area to be used in the gardens around campus. These are proposed to be relocated from the front area where the employee parking is proposed to be expanded.

Exhibit A-16 dated 10/18/22 was also distributed, which is a proposed site plan for the employee parking area. (also referred to as the berm area) eighty-four (84) parking spots are proposed, an increase from the current 42 spots. They are widening the area so that parking can be on both sides. Each space will be 9'w x 18' length. The drive aisles will meet requirements. The existing light poles will be relocated. Also proposed are a total of six (6) 10' x 14' sheds, intended to store building materials, windows, etc. from re-modeling projects that could be re-used, insulation, etc. The berm is along one side of the area, and a solid wood fence will enclose the other three sides. The existing dumpsters within the maintenance yard area will not be enclosed. Mr. Vecchio confirmed that this area cannot be seen from Route 70 or Medford Leas Way. Board members questioned the need for handicapped parking and EV charging station units given the increase in parking spaces (42 to 84). It was confirmed that 4 EV charging stalls are being added; as the new State law requires them for any increase in parking spaces over 25 in quantity. Mr. Vickers and Mr. Vecchio both agreed to provide the required number of handicapped parking spaces based upon confirmation by Mr. Noll for the conformance plans.

Mr. Martin was next to testify. He referred to Exhibit A-17, which was a diagram/architectural plan of the storage sheds. They will all be 15' in height, placed 5' apart, painted in the same warm, muted earth tone colors and have red roofs. They will not have electric or plumbing. There will no added impervious coverage as they will be replacing the sea boxes. He confirmed that no hazardous materials would be stored in any of the sheds, just building materials as per earlier testimony.

Mr. Taylor next summarized his October 17, 2022 review letter/report. He asked for confirmation that the existing sea boxes will be removed, to which Mr. Vickers replied yes. He also reiterated the testimony confirmed EV spaces and ADA compliant parking spaces would be provided in accordance with all federal and/or State regulations. Chairman Hartwig asked if any new lighting or signage was proposed, which the applicant responded no. Mr. Taylor concluded that his other comments in the letter were minor and technical in nature, and the applicant agreed to comply with all.

Upon questioning by Mr. Perks, the applicants confirmed several trees will need to be removed near the access driveway thru the berm, however Mr. Taylor noted the site is very well landscaped. The applicant did agree to add several more shade trees as noted in Mr. Taylor's letter. The usage of the driveway was questioned, and it was stated that trash trucks will need access. Mr. Noll had requested a circulation plan, and the applicant will provide one. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Noll discussed grading that may lessen the amount of earth to be removed. It was mutually agreed that the proposed connector road from the parking area is to be staked out and the grading adjusted if feasible in order to preserve existing trees. This is to be coordinated with PB/Township Engineer. In regards to EV parking spaces, one is required in the new lot, but the applicant has agreed to install four on the property.

Mr. Noll referenced his October 18, 2022 review letter. He first asked for clarification on lighting, as there was testimony the existing lights were going to be relocated with new LED fixtures and 3000-3500 kelvin. Mr. Noll recommended that the lighting specs be submitted for review, and be subject to a night light test once installed. Mr. Noll further mentioned the ADA parking spaces, and that an accessible route of travel from the employee parking area must be established. The turning radius plan for the driveway in the employee parking was discussed and the applicant agreed to supply a plan for review. Mr. Noll also discussed the stormwater management requirements for the project.

PUBLIC: None

Mayor Watson made a motion to close the public portion. Ms. Herman seconded. The voice vote in favor was unanimous.

Mayor Watson made a motion to approve the application as submitted, with all conditions outlined in Mr. Noll and Mr. Taylor's review letters. Ms. Herman seconded the motion.

Recorded Vote:

Ayes:	Bielec, Czekay, Herman, Juliano, Kornick, Watson, Perks, Devlin, Hartwig
Nays:	None
Abstentions:	None
Motion carried:	9 - 0 - 0

The Board took a brief recess from 8:05 pm until 8:10 pm.

WORKSHOP:

Telecommunication Tower discussion within the Taunton & Tuckerton Redevelopment Area

Chairman Hartwig opened the workshop by explaining that Verizon has applied for a Use Variance and site plan approval to erect a cell tower on property located within the Taunton & Tuckerton Rehabilitation Area, at the Taunton Forge Shopping Center. A cell tower is not permitted in the approved Redevelopment Plan, and Use Variance approvals cannot be granted in any such designated area. However, Verizon believes it can show justification of a significant gap in cell service coverage in this area, necessitating a cell tower. Verizon made an informal presentation to the Township Council at its October 18, 2022 meeting, and the Council decided to refer this application to the Planning Board to conduct a public hearing and determine if the Board will recommend that an amendment be adopted by the Council to allow a cell tower in this Redevelopment Area, and establish any conditions by which said cell tower must abide by.

Chairman Hartwig continued that the purpose of tonight's workshop was to familiarize the Board members with this matter before Verizon makes a formal presentation, which could be a difficult decision for the Board. Board members have an opportunity to have some background.

Mr. Drollas presented a short legal discussion this and similar projects. He stated this would normally be a Zoning Board application for Use Variance approvals, but given it is proposed within the Taunton & Tuckerton Redevelopment Area, an amendment to the Plan is required as the Zoning Board legally cannot grant a Use Variance within a designated Redevelopment Area. As the Chairman stated, the Council believes the application has enough merit to warrant a review by the Planning Board to consider an amendment to the Redevelopment Plan.

Mr. Taylor was next to speak. He distributed an aerial map and a colorized tax map of the designated Redevelopment area from the approved Redevelopment Plan to provide perspective of the surrounding neighborhoods. An 11" x 17" plan showed the location of a monopole behind the supermarket building at the Taunton Forge Shopping Center. The 2500 square foot compound was shifted as far back as possible to remain outside of the designated wetlands and wetlands buffer on the parcel. This was done in accordance with and with input from the Pinelands Commission. The monopole was originally proposed at 150 feet, then reduced to 123 feet after internal discussions with the Pinelands Commission and Township representatives. There will also be a 5 foot lightning rod at the top.

Mr. Taylor then described the five pages of coverage radius mapping that Verizon had submitted to the Township, which reflected the location of existing towers in Medford, and the lack of infrastructure in the southeastern quadrant of Medford which results in the coverage gap. This is not only for cellular phone service, but also data and public safety telecommunications; as the demand has increased substantially with the proliferation in use of streaming services on televisions and computers. The proposed tower will provide both 4G and 5G service coverage. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Drollas reiterated that if the Carrier (Verizon) can prove this monopole will

fill a gap in coverage, the Township, either thru Council or the Planning Board, will have to approve it. That being said, the Board & Township can only negotiate how it will look.

It is expected the formal presentation and public hearing will be held at the November 14, 2022 Planning Board meeting, but this is an opportunity for the Board to ask questions and layout any potential conditions that they may be inclined to impose. In discussions with the Pinelands Commission, the Council and with the Board professionals, the access driveway has already been changed from straight to curved to substantially reduce the number of trees that would need to be removed. The perimeter fence will be solid metal in a warm muted earth tone color that will blend into the woods and there will be minimally in view from the rear of the shopping center buildings. Verizon has also agreed to supplement with landscaping buffering. There is a lot of traffic that uses the drive aisles behind the buildings, but this fencing should screen the base of the monopole and the ground mounted equipment from view. The area is 331 feet from Tuckerton Road, and is all wooded so there will be almost no visual impact. For this gap area, this location is well suited since it is not near any residential properties.

The Council wants justification that the height of the monopole is only what it needs to be. State laws require other carriers to be permitted on the tower, and logistically there should be at least 10' between each carrier's cells. At 123 feet, two other carriers could install their equipment on the monopole. This is in accordance with the NJ Municipal Land Use Laws, the FCC and the Pinelands Commission. The Pinelands Commission has approved a Certificate of Filing at this height so that three carriers can be located on the monopole. Any reduction in height may eliminate the ability to accommodate three carriers; possibly resulting in applications from the other carriers to erect their own monopoles in close proximity. Thus, the Board should weigh this against the proposed height. Discussion ensued about the construction of the pole (i.e. make it look like a tree, colors, etc.) Mr. Taylor and Mr. Drollas both again explained the Board has the ability to specify their preference.

Both Mr. Taylor and Mr. Noll concur that this is an appropriate location to fill the gap coverage area.

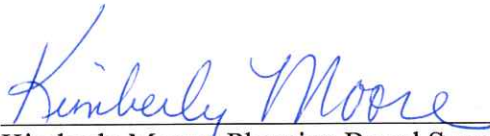
Mr. Drollas summarized the presentation by stating that the Board has discretion to impose the following conditions (1) location; (2) color; (3) ground mounted security; (4) access; and (5) aesthetics such as fencing and natural buffering.

Mr. Taylor stated he will draft language to amend the Redevelopment Plan for the November 14th meeting. Verizon will still need to come before the Board for Site Plan approvals after the amendments to the Redevelopment Plan are duly adopted.

GENERAL PUBLIC: No one was present to speak.

ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Herman made a motion to adjourn the October 26, 2022 Planning Board meeting at 9:03 pm.
Mr. Devlin seconded. A unanimous voice vote in favor carried the motion.



Kimberly Moore, Planning Board Secretary



Beth Portocalis, Planning Board Recording Secretary