

## MEDFORD TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MEETING

August 23, 2023 @ 7:00 p.m.

Public Safety 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, Juliano, Perks, Watson, Devlin  
Absent: Braatz, Muckenfuss, Ross, Anapete  
Professional Staff: Attorney Anthony Drollas, Engineer Christopher Noll, Planner Scott Taylor, Secretary Ann Bell

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None

#### **MINUTES:** July 26, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

Mayor Watson made a motion to adopt the minutes. Mr. Perks seconded. Councilman Czekay, Vice Chairman Juliano & Mr. Devlin abstained. A voice vote of the other Board members in favor of adoption was unanimous.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None

#### **REPORTS:**

Chairman Hartwig reported that insufficient escrow balances over 6 months would continue to be listed on the monthly agenda. He acknowledged that the list had grown, but some of the other escrow balances may never be collected, which is unfair to the professionals who are not compensated for services rendered. He thanked Ms. Bell and the staff for their continued efforts to collect the arrears.

### **APPLICATIONS/OFFICIAL ACTIONS**

#### **Camp EFS, LLC, 301/7.01, 35 Fostertown Road, SPR-5755**

One-year extension request from Dominic S. Favieri, Jr., Esq., 7/12/2023, Resolution 14-2021, Preliminary and Final Site Plan Approval for 21,000 sq. ft. of flex industrial space.

**SWORN:** Earl Stahl, Owner

Mr. Stahl stated that he is requesting still awaiting NJDEP approvals for the stormwater management plan that was submitted 18 months ago; therefore, he has been unable to commence with identifying a contractor to build the facility and seeking tenants. Mr. Noll clarified that the NJDEP Permit was approval of the Freshwater Wetlands and a Transition Area Waiver; which also allows NJDEP to review the stormwater management plan for the site.

Mr. Drollas had prepared a draft Resolution of Approval, which he will amend with Mr. Noll's clarification, as well as a date change typo as noted by Mr. Stahl.

**Resolution #14-2023 Camp EFS, LLC, 301/7.01, 35 Fostertown Road, SPR-5755**

Approval of a one year extension to previously approved Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan approval to construct a 21,000sf flex space industrial building. **Zone: PI**

Mayor Watson made a motion to memorialize the above Resolution as amended. Vice Chairman Juliano seconded.

Recorded Vote:

Ayes: Bielec, Czekay, Hartwig, Juliano, Perks, Watson, Devlin  
Nays: None  
Abstentions: None  
Motion carried: 7 - 0 - 0

**Fieldstone at Medford, LLC, 905/10.01, 10.02 & 11, 196 & 198 Old Marlton Pike, SPR-5766.**

Seeking Preliminary & Final Major Site Plan for a 10,000 square-foot, day care center and Preliminary approval of a 10,640 square-foot retail store in the Highway Management Zoning District. *(\*Carried from the July 26, 2023 meeting)*

**SWORN:** Patrick McAndrew, Esq  
Ahmad Tamous, Engineer-Bohler Engineering  
Matthew Jarmal, Architect  
Andrew Stockton, Planner, Engineer & Surveyor  
Matthew Seckler, Traffic Engineer – Stonefield & Associates

Mr. McAndrew opened the testimony by confirming that no submission waivers are being requested.

Mr. Jarmal was first to testify. His expertise is design of day care centers. The Day Care Center proposed would be “The Learning Experience (TLE),” which is a national chain of childcare centers. He described their corporate program is designed to serve children ages 6 months to six years old. The Learning Experience operates over 400 centers in both the US & UK; which equates to 40,000 children. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the children enrolled in each facility are siblings, and on average 10% of the children enrolled are out sick every day. The facility will be open year-round on weekdays from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm. They cater to specific family needs, so not all children will arrive and depart at the same time. Children can be enrolled in ½ day, ¾ day or full day options. The caretakers must park and walk the child(ren) into the building and to their assigned area. At the end of the day, the procedure is reversed. This was described as a 5 to 7 minute process. Therefore, short-time parking is needed, but since arrivals and departures are so staggered, the parking requirements are not onerous. TLE will operate under certification regulations of the State Department of Health and the NJ Department of Families and children. NJDEP approvals are also required for mandatory soil sampling and water testing. The highest security measures are also incorporated in the design.



Mr. Jarmal then described the proposed floor plan as included in the application (page SA 1.1) “Classrooms” are divided by age, and an indoor play area is included. Plans also call for a 5,000sf outdoor playground area adjacent to the building, divided in half to accommodate younger and older children. The play area is proposed to be surrounded by a 6’ high solid vinyl fence for safety and privacy. After discussion amongst Board members, Mr. Jarmal agreed to use a beige colored vinyl fence. A 4’ high black coated chain link fence will divide the area in half. Board members agreed to this style since it will not be able to be seen from the outside. The turf safety surfacing to be utilized is permeable. A 4’ vinyl fence as a safety feature to “contain” children will surround the other areas of the building.

Mr. Jarmal went on to discuss the operational aspects. The maximum capacity of The Learning Experience will be 163 children and 23 staff. Based on corporate experience, the great majority of Centers operate at 80-85% of capacity.

In regards to deliveries, no loading dock is needed since Amazon, Fed-Ex or UPS deliver all operational materials and supplies. Fifty-seven (57) parking spaces are being provided for this building, but based upon operations at other TLE centers in other areas; only 35 to 40 parking spaces are needed and utilized.

Mr. Jamal then distributed Exhibit A-18, which was a photograph of a similarly designed center in Pennsylvania. The building is 85 feet wide by 125 feet in length. The colors of this proposed TLE building will match those in the photograph. The HVAC mechanicals and equipment will be roof mounted, as additional air exchange is required. Based upon feedback from the Board professionals, changes were made to the building mounted sign. The applicant is proposing raised channel letters with gooseneck lighting to comply with the sign ordinance. The gooseneck lights will be off when the Center is closed. No internally illuminated signs are proposed.

Discussion then ensued on the building blocks on the two support columns on the front door portico. (ABC and 1,2,3) Mr. Jarmal explained that they are a registered trademark for the Learning Experience. Mr. Taylor elucidated why these were determined to be signs and thus will require variance relief.

The monument sign is proposed to be externally illuminated with gooseneck lighting per Mr. Taylor’s recommendation. The intent is to comply with the sign ordinance in regards to the size and location. No details were provided with this application, as the property owner has not determined who will be the tenant(s) in the proposed retail space building. Accordingly, the design of the monument sign will be included in the application for Final Site Plan approval of the retail space.

Mr. Toumas was next to testify on the proposed overall site plan. He referenced Exhibit A-1; an aerial image of the site. The area currently consists of three (3) lots to be consolidated totaling 4.65 acres in the Highway Management (HM) Zone. Both the day care facility and retail space are permitted uses. The site will be accommodated with both municipal water and sanitary sewer service.

The day care building is proposed at 10,000 square feet; and the retail building at 10,640 square feet. The parcels will not need to be totally clear-cut of existing trees and vegetation. There is proposed two (2) access driveways; one a right turn only into the parking areas, and the other a full driveway onto Old Marlton Pike. The owner has agreed to the Board professionals' recommendation to add a dedicated left turn lane.

A total of 57 parking spaces are being provided for the day care facility, and a total of 61 spaces will be provided for the retail space. Six (6) of these spaces will be handicapped parking, and four (4) EV charging spaces are also being provided.

Since the site grading is lower than the surrounding areas, three basins are included in the site plan. A sewer pump will carry waste across the street to existing sewer lines. Water access is available on Old Marlton Pike.

The landscaping plan calls for maintaining both the wooded 25' and 50' property buffers; and these buffer areas will be enhanced with added trees. A berm is proposed along Old Marlton Pike as required with added landscaping on top as required in the ordinances. Much discussion ensued amongst Board members on the amount of clearing and grading proposed in the buffer areas. Mr. Toumas reiterated that maintaining as much of the existing vegetation as possible is the goal. Mr. Taylor commented that in walking the site, there are many trees covered in vines that are not worth keeping. Chairman Hartwig asked if the applicant would accept a condition to work with both Mr. Taylor and Mr. Noll on the landscaping plan to their satisfaction as a condition of approval, to which Mr. Toumas responded yes.

Mr. Toumas went on to discuss the proposed parking area lighting plan, which calls for 12 light posts. He stated they would comply with Mr. Noll's recommendations as delineated in his review letter, acknowledging the one proposed light at the driveway entrance will need a design waiver since it does not comply with the height as per the ordinances.

Mr. Toumas concluded his testimony by acknowledging that the applicant agrees to comply with all other comments in Mr. Noll's and Mr. Taylor's respective review letters.

Mr. Taylor asked about the proposed fences around the basins. Mr. Noll commented that the preference is not to have any fences surrounding basins. Mr. Toumas answered that in this proposed plan, the fences are requested for the safety of the children. After discussion on the type of fencing, it was mutually agreed that the fences would be pressure treated post & rail with wire mesh.

Mr. Noll confirmed earlier testimony that no loading dock is proposed. He also commented that the driveway encroachment from Lot 12 would have to be mitigated with that property owner. In regards to the site lighting, he reminded Mr. Toumas that a night light test is needed; and that the one light at the driveway entrance will require a design waiver.



Mr. Noll also noted that a Right-of-Way dedication is required for NJDOT related easements for drainage.

Lastly, he pointed out that the existing sidewalk will be continued along the entire frontage of the consolidated lots, and confirmed that the water and sanitary sewer service is being provided by Medford Township.

A 5-minute recess took place from 8:35 to 8:40 pm.

Mr. Stockton was next to testify. He spoke to the “ABC-123” blocks on the columns as being a visual appeal to the intended audience of young children, and are decorative in nature and design. As spelled out in Section 526 of the Land Development Ordinances-Signs, they are not wall mounted or freestanding so by definition, they meet the criteria, but technically a variance is required because being located on the portico support columns they are a part of the principle structure. Mr. Stockton stated that they are not a detriment to the public good, nor do they impair the intent of the Ordinance or the Master Plan. He would qualify this as a flexible c(2) variance, as the building blocks on the columns promotes a desirable visual environment for the childcare facility. Further, since the columns with the building blocks are oriented towards the interior of the site and are not proposed to be internally or externally illuminated, there will be no substantial visual impact.

Mr. Taylor added that “Phasing Plan” notes should be included on the conformance plans, being that Phase I includes all basins, all parking lot areas, and all site lighting; and Phase II will be the retail building, the sidewalk, and the monument sign.

**PUBLIC:** No one from the public spoke.

Mayor Watson made a motion to close the public portion. Mr. Devlin seconded.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. McAndrew suggested that the Board could vote separately on the Site Plan, then on the building blocks on the columns. After discussion amongst Board members, Chairman Hartwig stated it would be all one motion.

Vice Chairman Juliano made a motion to approve the application, including bulk variance approval for the building block signs on the columns and design waiver approval for the driveway light, conditioned upon (1) compliance with the Board Planner’s and Board Engineer’s review letters, (2) making the required ROW dedication, (3) the night light test, (4) complying with the Board Planner’s and Board’s Engineer’s landscaping recommendations in the buffer areas and (5) post & rail with wire mesh basin fencing and beige colored vinyl fencing to enclose the playground area. Mr. Perks second.

Recorded Vote:

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Ayes:           | Bielec, Czekay, Hartwig, Juliano, Perks, Watson, Devlin |
| Nays:           | None  |
| Abstentions:    | None  |
| Motion carried: | 7 - 0 - 0   |

**GENERAL PUBLIC:** None.

Mayor Watson made a motion to close the public portion. Mr. Perks seconded.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Councilman Czekay made a motion to adjourn the August 23, 2023 Planning Board Meeting at 9:06 pm. Mr. Devlin seconded. A unanimous voice vote in favor carried the motion.



---

Ann Bell, Planning Board Secretary



---

Beth Portocalis, Recording Secretary