MINUTES
PLANNING BOARD
TOWNSHIP OF CHATHAM
DECEMBER 19, 2022

Mr. Sullivan called the Regular Meeting of the Planning Board to order at 7:29 P.M.

Adequate notice of the meetings of the Planning Board of the Township of Chatham was given as required by the Open Public Meetings Act as follows: Notice in the form of a Resolution setting forth the schedule of meetings for the year 2022, and January, 2023 was published in the *Chatham Courier* and the *Morris County Daily Record*, a copy was filed with the Municipal Clerk and a copy was placed on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the Municipal Building.

Roll Call

Answering present to the roll call were Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Choi, Mr. Duemling, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Miller, Mr. Nikolopoulos and Mr. Neibert.

Mrs. Felice, Mr. Kahn and Mr. Shehady were absent.

Also present were Board Attorney Steve Warner, Board Planner Frank Banisch and Board Engineer John Ruschke.

Minutes

Mr. Hamilton moved to approve the minutes of the December 5, 2022 meeting. Mr. Miller seconded the motion which carried unanimously with abstentions from those who were absent from that meeting.

Hearings

PBA-22-010 Chatham Emergency Squad, Inc., 45 Spring Street, Block: 102.11 Lot: 2. Requesting Preliminary and Final Site Plan Approval and One Variance

Michael Miller, an attorney representing the applicant, provided an overview of the application and introduced the applicant's witnesses.

The witnesses and Board professionals were sworn in to give testimony.

Steve Davenport, the President of the Chatham Emergency Squad, provided background on the CES. He also provided information on why the application is necessary to better serve both the Community and the needs of the Squad members. He stated that overnight sleeping quarters will be added, and personal storage space for members will be installed. New training technology will also be installed and the office will be updated. A dedicated decontamination space will be added and the ambulance bay will be climate controlled. Mr. Davenport addressed the need for a variance to have only 15 parking spaces rather than the 47 that would be required by ordinance, and he said that having 15 would be an increase from the existing 8 spaces. He noted the safety aspects of having squad members park closer to the building. Mr. Davenport noted the detriment to the neighborhood if all 47 spaces were built.

Mr. Neibert asked about the number of trees to be removed. Mr. Davenport said that 5 mature trees are proposed for removal. Mr. Neibert asked about use of the Colony Tennis parking area. Mr. Davenport addressed the safety aspects of having more readily available parking for Squad members with more direct access to the building.

Mr. Sullivan asked if additional parking is needed at all, and if the proposed parking spots were added only to satisfy the Planning Board. Mr. Davenport said that more parking is needed, and the design is intended to minimize the amount of parking added.

Mr. Miller asked the size of the trees to be removed. Architect Eric Baker said that the largest tree is a three foot caliper. Mr. Davenport commented on the wooded buffer with neighboring properties. Mr. Miller asked if parking at the Colony Tennis Courts becomes unavailable during the summer. Mr. Davenport said he does not recall a time when parking was not available to the Squad in the overflow lot.

Mr. Davenport stated that during building renovations, CES will operate out of the Borough facility on North Passaic Ave. Following renovations at the Township facility, CES will seek to renovate their Borough facility.

Mr. Miller asked about security lighting that would not encroach on other properties. Mr. Davenport said there will be exterior lighting that will conform to code.

Mr. Davenport addressed reserving the three closest spots to the door for Squad members who are arriving to respond to a specific emergency.

Mr. Banisch noted that the Emergency Squad is a public good, and the plan is well thought out.

Eric Baker, an architect representing the applicant, provided his qualifications and was accepted as an expert.

Mr. Baker described efforts to upgrade the CES facility to better accommodate the Squad's needs in a way that minimizes impact.

Exhibit A-1, a rendering and front elevation of the proposed facility, was entered into the record.

Mr. Baker presented Exhibit A-2 which was a floor plan of the proposed building. Mr. Baker noted that the generator will remain in the same place, and will not provide full home coverage however it will satisfy the basic needs. Mr. Davenport noted that an upgraded generator would cost $100,000 in added expense. Mr. Baker commented on the safety aspects of having more parking directly at the building.

Mr. Choi asked about safety measures to protect the bike path from the additional parking. Mr. Baker addressed the distance from the parking to the bike path.

Mr. Hamilton asked about decontamination. Mr. Davenport said that the current unit is a shower in the interior of the building and is not currently sufficient. Mr. Hamilton asked about any danger from the oxygen tank storage. Mr. Davenport said that the proposed storage would be safer.

There were no questions from the public for Mr. Baker.

Andrew Clarke, an engineer representing the applicant, provided his qualifications and was accepted as an expert.

Mr. Clarke presented the proposed site plan. He noted trees to be removed, and addressed the proposed layout and grading. Mr. Baker noted that the parking is a curbed lot and is at a minimum of 5 feet from the bike path. He also addressed drainage measures.

Mr. Miller asked about protection to the Squad from users of the bike path. Mr. Davenport commented on the lack of issues with pedestrians. He also said that there is the potential of the Township installing a fence as part of the easement agreement.

Requirements for a handicapped parking spot were discussed. Mr. Ruschke said he would check to see who would have authority to give any relief to keep the existing configuration for the spot.

Mr. Clarke addressed the review memorandum from Mr. Ruschke’s office.

Mr. Davenport asked if the Board could approve a variance for a range of parking spaces with a minimum of 12 and a maximum 15 without an additional Planning Board hearing. It was suggested that drainage be designed for the 15 spots and allowance be granted for fewer spots. Planning for EV charging stations in the future was suggested.

The C2 variance criteria was addressed.

There was no public comment or questions.

Mr. Warner reviewed the conditions of approval. Infrastructure will be included for future EV charging stations.

Mr. Hamilton moved to approve the application subject to the conditions and stipulations discussed. Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Mr. Sullivan, Aye; Mr.Choi, Aye; Mr. Duemling, Aye; Mrs. Felice, Absent; Mr. Kahn, Absent; Mr. Hamilton, Aye; Mr. Miller, Aye; Mr. Nikolopoulos, Aye; Mr. Shehady. Absent; Mr. Neibert, Aye.

Mr. Sullivan thanked the Board for their work this past year and wished everyone a happy holiday season. The next Planning Board meeting will be rescheduled for January 23rd.

Mr. Sullivan moved to adjourn at 9:00 PM. Mr. Choi seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Gregory J. LaConte
Planning Board Recording Secretary