

Borough of West Long Branch

Zoning Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes of February 26, 2015

Contact:

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Category: ZONING BOARD MEETINGS

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ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
OF THE BOROUGH OF WEST LONG BRANCH

FEBRUARY 26, 2015

The Regular Meeting of the Zoning Board of Adjustment of the Borough of West Long Branch was held on February 26, 2015 at 7:00 PM in Borough Hall.

The Board secretary verified that adequate notice of the meeting was published and posted in accordance with the Senator Byron M. Baer Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6) known as the Open Public Meetings Law.

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Mr. John Penta

Mr. Michael Habeck

Mr. Jared Murphy

Mrs. Pamela Hughes

Mr. Paul Santorelli

Mr. Paul Giglio

Members Absent: Mr. Scott LaMarca

Mr. Michael Schulz Mr. Robert Venezia

Planning Board Members: Stephen Bray
Gordon Heggie

Also Present: George Cieri, Esq.

Bonnie L. Heard, P.E.

Lisa Norman, C.S.R.

MINUTES:

The Board reviewed the minutes for January 22, 2015. Mr. Habeck made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Penta seconded the motion, which was approved by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Mr. Penta, Mr. Habeck, Mrs. Hughes Mr. Santorelli, and Mr. Giglio.

NAYES: None

NOT POLLED: Mr. Murphy

Pamela Hughes and Michael Habeck excused themselves as they both have conflicts of interest with the Monmouth University

application. Stephen Bray and Gordon Heggie of the Planning Board will sit in on the Board as voting members.

MATTERS BEFORE THE BOARD

APPLICATIONS:

New Application:
MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY
BLK: 39 LOT:P/O 8

Wendell Smith, Esq., was present on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Cieri advised the Board that the notice materials were reviewed and jurisdiction was taken at the December 18, 2014 meeting of the Board, at which time the matter was carried to the February 26, 2015 meeting. The Board also approved requested waivers of completeness at the December meeting. Mr. Smith advised the Board that the applicant is proposing additions and renovations to the existing Science building at the University. He explained that the proposal will require "c" variances for the most part for existing conditions on the site, and a "d" variance for the height of the new renovation.

Patricia Swannack, Vice President of Administrative Services in charge of Campus Planning was introduced and sworn.

EXHIBITS:

A series of photos taken February 20, 2015 were introduced.

A-1 Interior photo of existing Science building.

A-2 Photo of existing Science building.

A-3 Photo of existing Science lab.

A-4 Photo of renovated areas of the building.

A-5 Photo of Physics research classroom.

A-6 Photo of Study rooms.

A-6 Photo of existing study areas.

A-7 Photo of study and research area.

A-8 Photo of existing Lab.

A-9 Photo of East side of the Building.

A-10 Photo of West side of the Building.

A-11 Photo of the "link" between two buildings where addition is proposed.

A-12 Rendering of the floor plan with areas colored for different uses.

A-13 Rendering of the 1st floor plan with offices and facilities for research.

A-14 Rendering of the 3rd floor plan with existing science and faculty research.

Ms. Swannack introduced the photos and described them to the Board. She advised the Board that the University is trying to bring its Science facilities into the 21st Century. The existing school is not ADA compliant, is constructed of cold concrete, narrow hallways, low light, and outdated fume hoods. When it was built the computer rooms did not require the sophisticated cooling systems that are required now. She explained that the renovations and addition are not intended to increase enrollment, but to improve the University's ability to be more competitive.

Dr. Michael Paladino was sworn and he described his credentials and connection with the University. As Dean of the Science Department he supported the renovations and improvements to the facilities before the Board, as the facilities at the University are behind the times as a competitive environment for the new students. He advised the Board that he has been responsible for several grants and author of textbooks in Bio-technology and Genetics used nationally and globally for several years now. He advises that the Science students who presently attend the University are successful in obtaining employment and entering other Graduate schools. His wish is to achieve improvements in the facilities so that the University can continue to offer a successful environment and improve research facilities so that they can be more competitive in employing the best faculty and better and better students. He reiterated that the intention was not to increase the student enrollment, but to improve it. He referred to the photos submitted into evidence and supported the opinion that the facilities are much like those of high schools. The new lab and study areas will include state of the art equipment including new fume hoods, which are absolutely necessary for a safe environment. He advised that Science education in today's best schools cannot be just a lecture hall and books, it must include research. The more research that a student is involved in,

hands on, the better their chances for future employment and graduate education. The University offers research opportunities in the summer, so that students can improve their knowledge and experience for their future. The Science Department presently holds five patents. All students at the University must attend at least 4 Science classes in order to graduate.

Andy Wong was sworn, and accepted as an expert witness, and the architect for the project. He described the plans and layouts of the three floors of renovations. He explained to the Board how the new renovations which will be located where the existing "link" is located, which is a bridge in essence to the two buildings. He described new layout of classrooms, study rooms, faculty rooms, and labs, and how far more efficient the areas will be. He described the exterior changes, which will help remove the institutional look of the outside of the structures. He advised the Board that the first level is presently a walk through area, which is a constant flooding nuisance. He testified that this area will be filled in with a walled area which should eliminate the flooding. He described the changes, which will not only improve the layout and conditions of the Science School, but add charm and light to the whole area. He stated that the new addition will essentially be the same as the existing side footprints, and the height is needed so that all of the HVAC equipment can be located on the roof and be screened with a compact mansard treatment. He stated that the materials will be brick, glass, metal frames, stone and painted metal. He testified that the existing science facility is 79,359 SF and will be 97,422 SF. He stated that the "link" will become three levels. Mr. Giglio asked how the new facilities will be "green" and how they will address the requirements for new computer systems. Mr. Wong stated that they intend to install state of the art fiber cables with enough capability to grow into the future. They are designing all of the fume hoods to maintain safe levels, and modulated to shut down or lower when the rooms are not occupied.

William Fitzgerald, P.E., P.P., was sworn and accepted as an expert, and engineer for the project. Mr. Fitzgerald, had the set of site plans for the project, dated 10/18/14 marked as A-15. He further described the location of the project on the 64-65 acre site. He stated that the area affected by the renovations is approximately one acre. He stated that the adjacent new Business School renovations are under construction. He described the "link" area to be demolished, where the first level is essentially a drive-thru for campus vehicles and pedestrian walk through. He stated that they proposed to fill in the ground area in order to address the flooding in that area. He described the location of large Sycamore trees, which will not be affected by the changes. Some of the evergreens that are adjacent to the structure will be lost. He continued by describing sheets 1-6. He described the new lighting as similar to existing pole mount lighting on the campus, using only LED lighting. The level of the lighting is for illumination of the pedestrian walking areas only, with no spillage onto any adjacent lots or streets. He provided a set of 3 photos, which was marked as A-16, which he described to the Board. He described the existing drainage over the site, which is directed over the lot to the southerly stream. He stated that the NJDEP will not easily entertain any other drainage solution, than the water running across the land. They are planning on filling in the low area, and constructing walls to help direct the water to south end of the lot. Mr. Fitzgerald addressed the letter from T&M; as follows:

1.1 – A required variance, but no expansion on this, an existing condition.

1.2 - There is no 25' buffer on the side and rear, and this is an existing condition, there will be no change.

1.3 – There are numerous accessory buildings, and this is an existing condition, with no change.

1.4 – "d(6)" variance for the height of the new structure, at 41.8' where 35' is permitted. He explained that there is no substantial change in the existing height of the structure, just a mansard structure to screen the mechanical equipment to be installed on the roof.

1.5 – A variance for the parapet screen, which is not required, as it does not exceed the permitted height.

1.6 – Signs – Not more than one sign is permitted, and the sign exceeds the SF permitted. He described the sign as similar to the others on campus, which is on the inside wall, just the letters of the name of the building, large enough to be seen across the campus for proper identification for pedestrian location of the building.

2.1 – NJDOT – improvements are to existing areas, where the traffic impacts do not increase enough to require NJDOT permits.

2.2 – The parking has been granted by this Board and the Board of Adjustment, where 2,203 exists and 3,752 are required. The new proposal is not intended to increase enrollment, and parking agreements are in place, which do not allow for large events occurring at the same time. The new proposal anticipates less faculty and no more students.

2.3 – There are no loading zones. The campus presently operates with deliveries made on off peak hours where drop off is done pathways, with no issues or problems. They do not anticipate this to change.

2.4 – Parking demands are addressed in the Traffic Study Report.

2.5 – With regard to comments about off campus parking. Ms. Swannock advised the Board that she receives monthly reports, which indicate there are a few cars found parking off campus, but since Bey Hall was approved, they are immediately responding where complaints are made and they patrol these areas also. She also pointed out that residents are allowed to park on streets in most areas, so it is hard to tell sometimes if it is a student or a resident.

2.7 – New faculty needs will decrease as they will become full time, so less faculty is required.

2.8 – Addressed in traffic report.

2.9 – They agree to repair and replace any broken or removed curb and sidewalk.

2.10 – Fire Marshall has already approved the plans.

2.12 – Cedar and Norwood to the north NJDOT jurisdiction, and Norwood south is Monmouth County DOT.

2.13 – The wall is conforming because it is on the inside of the site, and they will save the trees where possible, and landscape where removed.

2.14 – Addressed.

3 – Landscaping was described and found to be sufficient.

4 – Lighting – they will supply details where required by the engineer.

5 – Grading and Drainage was adequately addressed.

6 – Phasing – One Phase – all at one time. All required additional submissions will be complied with.

Mr. Fitzgerald, continued his testimony as a Professional Planner, on the variances. He advised the Board that the existing University and these improvements are of no significant impact and to the zone plan, and are for an existing conforming use. He stated that the “d” variance is for a diminimus increase to the existing height of the structure in order to screen mechanical equipment on the roof. He explained that the improvements are essentially on the internal campus more that 600’ from any other use, and will be barely noticeable as they are in the place of the existing “link”. He testified that the proposal is in order to bring the existing science facilities into the 21st Century so that the University can be competitive in the provided science facilities. He further testified that all of the proposed changes and renovations can be done without any significant detriment, but in fact will enhance the beautification of the campus, and improvement of the existing University facilities.

The Board felt that all traffic questions had been asked and did not require further traffic testimony.

There were no public questions or comments.

Mr. Penta asked what the maximum number of students that would use the new facilities. Ms. Swannack spoke, and stated that it was difficult to say as parts are occupied when others are not, but there student body in the Science Department was approximately 550 students total. She stated that they have a strategic intention to cap the number of students and improve the level of students, with any graduate programs to be offered at the Monmouth Park Associates off site location. Mr. Heggie asked how they would continue while the work was being done. He was told that they will switch out space with the new “link” areas until work is completed.

Mr. Murphy made a motion to approve the variances and site plan as presented, and congratulated the applicant on a comprehensive presentation, on what was presented as a positive improvement to the University and the Borough. Mr. Penta seconded the motion, which was approved by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Mr. Penta, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Santorelli, Mr. Giglio, Mr. Bray, and Mr. Heggie.

NAYES: None

NOT POLLED: None

RESOLUTIONS: NONE

Mr. Penta received an email inquiring if the Board would be willing to move the July meeting to another date, as the MC Board of Freeholders would like to hold a meeting on July 23, 2015. Mr. Penta advised that he wanted to wait until the entire Board was present to make a decision.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned, at 9:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna R. Wainright

Recording Secretary