

CITY OF ENGLEWOOD PLANNING BOARD

AUGUST 3, 2023--7:30 P.M.
REMOTE MEETING/ZOOM MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

Opening: Chairman David called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.; Mrs. Myers read the open public meeting statement, salute to the flag

Roll Call:

Members Present: Chairman Anthony David, Vice Chairman Howard Shafer, Mayor Michael Wildes, Councilman Kevin Wilson (arrived 7:49pm), Ms. Mercedes Cordon, Raphael Rosenblatt (arrived 7:45pm), Mr. Salvadore Almonte, Ms. Emily Mann

Members Absent: Mr. Allen George, Ms. Diana Patino-Valle, Mr. Ilan Lerman

Attorney Present: Douglas M. Bern, Esq.

Advisors Present: Robert Costa, P.E., P.P., C.M.E., Chelsea Gleis, P.P., AICP, Court Stenographer, Laura Carucci

Board Secretary: Paris Myers

MINUTES:

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 22, 2023:

- Motion: Ms. Mann Seconded by: Ms. Cordon
- Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to Adjourn Scheduled Cases and Procedures: None

Resolutions For Approval: None

Completeness Review:

- Board Engineer, Robert Costa of Costa Engineering stated that the File 2023-04 Community Seventy Day Adventist Church is for the replacement of an existing monument sign with a digital sign, simple variances and may proceed for the hearing.

Public Hearings:

- (a) **File:** 2023-04 Community Seventh Day Adventist Church
Premises: 245 Tenafly Road, Block 807, Lot 27
Attorney: John M. Barbarula, Esq.
- o Applicant proposes to replace the existing freestanding monument sign with an internally illuminated monument sign with a color digital message board.

John M. Barbarula, Esq. representing the applicant, Community Seventh Day Adventist Church presented the application to the Board. He gave a brief overview of the application stating that the applicant proposes to replace the existing freestanding monument sign with an internally illuminated monument sign with a color digital message board.

Mr. Barbarula calls his first witness, Edward DeZuzio from Butler Sign Company, 582 Fairfield Road, Wayne, New Jersey. Mr. Bern swore in Mr. DeZuzio. Mr. DeZuzio stated that he has 43 years of experience in the sign business, he prepared the Exhibits for this application and has been qualified in other jurisdictions as an expert in his field. Mr. DeZuzio was qualified by the Board as an expert in this field.

Mr. DeZuzio gave a brief synopsis of the project. The existing sign has been in place since the the 1990's. It is an analog version of a copy sign. The proposed sign is the same size as the existing sign. The plan is to use the existing structure for the new sign while modernizing it with digital components. The background of the proposed digital sign will be dark with the letters being illuminated.

Mr. DeZuzio testified that the letters will be 8 inches high with the logo being a maximum of 14 inches in height. The digital board will dim every night at 11:00pm. Messages will be scrolling or will change approximately every 2 minutes. The church will post community emergency messages and events. Mr. DeZuzio also indicated that a power upgrade is not necessary to illuminate the sign.

The Board had comments regarding the frequency of scrolling of messages, whether or not the digital board would be a distraction to drivers and the height of the lettering. All questions were satisfactorily answered by Mr. DeZuzio.

Mr. Costa added that he did not feel that there would be any traffic issues.

At this time the hearing was opened for public comment; one member of the public had questions for Mr. DeZuzio. Diane Jansen of 589 Ridgeland Terrace, Englewood, NJ asked Mr. DeZuzio how the digital billboard would add to the character of the neighborhood. Mr. DeZuzio replied that it would bring the church more into the community.

Ms. Cordon added that she resides near the church and feels it would be a great improvement to the church property and a great way to stay integrated with the community.

Councilman Cobb voiced his concern that the digital sign may be a distraction to drivers driving past the area. He also asked whether or not a traffic study was conducted. Mr. Barbarula indicated

that a traffic study was not conducted as the application is for the replacement of an existing sign with a new digital sign. The size of the sign will not be changed.

Mr. Shafer asked Mr. DeZuzio if this was the first time replacing a sign like this? Mr. DeZuzio responded that it was not, that this type of sign is now standard. He has replaced or installed signs in other residential areas without traffic issues.

At this time the Board felt all questions were satisfactorily answered by Mr. DeZuzio. His testimony was concluded.

Mr. Barbarula called Mr. Donald Hairston, Treasurer and Member of the Community Seventh Day Adventist Church as a fact witness. Mr. Hairston has an address of 145 Magnolia Avenue, Dumont, NJ.

Mr. Hairston testified that the church has a large number of members from the City and the vicinity. The church is located near the high school and Durie Avenue and Ivy Lane. He indicated that the church has plans for additional improvements including an upgrade for perimeter security cameras and landscaping, however no timeline is available as the improvements will be done when funds are available.

On behalf of the church Mr. Hairston agreed to the proposed terms of the sign dimming at 11:00pm; the church logo cannot be higher than 14 inches and lettering not higher than 8 inches. Additionally, he indicated that it was not the church's intention to have rotating messages but if the need arises the scrolling will be kept to two (2) minutes per message, and he agreed to reevaluate lighting in the event of public nuisance after six (6) months.

At this time members of the Board had questions for Mr. Hairston.

- Mayor Wildes asked about possible traffic issues and how important is the sign. Mr. Hairston replied that the church only wanted to have a modern sign to make it more efficient to be able to change the message. Douglas Bern, Esq., Board Attorney indicated that the illuminated sign is allowed in this area.
- Ms. Cordon indicated that the Presbyterian Church on Knickerbocker Road has a sign like the one being proposed, and she is unaware of any issues.
- Several members of the public had comments regarding possible traffic issues, types of community messages and whether or not a traffic study should have been conducted. Mr. Costa replied to the traffic study issue again indicating that it was not necessary and a letter from the Englewood Police Department was not received with any concerns.

The Board felt that Mr. Hairston answered all questions and comments satisfactorily and his testimony was concluded.

Mr. Barbarula gave a brief summation indicating that the replacement of the outdated sign with a new modern digital one has been in the making for the past eight (8) months. The new sign will be the same size as the existing sign and installed in the same exact place as the existing sign. He

reiterated that illuminated signs are permitted in this zone and that the application should be granted without detriment.

Chairman David called for a motion to approve the application: The motion was made by Ms. Mann and seconded by Vice Chairman Shafter.

Vote:

Ayes: Chairman David, Vice Chairman Shafter, Mayor Wildes, Councilman Wilson, Ms. Cordon, Mr. Rosenblatt, Mr. Almonte and Ms. Mann.

Nays: None

The application passed with the following conditions:

- Letters—8 inches maximum height
- Logo—14 inches maximum height
- Messages to change/scroll in 2 minute increments
- Sign to dim at 11:00pm every evening.
- Review of lighting nuisance after six (6) months.

(b) File: 2023-07 Bergen Family Center

Premises: 44 Armory Street

- **Installation of a Collaborative Community Mural**

Ms. Mann, Chairperson of the Sign Committee gave a brief overview of the proposed mural and how it came about. She indicated that the mural was a gift from an artist to the Bergen Family Community Center. It was a project to be worked on by the teens at the Center. Unfortunately, due to the timing of the mural project it had to be completed over the summer vacation time prior to coming to the Board. The Building Department made an exception and granted the necessary permits for the mural. All application fees and paperwork were submitted and accepted.

Alexis Cooperman, 314 Maple, Englewood, NJ; Head of Development at the Bergen Family Center and Harry Martin, 193 Truman, Cresskill, NJ; Chairman of the Board of Trustees attended on behalf of the Bergen Family Center; both were sworn in by Mr. Bern as fact witnesses.

Ms. Cooperman described the mural as a 30 ft. by 15 ft. mural on the parking lot side of the building on 44 Armory Street. It was a well thought out project; the teens of the Center wanted a mural of positivity; a mural of positive and inspirational words and very colorful. The artist was Marco Santini, a world class artist who has created many murals in New York City.

Mr. Martin showed pictures of the completed mural.

The Board was very pleased and had no questions for Ms. Cooperman or Mr. Martin.

The hearing was opened to the public, Councilman Cobb suggested that the City should help non-profits and waive fees.

At this time all testimony was completed. Chairman David asked for a motion to approve this application: Mayor Wildes made the motion to approve; Ms. Mann seconded the motion;

Vote:

Ayes: Chairman David, Vice Chairman Shafter, Mayor Wildes, Councilman Wilson,
Ms. Cordon, Mr. Rosenblatt, Mr. Almonte and Ms. Mann.

Nays: None

Application passed with a unanimous vote.

No conditions were recommended by the Board.

Old/New Business:

**Ordinance #23-22 An Ordinance to Amend and Supplement Chapter 250, Titled “Land Use”
Creating Affordable Housing Overlay Zones**

Mr. Bern gave a brief overview of Ordinance 23-22 and described the role of the Planning Board in this instance.

Mr. Bern stated that Master Plans are updated every ten (10) years. The City’s Master Plan will be reviewed and amended if necessary next year (2024).

The Affordable Housing Element & Fair Share Plan Settlement Agreement provides for a number of housing credits and compliance. A statement adopted by the Planning Board was prepared indicating the Board’s finding that the Overlay Ordinance is inconsistent with the Master Plan and to be forwarded to the Mayor and Council, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. The Council has the authority to accept or decline the finding provided to them from the Planning Board.

All Board Members made comments, discussed as a Board and/or stressed their individual unhappiness with the way the overlay ordinance and Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and related settlement was handled by the Council, and how it is inconsistent with the Master Plan of 2014.

Five (5) members of the public spoke about their disapproval of the overlay zone.

Chairman David calls for a vote that Ordinance 23-22 An Ordinance to Amend and Supplement Chapter 250, Titled “Land Use” Creating Affordable Housing Overlay Zones, as *inconsistent* with the Master Plan of 2014.

Motion Ms. Mann and seconded by Vice Chairman Shafer.

Yay: Chairman David, Vice Chairman Shafter, Mayor Wildes, Councilman Wilson, Ms. Cordon,
Mr. Rosenblatt, Mr. Almonte, Ms. Mann

Nay: None

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Chairman David thanks the Board and asks for a motion to adjourn:

Motion: Vice Chairman Shafer

Seconded by: Mr. Rosenblatt

Vote: All in favor

Meeting adjourned at 10:30pm

Respectfully submitted,

Paris Myers,

Planning Board Secretary