

VOORHEES TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD MINUTES-SEPTEMBER 11, 2014

The Chairman called the meeting to order and stated it was being held in compliance with the "Open Public Meetings Act" and being duly noticed and published by law

ROLL CALL (7:40pm)

PRESENT: Mr. Weil, Mr. Cohen (left sick), Mr. Cupersmith, Mr. Willard, Mr. Quarishi, Mr. Kerr Mr. Daddario , Mrs. Cherylynn Walters, Esq, the board attorney, Doug Rohymeyer, P.E. from CME and the planner from CME

ABSENT: Mr. Leoncio

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES: NONE

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APPROVAL OF RESOLUTIONS:

CELLCO:

Motion was made by Mr. Weil; Seconded by Mr. Cupersmith; Abstain: Mr. Kerr and Mr. Senges. The remaining voice vote was in favor.

GALLO:

Motion was made by Mr. Weil; Seconded by Mr. Willard. Abstain: Mr. Kerr and Mr. Senges. The remaining voice vote was in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE: NONE

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NEW BUSINESS:

Khmer Buddhist Humanitarian Association

Block 262, Lots 6, 6.02, 7 and 8

1232-1238 Berlin Road

This application is continued from July 10, 2014. The applicant is seeking:

A use variance from Section 152.082 and 152.084 to permit the use of the existing home located on Block 262 , Lot 6 (1234 Berlin Road) to be used as a residence rectory for three (3) persons (monks) in the B zone which does not permit any residential dwellings.

A use variances from Sections 152.082 and 152.084 of the Voorhees Township Zoning ordinance code book to permit a house of worship and meditative gardens to be constructed in the b zone on Block 262, Lot 7 (1236 berlin road), lot 8 (1238 berlin road and lot 6.02 (1232 berlin rd) in the township of Voorhees in a zone that does not permit said use.

Variance from Section 154.013(b) (2) requiring a recreational impact fee to allow no recreational impact fee to be imposed.

Mrs. Walters stated that they are not here for a site plan. She wanted Mr. Grayson, the applicant's attorney to notice for the height-which was not done in the last notice-she felt there would be a need for that in the notice.

In addition any and all variances waivers, design waivers and ordinance interpretations that may be necessary.

All the professionals for testimony were sworn in for testimony per the board attorney's request Anthony Sirizzotti-the architect from The Bannett Group, Khatbulthy Butthali-Monk with the Temple, and James Kyle.

The board solicitor asked Mr. Grayson the applicant's attorney if he wanted to have all items voted on together or individually due to the fact that if the worship center was denied they could still have the interest in the residence approval, since there is no site plan this evening.

Mr. Grayson was in agreement.

Mr. Senges stated that at the last meeting there was testimony on the height of the building, the spire and how high that was going to be –there was going to be a balloon test for the height to see how the affect was on the surrounding residents in the area.

Mr. Henry Haley gave testimony of his report and showed the board the display and what that meant. The temple building will be 92 ½ ft high. He had the survey crew obtain a helium balloon and set it for 93 ft from that location. The balloon is 30 inches in diameter. The applicant is planning on keeping as many trees as they possibly can. The exhibit A2 showed a 25 foot buffer around the entire site-the board discussed increasing the buffer. Jeff Senges suggested on the diagram that the lot with the white line and the density of the woods would the applicant be willing to allow that whole area to remain and not build on or knock down trees. The attorney spoke with his applicant and they agreed to that as a condition. If they wanted to expand they could come back to the board; the zoning board stated that they would really want that area to remain untouched. He stated that there are a lot of commercial sites off this Haddonfield-Berlin Road and that the buildings and the trees that are surrounding the area and stated that it was difficult to see the building. Mr. Weil had a good point and stated that when the leaves fall off the trees –there may be some more visibility.

Mr. Senges wanted to make sure the residents weren't going to see this large building and spire from their yards or sitting on their front porch.

Mr. Haley stated that there is a wall that goes around the entire site which is 6 ft high and the piers that accompany it will be 8 ft. He stated that the footprint of the temple itself is not that large, it is a very narrow structure. Mr. Senges asked the board engineer and the applicant if they would be willing to work with him to have a review of the landscape plan. The board asked if they would increase the buffer around the entire perimeter 35 ft in order to justify the height –no trees coming down.

Anthony Sirizzotti, the architect from The Bannett Group got up and spoke about the display of the temple and showing the spires. The temple has to be proportionate for it to all work and the shape and form and look has to all be the same-the Buddhist temple is not a temple unless it is proportionate.

The temples that the applicant is stating they are currently at and worshipping in Philadelphia –they do not call it a temple-they are houses of worship-they are not considered temples-the temple significance and height are a sign of intelligence and that it all has significance to the Buda.

Doug Rohymeyer, the board engineer was trying to figure out if the ordinance where the cupola, spire, roof of a church and there is a section in the ordinance that makes them exempt or an exception.

There was an exhibit marked A-6 –sheet SK-2 which the board has in their packets which displayed the roof line

There was a black and white exhibit marked A-5 of the spire.

The exhibit A-7 was the image of religious centers and what the spire looks like-but if you looked at the pictures the base of the temple is the same and the spires, there are some that are higher but they were all within proportion.

The board asked if there would be any lighting on site ? The applicant stated that there would be lighting on the outside of the roof on the building. There will be some on the columns. There will not be any illumination above 35 ft.

THERE IS A BREAK

The monk(did not get name) that is new in the country spoke. His English was not good and he stated that there is a huge importance in the temple being in proportion. He stated that the temple that they would like

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Alexander Khan and Sokahan-they reside in Cherry Hill. Alexander the son and Sokahan the father, they are members of the house of worship in Philadelphia and are looking to come to this temple when it is complete. They stated that the worship center in Philadelphia-there are usually 10-50 monks –there is no count for the people that are present-they were guessing 150-200. The monks sit in one area and the lower portion of the temple is where there is the actual congregation; so there may be 150 people

and 50 monks. During ceremonies there may be 500-600 people. They stated that there are times where they have to close off the streets because it gets so crowded in Philadelphia.

Peter Nong-he is the project manager for the congregation for the temple.

He stated that there is a 4x4 square area that the members would need in order to sit and pray . The board stated that so if it was a 4,000 sq ft building that would equal 250. He apologized for the confusion that everyone was giving the board and should have been more active in testifying information.

The Board solicitor and board chairman stated that there is a lot of testimony this evening and stated that there is all conflicting information for the amount of people showing up for services, then there is a conversation about conferences and then weddings, parties, etc. that was not given the first time the temple was before the board. The board just wants to make sure they have all the correct information for the application and to make sure the facts and information is consistent. They stated that they may have conferences at the community/rec room. The applicant was in agreement and the board felt that they should come back on another board meeting to go over this information. The next meeting that would be available would be October 23, 2014. The applicant's attorney was in agreement and agreed to continue the action date as well. The board solicitor stated that maybe having a traffic engineer available at the next meeting since the number of people for the use has some correlation with the parking available on site. The board did not want to compare to the mosque which is not far from this site, but they want to make sure that all the facts and information and that everyone is on the same page with the information that they are providing to the board because the mosque had many issues due to the fact the they did not project the right information for this religious center.

The meeting was adjourned.(10:15pm)

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie S. Marchitto, Board Secretary