

**Borough of Florham Park
Planning Board
Work Session Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2019**

The Work Session Meeting of the Borough of Florham Park Planning Board was called to order on Monday evening, October 21, 2019 at 6:30p.m. in the Municipal Building located at 111 Ridgedale Avenue, Florham Park, New Jersey.

Members Present:

Mr. Michael DeAngelis – Chairman
Mrs. Jane Margulies – Vice Chairman
Mayor Mark Taylor
Mrs. Carmen Cefolo-Pane
Mr. Michael Cannilla
Mr. Gary Feith
Mr. David Roberts

Members Absent:

Mr. Joseph Guerin
Mr. John Buchholz
Ms. Kristen Santoro (1st Alt)

Also Present:

Mr. Michael Sgaramella, Borough Engineer
Ms. Katherine O’Kane, Borough Planner
Mr. John Inglesino, Esq. Board Attorney

Statement of Adequate Notice:

Mr. DeAngelis issued the following statement:

“I hereby announce and state that adequate notice of this meeting was provided by the Secretary of this Board by preparing a notice, specifying the time, date and place of this meeting; posting such notice on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building; filing said notice with the Clerk of the Borough forwarding the notice to the Florham Park Eagle, and forwarding, by mail and fax, the said notice to all persons on the request list, and that said notice will be included in the minutes of this meeting. This action is in accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, et seq., “Open Public Meeting Act.”

Site Plan Waivers:

None

Mr. DeAngelis asked the Board members to review the new documentation related to this evening’s agenda items.

On a motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 6:40p.m.

October 21, 2019

Marlene Rawson
Board Secretary

Preliminary and Final Site Plan:

8. **Flo-Park Associates**
182 Ridgedale Avenue
Block 1902, Lot 1

Application #19SP-3 & 19SPW-13

Applicant is seeking approval for parking lot modifications and a change in tenancy for a fitness center (Orangetheory Fitness).

Carried from the October 7, 2019 meeting without further notice or publication

Larry Calli, Esq. represented the applicant. He stated that the site plan has been revised to include the compliant number of spaces.

Dan Sehna, Engineer remained sworn in. He reviewed the changes to the plan. There is now a compliant number of spaces. They closed the exit only driveway onto Brooklake Road because it is problematic with site distance issues. This allowed them to realign the parking spaces on the southern corner of the site and add 5 more spaces. They also put a smaller and reconfigured trash enclosure behind the diner and provided a larger enclosure in the eastern corner of the site. This created space to add three more spaces at the rear of the diner.

Regarding ingress and egress, there is a full movement driveway at the eastern corner of the site that will allow drivers to get out to Hanover Road and Brooklake Road. They are proposing to make the Ridgedale Avenue entrance only to be a right out exit as well. The Morris County Planning Board gave a verbal okay but they will submit the plan to them for a formal approval.

Mark Taylor was concerned with illegal lefts out of that driveway. They indicated that they will install a triangular island to guide the traffic to the right and control the illegal left out. They will discuss this with the County.

They are able to create a two way traffic lane on the northeast end of the building that is currently only one way. This will allow drivers to access the rear parking lot without having to first circle around the front of the building.

The northwestern front parking field is proposed to be restriped to provide for angled parking on both sides and eliminate the parallel parking. They will realign the angled parking to 40 degrees from 60 degrees. The drive aisle lane width will be just under twelve feet wide at the most narrow point. This will help to enforce one way circulation around the front.

After some discussion, and the fact that no additional parking would come from the change, Mike Cannilla thought that it would be better to leave the front area unchanged since they are not gaining any parking spots. The Board agreed to leave the area as is. There was discussion about overlapping an ADA space with the front fire lane. Mike Sgaramella said that change to the fire lane must be approved by the Fire Official.

Mike DeAngelis asked if additional trees could be added on the property since they are removing nine trees. There is an aisle along Hanover Road that looks like a tree could fit in there near the light fixture. Mark Taylor asked if a recently planted tree near the rear entrance to the Apex space could be transplanted. They said they would look into that.

Carmen Cefolo-Pane confirmed that all the ADA parking spaces comply with the width requirements and are unaffected by the parking space size variance.

Regarding signage for the proposed Ridgedale entrance and right only exit, they have proposed a sign that says "Right Turn Only" to be placed there. Mike Sgaramella preferred a sign that says "No Left Turn". He feels it is more enforceable by the police. He confirmed with the applicant that the fire truck turning template works in the front with the parallel spaces.

Gary Feith asked if the Hanover Road exit can have a right and left exits. He was also concerned about the safety of the Ridgedale Avenue full movement driveway. He did not think that the driveway entrance is wide enough to accommodate two movements. He also said that stretch of roadway is complicated with lots of driveways in close

proximity to each other. Mike DeAngelis agreed and thought maybe it could be made wider by eliminating a parallel parking space.

Mr. Sehna stated that the driveway opening is a compliant width. Mike Sgaramella stated that he will look and see if the striping can be modified to channel the drivers. He added that the applicant's traffic assessment is acceptable to the Borough traffic consultant.

Carmen Cefolo-Pane asked if the exit is really needed. Jane Margulies agreed with adding the exit onto Ridgedale Avenue and said that it will help take the traffic load off the rear exit, since they closed the Brooklake Road exit. Mike Sgaramella noted that the shopping center must have a second exit.

Mike Sgaramella asked about snow removal. Due to the parking reconfiguration, there will be a shortage of places to pile snow. The applicant testified that snow will be removed offsite in the case of a heavy snowfall. The applicant agreed to remove it within 24 hours.

Katherine O'Kane concurred that the parking layout in the front of the mall should remain unchanged since there is no spaces to be gained. She confirmed that the drive aisle remain the way it is now.

The meeting was opened to the public.

Bill Zuckerman, 27 Keyes Street. He was concerned because the existing Brooklake Road exit is used by the Fire Department to park the truck in the fire house.

Mike Sgaramella replied that the Fire Chief is okay with the revised plan and the Brooklake Road driveway closure.

John Winters, 32 Brooklake Road. He confirmed that the applicant owns the property and the building.

Michael Tobia, Planner for the applicant, was sworn in. He stated that they have provided enough parking spaces and no variance is needed for the number of spaces. The variances remaining are parking lot landscaping and parking stall size of 9 x 18sf.

Michael Tobia stated that regarding parking stall size, 9 x 18sf is regarded as the industry standard. If they were to provide the required size of 10 x 20sf, they would lose 10 parking stalls. Additional landscaping area would force them to eliminate three parking stalls. He noted that the Board is concerned about the crowded parking lots in the town center, and he believes that more parking spaces is the greater benefit to this shopping center.

Michael Tobia opined that the space that karate studio occupied has been marketed for 21 months with no serious inquiries.

Carmen Cefolo-Pane noticed that the existing trash enclosure was moved to the far corner, and asked what is replacing them. Mr. Tobia responded that three parking spaces will be installed there. They agreed to add a tree to landscaped area next to the smaller trash enclosure area.

Mike Sgaramella said that landscape coverage is defined as being a vegetated area that is two feet beyond the parking space. Adding trees does not increase the coverage.

A total of three trees will be added to the site. One will be on the island near the intersection of Hanover Road and Brooklake Road. Another tree will be placed in the grassy area by the stop bar on the Brooklake Road side, and in the diner dumpster area.

Katherine O'Kane asked for clarification on the landscape variance. The zoning table does not seem to reflect what exists and what is proposed. She calculated the existing landscaping to be 2.7% where 10% is required. Jane Margulies noted that the proposed landscaped area is 2,514sf but it is not reflected in the table. They responded that is correct and they are requesting 3%. This is slightly more than what is on the site at the present time.

Mike Sgaramella asked if they would comply with the Town Center Task Force recommendations. They agreed to comply with the planting material recommendations but added that they may not be able to agree to every request.

Mike Cannilla asked if a landscape aisle can be put along Ridgedale Avenue sidewalk and be planted with greenery. He stated that there is enough room for this and would help with the landscape deficiency. It would also help with snow storage in that area.

Michael Tobia responded that they have one extra parking space that could be sacrificed for a landscape area. Mayor Taylor thought the space by the stop bar at the end of the drive aisle on the side of the building would be a good spot.

Larry Calli responded that they were able to add 34 more parking spaces with nominal coverage changes. Mike Cannilla asked if they can install a water source in the dumpster area so there is a way to wash out the dumpsters periodically.

Larry Calli requested a break to confer with his client.

Break: 10 minutes.

After conferring with his client, Larry Calli stated that they will install the water source near the dumpsters, however, it is not feasible for them to plant a strip of greenery along the Ridgedale Avenue frontage. It would be impossible to maintain, and it would be trampled by people that park along that side. They realize the Board would like to see more landscaping and have identified areas that can be landscaped.

A-4: colorized sheet 2

Michael Tobia said that they can increase the total landscape area from 3% to 5%. Dan Sehnal remained sworn in. He noted two areas in the front that can be landscaped. They can narrow the Ridgedale driveway to create a landscaped area and also landscape a bump-out just south of the driveway along the drive aisle. Mike DeAngelis disagreed with making the driveway narrower. Mike Sgaramella said that the bump-out connected to the sidewalk on Ridgedale Avenue must stay since it is used for pedestrians to access the shopping center parking lot. It was decided to leave those areas as is.

They can extend the landscaping strip on the southwest corner of the building, adding 100sf. They will also eliminate a single space along Brooklake Road and convert it to landscaping. This will pick up another 200 sf. This additional 300sf will bring the total landscape area up to 4%. The total existing lot coverage is 78,193sf. This would decrease by 10sf under the proposed plan and slightly more with the proposed additional landscaped areas.

They will stripe for a right and left turn exit at the Hanover Road driveway. This will help with the right turns. Mr. DeAngelis wanted it defined where the stacking will occur for the left turn out.

Mike Cannilla was concerned because he did not see anywhere for the waiting cars to stack unless they are in the northern drive aisle. Mr. Sehnal responded that this will primarily help facilitate right turns. Larry Calli said that while it is not an ideal area, it will work. They are dealing with an existing parking lot. Mike Sgaramella agreed that it may be best to leave it as is with a single lane exit. Larry Calli said that they will leave it the way it is if that is what the Board wants.

Mike Cannilla reiterated that a landscape area along the front by Ridgedale Avenue would enhance the site and would help with their deficiency in total landscaping within a parking field. Larry Calli responded that it will present difficulty in maintenance and is not something that the owner is amenable to. Mike DeAngelis agreed with Mike Cannilla in that he would like to see more greenspace on the site.

Larry Calli replied that the current proposed landscaping is actually an increase over what is on the site presently. Katherine O'Kane stated that the requirement is 10%. There is 2.7% existing on the site presently. They are proposing to increase that as proposed on the plan.

Katherine O’Kane stated that there is a trade-off for all of the parking in order to maximize the parking space count. The Board must consider whether the landscape detriment outweighs meeting the parking space requirement.

Dave Roberts asked if there could be less dumpsters. Dan Senhal said there are currently 5 dumpsters and they are going down to 4 dumpsters. Larry Calli said that they need the dumpsters and the center cannot manage with less. The dumpster area will be buffered with trees and marked on the exhibit.

A-5: Sheet 3 - Five tree locations depicted

Larry Calli summarized the application. They are improving the existing parking on the site and giving more green space everywhere that they can. They now have a conforming parking space count. This was triggered by higher parking requirements for a fitness center that will take tenancy in the shopping center. They have done so without modifications and by optimizing the functionality. He said his client owns and manages many properties and knows what can work and what does not work. They do not believe that the green strip along Ridgedale Avenue makes sense and it cannot be maintained. They are happy to add trees everywhere they can.

Mike Sgaramella confirmed to the Board that the applicant gave the ROW dedication at the corner Brooklake Road and Ridgedale Avenue to the Borough.

Katherine O’Kane listed the four variances:

Minimum landscape requirement within a parking area (10% required): approximately 4%

Minimum parking space size (10 x 20ft required): 9 x 18ft

Location of parking to have 20 foot buffer from a public street: less than 20ft

Landscaping buffer for parking all sides (10ft required): less than 10 feet

Katherine O’Kane stated that many of these conditions are already existing.

The meeting was opened to the public. There were no questions or comments.

Mike DeAngelis and Mike Cannilla still felt that some landscaping along the Ridgedale Avenue parking lot is needed. After some discussion, the applicant agreed to vegetate the area with low shrubs, but not grass. They will work with the Board Engineer as to the appropriate size of the strip.

Gary Feith was still concerned with the right exit out of the Ridgedale driveway and thought it was only adding another movement to the already busy stretch of roadway. He would have like the applicant to re-look at the design to see if there is another place to install an exit.

There were different opinions on whether or not the existing Brooklake Road exit is that challenging. Some members thought it was dangerous while others did not have a problem with it.

There were no other questions or comments. Mr. DeAngelis called for a motion.

Mr. Cannilla made a motion to approve the application with the agreed to conditions, second by Mrs. Margulies
Roll: Cannilla, yes; Margulies, yes; DeAngelis, yes; Taylor, yes; Feith, no; Roberts, yes.

On a motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 8:35p.m.

Marlene Rawson
Board Secretary

October 21, 2019