

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT OF THE TOWNSHIP OF PENNSAUKEN**

A public meeting of the Zoning Board of Adjustment of the Township of Pennsauken, in the County of Camden, in the State of New Jersey was held on the above date at the Pennsauken Municipal Building, 5605 N. Crescent Boulevard, Pennsauken, New Jersey.

Chairwoman Butler called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. and led the flag salute. Roll call disclosed the following members present: Carl Bierbach, Paul Hoyle, Lysa Longo, Shirley Butler, Jaye Silver, Darlene Hannah, Dianne Piccari, and Duke Martz. Acting Solicitor Richard Wells, Esq., Zoning Board Engineer, Ray Jordan, Planning & Zoning Coordinator, John Adams and Zoning Board Secretary Nancy Ellis were also present.

The Chairwoman announced that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice has been sent to two local newspapers, and also posted on the Bulletin Board in the Municipal Building.

**HEARINGS:**

**PENNSAUKEN HOSPITALITY, LLC** - Seeking a use variance and site plan approval to convert an existing office/school into a hotel building. Premises located at 7050 Route 38, Block 6403, Lot 2 in Zoning District C-2.

Mr. Jeffery Barron, Esq. came forward to represent the applicant and summarized the application and the variances necessary for the proposed project.

Mr. Cheng Zhou, President of Pennsauken Hospitality, Mr. John Pettit, Profession Planner and Mr. Raymond Jordan, Zoning Board Engineer came forward to testify and all were duly sworn by the Solicitor.

Mr. Raymond Jordan read his review letter dated November 28, 2016 onto record.

The applicant agreed to Mr. Jordan's recommendations as set forth in his review letter.

Mr. Cheng Zhou testified that he is the president of Pennsauken Hospitality and he informed the board of his 20 year experience with the development and operations of hotel chains.

Upon query, Mr. Zhou informed Mr. Martz that the closest hotels he has opened are Ramada Inns in New York and Pottstown, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Zhou testified that the property is under contract and if the board grants approvals he can proceed with the project. Mr. Zhou further testified that there was a study done and it showed a favorable 70% average occupancy rate for this particular location. Mr. Zhou stated that it's a good location in that it is close to Philadelphia for leisure and corporate business. The room rates will be \$125.00-\$130.00 per day other room rates are \$90 to \$100 per day, there will be a business center and small meeting room at the premises and the rooms are mixed with king sized beds and double beds. Mr. Zhou testified that the renovations will cost approximately 3 million dollars, there will be 5 to 6 employees during 3 shifts, and will be creating 15 to 18 new jobs once the facility is up and running. Security lighting and cameras will be installed at the site and no one will have access through any hotel entrances after midnight unless they have a key.

Upon query, Mrs. Butler was informed by Mr. Zhou that he has 20 years experience opening hotels. He further stated that he has another Best Western opening by the end of the month. Mr. Zhou further informed Mrs. Butler that it will take approximately 12 to 15 months to open this location in Pennsauken.

Upon query, Mr. Martz was informed by Mr. Zhou that the hotel will have 70 rooms. Mr. Zhou agreed to the condition that there will be no rooms rented on an hourly basis.

Upon query, Miss Piccari was informed by Mr. Zhou that none of the rooms have a living area or kitchens. The applicant agreed to the condition that there will be no rooms rented for more than 30 days at a time.

Upon query, Miss Hannah was informed by the applicant that the small meeting room can hold approximately 10 people. Mr. Zhou further informed Miss Hannah that he intends to hire people from the community to work at the hotel.

Upon query, Mr. Silver was informed by the applicant that they did research other locations in the area and this location had the best statistics.

Duke Martz left the meeting 7:45 pm

Mr. Hoyle assumed the seat of Mr. Martz.

Upon query, Mrs. Longo was informed by the applicant that they will serve their guests a continental breakfast in the morning. Mr. Zhou further informed Mrs. Longo that there will be an exercise room on site.

Upon query, Mr. Hoyle was informed by the applicant that the Best Western has quality standards and expectations of each of their franchises. Mr. Zhou also informed Mr. Hoyle that they will be landscaping the property.

Upon query, Mrs. Longo was informed by the applicant that they will agree to the condition that there is at least 1 week in between a 30 day room rental.

Upon query, Mrs. Butler was informed by the applicant that the facility will not have a pool on the premises. However, they will have free Wi-Fi service to all guests.

Upon query, Mr. Bierbach was informed that the meeting room holds approximately 10 to 15 people. He further informed Mr. Bierbach that the study that was done predicted that the hotel is a good location in that it is close to their partner hotel in Philadelphia. If that location is booked, or if a guest doesn't want to stay in the city they can stay just minutes away and over the bridge in the proposed facility. The benefit is that the room rate will be lower and they won't have to pay a parking fee.

Upon query, Mrs. Longo was informed by the applicant that the Best Western has inspections 1 or 2 times per year. The state does spot inspections of the facilities as well.

Mr. Pettit, the professional planner presented Exhibits A-1 through A-3 and testified as to the positive and negative criteria of the application. Mr. Pettit described the existing conditions of the site and testified that a hotel at this location is particularly suited in that is on a state highway, the site is already developed, there is plenty of parking at the site and they will be redeveloping an empty building. Mr. Pettit presented a rendering and described the proposed upgrades to the site as well.

Upon query, Mr. Bierbach was informed by the applicant that there will be a laundry room and breakfast room on the first floor in the front of the building. Mr. Bierbach was further informed that the parking lot will be repaved and re striped. The side walk will be replaced as well.

Upon query, Mr. Hoyle was informed by the applicant that they will not submit the proposed plan to Best Western until they are approved by the town.

Upon query, Mr. Bierbach was informed by the applicant that they have verbal approval from Best Western. Mr. Bierbach was further informed by the applicant that if they don't move forward with Best Western and they go with another "flag" hotel chain, they will come back to the board seeking approval.

Upon query, Mr. Hoyle was informed by the applicant that the proposed hotel is a little more "upscale" opposed to a regular Best Western.

Mr. John Adams, Pennsauken Township Zoning Officer, 3825 Gladwyn Avenue came forward to testify and was duly sworn by the Solicitor.

Upon query, Mr. Adams was informed by the applicant that there will 70 rooms maximum and the study showed a 70% occupancy rate, and the room rates will be \$125 to \$130 per day. The applicant further informed Mr. Adams that there are two elevators at the facility and there is a sprinkler system throughout the building.

The meeting was open to the public.

There being no one who wished to speak, the meeting was closed to the public.

The Solicitor made the following factual findings: This is an application for use variance relief and site plan approval with bulk variance relief to permit a hotel as presented in the C-2 Commercial Zone. Section 141-82 of the township ordinance establishes the C-2 District and subsection A23 conditional use permits the use of a motel with a dining and meeting room facility but does not specifically indicate or address hotels. Accordingly, we have an application for the use variance relief to permit a hotel with a meeting and dining space rather than a motel. The applicant was represented by Mr. Jeff Barron and presented both the applicant, the president of the corporation and the applicant's engineer. The president of the corporation did represent that he has a contract agreement to purchase the property pending zoning approval as well as a verbal approval to operate the property as a Best Western franchise, once again, pending zoning approval. The applicant generally summarized the type of operation and why they believe, in light of their research that this facility is suitable for the proposed use. The applicant's engineer also addressed the bulk variance relief being requested, specifically he addressed the positive and negative criteria and why this application both advances the intent and purpose of the municipal land use law and it is also substantially similar to the uses permitted under the township's ordinance for this zone. The board imposed a number of conditions towards the applicant and the applicant agreed. The

conditions are that no tractor trailers can be used at the property, a tractor trailers being what is commonly known as an 18 wheeler. The applicant also agreed to all conditions if any are imposed by the fire marshal once they are inspecting the property. The applicant agreed to conduct an existing lighting survey and will supplement the existing lighting if necessary. The applicant will also submit a landscaping plan to the township engineer for discussion and approval. If necessary, the applicant will come back for additional variance relief if their sign package does not comply with the township ordinance. The applicant agreed that no short term rentals be allowed at the hotel, meaning no less than a one day rental. The applicant also agreed that there will be no long term rentals over 30 days will be allowed and that the applicant will require a 1 week separation period between rentals if it does come to that 30 day mark. Finally, the applicant will also communicate with the board if Best Western does not enter into the franchise agreement. The applicant will advise the board if they are under another franchise operation and will come back to the board if necessary to adjust their operation accordingly to seek any other approval.

Mrs. Hannah motioned to accept fact finding. Mrs. Longo seconded.

Mr. Bierbach motioned to grant both the use variance and site plan with all the conditions imposed during testimony and in fact finding. He stated that he sees no detriment to the surrounding community. He further stated that he believes it will be a beneficial use of the land and an improvement of the existing condition of the property. Mr. Silver seconded. Roll call: Madams Longo, Butler, Hannah, and Piccari, and Messrs. Bierbach, Hoyle, and Silver-Aye. None opposed.

**MINUTES:**

It was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed to approve the November 14, 2016 meeting minutes.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

None

**RESOLUTIONS:**

**Resolution #Z-2016-27** Granting **JOSE & CARMEN ACEVEDO** 39.46 feet of relief from front yard fence setback requirement of 20 feet for a 4 foot vinyl picket fence and any other variances required by Pennsauken Township. Premises located at 5730 Irving Avenue, Block 5002, Lot 2 in Zoning District R-3

**BILLS:**

*12/7/2016*-T&M Associates, Engineering Services for 3801 Marlton Pike Apartments-***\$1,681.50.***

*12/7/2016*-T&M Associates, Engineering Services for Pennsauken Hospitality, LLC-***\$1,062.00.***

**COORDINATOR'S REPORT:**

Not at this time.

There being no further business; it was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted:



Nancy L. Ellis, Board Secretary