

**TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
ZONING BOARD MINUTES
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

June 29, 2021

Meeting called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairman Vincent LaFata (via zoom Web-meeting access information <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87023657042>, Phone #1-312-626-6799 or 1-929-205-6099 Meeting ID 870 2365 7042) who led the salute to the Flag.

Chairman Vincent LaFata read the Sunshine Law as follows: In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, it is hereby announced and shall be entered into the minutes of this meeting that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by the following:

Posted on January 1, 2021 on the Bulletin Board of the Office of the Township Clerk, Municipal Complex, 1 Municipal Plaza, and remains on file at that location for public inspection;

Posted on the Bulletin Board of the Office of the Township Clerk;

Posted on the Bulletin Boards within the Municipal Complex;

Printed in the Home News Tribune and Cranbury Press on January 1, 2021;

Posted on the Monroe Township website; and

Sent to those individuals who have requested personal notice.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Vincent LaFata, Vice Chairwoman Carol Damiani, Mr. Marino Lupo, Mr. Louis Masters, Mr. Donato Tanzi, Alternate #1 Mr. Richard Lans and Alternate #2 Mr. Arnold Jaffe. Also present for the Board were Attorney Peter Vignuolo, Planner Mika Apte, Engineer Mark Rasimowicz and Director of Planning & Zoning Mr. Joe Stroin.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Busman, Ms. Rajani Karuturi, Alternate #3 Mr. Nicholas Morolda and Alternate #4 Mr. George Gunkelman.

A motion to approve the **May 25, 2021 Minutes** made by Vice Chairwoman Carol Damiani and seconded by Mr. Donato Tanzi and passed unanimously by all members present.

BA-5197-20

251 Docks Corner, LLC; Request for Amended Final Site Plan with Bulk Variances; Located at 251 Docks Corner Road; Block 81, Lot 2, in the R-30 (Residential) Zone

Represented by Mr. Glenn Pantel who stated he is the attorney for the applicant. The applicant before you on this application is 251 Docks Corner Road, LLC and are the owner as well. It is a warehouse facility occupied by a single tenant, namely Automann. The property consists approximately 29.5 acres with a 382,400 square foot warehouse facility that was recently completed pursuant to site plan approvals. The application tonight is a very straightforward application for the installation of certain flag poles that are proposed to be put on the property. Specifically, we're proposing two 30 foot flag Poles for the USA and Canada flags on Poles at the easterly the regular entrance onto the property. USA flag, for obvious reasons, and the Canada flag because Automann also has a substantial facility in Canada. In addition to those flags there's a five 25 foot slightly shorter flag Poles proposed with state flags for New Jersey, California, Illinois and Texas. The reason for those again being that order man has facilities in those states and a US navy flag there's one of the key founders and consultants for Automann who has worked with the company for many years is a US Navy Veteran. The company supplies auto like and logistics. There's also one flag proposed for the Automann with a logo on it it's actually a very understated logo as you've seen on the plans and, in fact, is being proposed will into the site. At least a couple hundred feet from the road, that flag is technically the variance for it as an advertising flag was called out because it has been company's logo. It is hardly in the nature of a billboard, you might see on businesses, as you drive down the road like route 522 understated way step back. From Docks Corner Road as a company logo, probably the only people who would even recognize it as such, we be employees of Automann and those who are already doing business with the company. The one variances being sought was called out by your planner for the number of flag poles on the property, the ordinance actually doesn't specifically regulate the number of flagpoles on the property just looking for one.

Chairman Vincent LaFata recognized that Mr. Marino Lupo was in attendance.

Mr. Dennis Khanduja, applicant, my address is 1890 Mountaintop Road, Bridgewater New Jersey 08807.

Mr. Glenn Pantel can you please describe to the board the background behind your desire to have these additional these flagpoles installed on the property, your motivation for doing so.

Mr. Dennis Khanduja stated we came into the country and started business from scratch and, as we have been going Thus we have been expanding into the different States and we have received tremendous amount of cooperation from the respective states that we invested into and worked with them and it's an acknowledgement to their cooperation and extension and the trade relationships that they've given us. Besides that it's also to represent and let us acknowledge that we are represented there and we service those particular states and that we are grateful for being where we are today, and we continue to identify ourselves as National and represented in all the States including Canada. So that's the reason.

Mr. Glenn Pantel asked if he could describe a little bit about your operation on the property.

Mr. Dennis Khanduja stated our businesses, basically, our distribution business we distribute truck and trailer aftermarket products are they are private label branded Automann and we

service, the aftermarket the products that are difficult for them to get from the pillars, a lot of our fleets and there's a tremendous amount of trucks out there that have been in service for many years and the dealers are not offering the services to them, and that is what we do, we bring to the industry of what the industry is finding difficult to obtain and get that truck service.

Mr. William Hamilton, applicant's Planner described the location and size and surroundings of the property. There are eight flags proposed in the application that Mr. Pantel described in detail. As far as the variance, associated with the application and potentially a second variance as your planner has pointed out, and the variances regarding the advertising side and again that's the sign on the Northeast corner of the site advertising signs are not permitted as per your ordinance section. Looking at the positive criteria for that sign, we believe relief is justified under the C2 standard, where a purpose of planning, as outlined in municipal and use law will be advanced by the granting of the deviation and the benefits will substantially outweigh any detriment, and the purposes that we're looking in this case to advance would be twofold the first is promotion of public health safety morals and general welfare and then the second is a promotion of a desirable visual environment to creative development techniques good civic design and arrangement. The proposal, as you heard for the flag is just for the logo of the company and it's located again at the rear of the site it's not out at the front of the site where it would be an advertisement for the property it's in an interesting spot, if you look to the east there's a significant berm with landscaping that berm is a minimum of 10 foot high and there's an eight foot solid fence, on top of that berm that was approved as part of the original site plan for the project completely screening that flag from the adjacent use any adjacent which is The Venue. It is a detention base along that Eastern property line there is a very large detention basin and approximately 10 foot deep that runs all the way from Docks Corner Road to approximately that building line of the Automann building and then there is some additional open space adjacent to the property line, as you move further north within The Venue site. That would be the closest, where the closest residents are to this sign those residents are roughly 1000 feet from the flagpole and again, they would be behind what is, in that case it's a roughly 16-foot-high berm again with an eight-foot-high salad fence and landscaping. I was talking a little bit about their about negative impact it's going to be no impact when you look at this application this use was already determined as part of the use variance application that was previously approved in this R- 30 zone and then there'll be no impact obviously on the neighborhood based upon the fact of the location of the sign as well as the buffering that's in place.

Mr. Glenn Pantel asked approximately how far is that Automann sign from Docks Corner Road.

Mr. Bill Hamilton stated he would estimate it's roughly 800 feet.

Chairman Vincent LaFata asked Mr. Hamilton to refresh the board's memory of the height of the actual building.

Mr. Bill Hamilton stated that the building is approximately 35 foot tall at its minimum.

Chairman Vincent LaFata stated so basically the flagpole will not exceed the height of the building.

Mr. Bill Hamilton stated that's correct. So that's the main variances associated with the application it's a very simple application, it was brought up by your planner and by Mr. Pantel

with regard to the number of flags. We don't actually view that as a variance, however, eight flags on the site is a little unusual, but again, this is a 29 acre site in a zone that allows properties that are less than an acre so we do think it's appropriate and justify it again under the C2 standard. We don't think there's any negative impact to the neighborhood, to the people that are traveling on Docks Corner Road. These flags are going to be set back 30 feet from the right of way, which is a reasonable distance that again there's just two flags proposed along the frontage that is over 700 feet long Docks Corner Road to Cranbury South River Road which is just over 1000 feet long, so we think it's appropriate.

Vice Chairwoman Carol Damiani asked why can't those six flags or eight flags be inside the building, instead of outside if these people, the visitors or the employees or truckers are going to go inside the building, they can see them in there, why does it have to be outside.

Mr. Bill Hamilton asked, I'm sorry, do you mean it's inside the actual structure of the building.

Vice Chairwoman Carol Damiani stated yes, inside the building.

Mr. Bill Hamilton stated I'm not familiar with the floor plan of the building. My thought is that it probably wouldn't work from a from an operation standpoint, but I'll defer to the owner on that.

Vice Chairwoman Carol Damiani asked if there are any other businesses or facilities in the area that have a lot of flagpoles like you are planning.

Mr. Dennis Khanduja stated yes, I I've seen several facilities on South River Cranbury Road as well and I don't have the name of the other facility settles there it's the road that goes towards the Coca Cola plant as well the seven buildings that I've seen having such flags on their on their facilities yeah.

PUBLIC

Ms. Rita Sperling, 140 Starlight Drive in The Venue at Monroe. You know, obviously, as a resident of Venue I'm interested, curious about you know what the impact, if any, there would be on what visually we see now from inside the Community, and so my question is because you know I haven't really analyzed or I've seen a site drawing but you know I'm just asking the question of lights that are going to be going on and then being turned off, I mean will the light be visible at night from let's say you know the residents here in Venue.

Mr. Bill Hamilton that are directed towards the flag itself from the ground they're not directed at the building, we did prepare an exhibit that showed that the foot candles spill over onto the building is minimal. Again, on only between the hours before 10pm when it's dark.

Mr. Mark Rasimowicz, Board Engineer, has no objections subject to applicant's compliance with report dated June 21, 2021.

Ms. Mika Apte for Mr. Rob Russo, Board Planner, has no objections subject to applicant's compliance with report dated June 17, 2021.

Motion to approve made by Mr. Richard Lans and seconded by Mr. Louis Masters and passed with Vice Chairwoman Carol Damiani voting no.

BA-5205-21 **Hotel Investors, LLC; Request for Use Variance; Located at Interchange Plaza and Abeel Road; Block 55, Lot 9.07, in LI (Light Industrial) Zone**

See attached transcript.

MEMORIALIZATION

BA-5201-20 **KANA Retail Investments, LLC**, a motion to approve made by Vice Chairwoman Carol Damiani and seconded by Chairman Vincent LaFata and passed unanimously by all members of the Board present.

BA-5206-21 **BSREP III Monroe, LLC**, a motion to approve made by Mr. Arnold Jaffe and seconded by Chairman Vincent LaFata and passed unanimously by all members of the Board present.

PUBLIC PORTION

No public wanted to be heard.

A motion to close public portion made by Mr. Richard Lans and seconded by Mr. Louis Masters and passed unanimously by all members of the Board present.

A motion to enter into executive session made at 10:12 pm by Vice Chairwoman Carol Damani and seconded by Mr. Arnold Jaffe and passed unanimously by all members of the Board present.

A motion to enter into back into public meeting made at 10:22 pm by Mr. Donato Tanzi and seconded by Chairman Vincent LaFata and passed unanimously by all members of the Board present.

A motion to adjourn at 10:24 p.m. made by Mr. Marino Lupo and seconded by Mr. Louis Masters and passed unanimously by all members of the Board present.

Respectfully submitted,

**LAURA ZALEWSKI
ZONING BOARD SECRETARY**