

**WARREN TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
7:30 P.M. – Susie B. Boyce Meeting Room – 44 Mountain Boulevard  
May 13, 2019  
APPROVED**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**FLAG SALUTE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR OUR TROOPS**

**ROLL CALL**

Mayor DiNardo	Mr. Esposito
Committeeman Marion	Mr. Scuderi
Mr. Toth	Mr. Pasi
Mr. Lindner (arrived 7:35)	Mr. Villani
Mr. DiBianca	Mr. Gallic
Mr. Argiro	

***Statement by Presiding Officer:** Adequate notice of this meeting was posted on January 24, 2019 on the Township bulletin board and sent to the Township Clerk, Echoes Sentinel per the Open Public Meetings Act. All Board members are duly appointed volunteers working for the good and welfare of Warren Township. We plan to adjourn no later than 10:00 p.m.*

■ **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:  
April 22, 2019**

Motion was made by Mr. Toth, seconded by Mr. Pasi to approve the minutes.

**ROLL CALL**

For: Committeeman Marion, Mr. Lindner, Mr. Argiro, Mr. Toth, Mr. Pasi, and Mr. Villani.

Against: None.

**Reports:**

Alan Siegel, Esq.

John T. Chadwick, IV, P.P., Professional Planner

Christian Kastrud, P.E., Professional Engineer

Maryellen Vautin, Clerk

■ **ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION:**

None.

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■ **CORRESPONDENCE**

■ **CITIZENS HEARING non-agenda items**

Mr. Gallic opened the meeting for any non-agenda items discussion. Seeing no one come forward, this portion of the meeting was closed.

■ **PUBLIC HEARING**

**PB19-03  
Flag Plaza Block 88.04, lot 14**

Preliminary and Final Site Plan--Commercial and Residential Units

Mr. Richard Sasso came forward as the attorney for the applicant. This applicant will provide 6 affordable housing units as part of this application. They will modernize the existing building and remove the building at the back of the property that used to be a frame shop. They will build a beautiful condo building in its place. This is one of the redevelopment projects in town. This is an attractive application for the town with an upgraded site and meeting some of the affordable housing requirements. There were many people to give testimony and Mr. Alan Siegel, board attorney, swore them in. Mr. Jeff Beer, architect; Mr. Robert Gazzale, engineer; Mr. Robert Checchio, principal; Carl Checchio, principal; Gary Dean, traffic consultant; Henry Hinterstein, landscape architect were all sworn in for the applicant, and Mr. John T. Chadwick, township planner, and Mr. Christian Kastrud, township engineer, were sworn in as the town professionals.

Jeff Beer began and his father-in-law had developed this property 30 to 40 years ago. They propose to change part of it to residential. Sheet C-1 (this was submitted to the board earlier) was discussed. The middle elevation is the existing building and it is a truss building, floor and roof trusses and they will maintain these structures. The end elevation is shown as proposed and existing and they propose architecture that will give some interest to the view from Mount Bethel Road. Mr. Beer worked off the existing gables and added details, including a tower at the corner. The existing building is either stone or brick base and it is similar for the proposed. The second floor existing is combination of stucco, mansard roof and dormers. This will be cleaned up. He discussed the buildings going up Mount Bethel and how the proposal will set up a hierarchy with the building heights. There are three elements along the front of the building. That come out off the building, one story roof structures a balcony look (but do not walk onto). The mansard roof will be removed and awnings will be installed along parts of the building. There is no additional living space that will be added to the building. There will be clapboard siding, shutters, and some shingle siding at the gables.

The first floor is currently a business use and will remain the same. The second floor is currently business use and is proposed to change to residential. This is where the

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sixteen affordable units will be. They have to work within the existing context of the structure, within the fire walls.

Mr. Sasso asked about the redevelopment ordinance that applies to this site and that it had 20 affordable and what is proposed is 16. Mr. Beer went to sheet A-2 with the layout of the 16 units. The first third of the building goes to the stairway and also the first fire wall. The design works between the fire walls. They were able to get five apartments between each fire wall, all two-bedroom apartments. In the last apartment past the last firewall they are able to get a three-bedroom apartment in. It is 15 two-bedroom and one three-bedroom. The units are 695SF, 650 SF, the three bedroom is 1290SF. These are pretty efficient and it also has to be designed for ADA requirements. It was not possible to get the full twenty units for affordable.

Mr. Beer went over Sheet A-1, the commercial section. They are not proposing a change in the use, just adding on the façade. There are planter urns that will act as bollards and there will be columns also. There is proposed outside dining along the front and by the front corner of the building near the tower. Mr. Sasso stated they are seeking a variance for outside dining. They ask for the option of being able to do that. They would not serve alcohol.

Mr. Chadwick has reviewed the redevelopment plan and the language within the plan authorizes this board to make those determinations. There are other places with outdoor eating in town.

Mr. Beer passed out Exhibit A-1, a site sign revision from the earlier submitted sign. The sign will be back further back and out of the site triangle. The sign is proposed at 10 feet wide, and 12.5 tall to the top of the sign (not including trim or crown molding, or little copper roof). The sign follows the architectural rhythm of the proposed building.

Mr. Beer went to drawing CR-1, The Windsor Building (in the rear of the property, facing towards Mount Bethel Road. The building has the same rhythm as the proposed renovation. The building is a three-story building. The grade goes right to the first floor. He went over the building design. There are twenty-four units in total. There are eight units per floor.

There are two one-bedroom, one bath, plus a den. Fourteen units are two-bedroom, two bath, and eight units that are two-bedroom, two bath, plus a den. (The existing building is coming down and the new building will be in a slightly different location more forward to Mount Bethel Road).

Mr. Beer went over the lower level elevation around to the right of the building. There are three two car garage doors. The center garage door goes up and you can enter under the building. The other two garage doors are private garages. You don't see the garages from the front. The building is 34.5 feet with a flat roof. There is a lobby in the garage level and go to an elevator (sheet A-1). And Sheet A-2 shows the first floor at ground level. You enter in the center of the building into a lobby. There is a center hall with the units off of it. There is a mail room and spot to deliver packages, there is also a

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mechanical room. The two one-bedrooms are on the first floor. There was discussion on the stairwells and emergency egress. The building will be sprinklered. The HVAC is on the roof and will be hidden.

Sheet A-3 is the second level and it is all two bedroom (1100SF plus) or two bedroom with dens (1450SF plus ). The second floor and third floor are identical. Mr. Beer went over the plans further.

Mr. Robert Gazzale came forward for the applicant. He was accepted by the board. They are requesting a variance for the existing Weichert sign for its size and location (pre-existing). There is a design waiver request for the compact car spaces, the width is okay but only 16 feet deep instead of 18 ft due to an existing wall near the Bank of America. Mr. Gazzale went over the engineering plans and the re-aligned entrance way to help the line of traffic. The existing condition is almost all covered with impervious material. The access has been improved. There is an easement for Warrentville Hardware for trucks delivering items. The easement will be preserved and relocated and described. There will be access from Mountain Blvd through the hardware store parking lot, across Weichert and will be maintained. The applicant has met with Bill at the hardware store. Exhibit A-2, the Flag Plaza landscape plan dated January 9, 2019, was brought in and Mr. Gazzale went over the driveway layout and that it is straightened and showed the board where the easement will be on the plan.

The Windsor building will come down and a large portion of the parking lot will be removed. The impervious coverage is reduced by about 11,000SF There is extensive landscape proposed and green areas around the building. There are large arborvitaes along the parking lot currently to buffer the properties to the north. The storm drain will be re-aligned to accommodate the new configuration, everything drains to the county road. Sewer and water are on the site. There will be a hydrant placed on the property to enhance fire fighter ability. There are 186 parking spaces required and they have them. All lighting fixtures, including the Weichert building, will be upgraded to LED fixtures and decorative lampposts. The town center lighting will be extended along Mount Bethel Road. There were no questions for the board.

Mr. Gary Dean came forward as the traffic expert and was accepted. He did a study and sent a letter dated April 25, 2019 from his office. He stated that this proposal will yield less traffic. Taking office space and converting to apartment space generates less traffic. Re-aligning the driveway brings it into contemporary design standards and helps everyone going in and out. The Somerset County Planning Board will need to approve this. They do meet the RSIS. He feels there will be abundant parking at the site.

Mr. DiBianca questioned the numbers of trips with Dominos pizza being there. Mr. Dean said that the analysis only compares the traffic of what is being changed and that is the second floor of the building to remain and be modified to residential. Mr. DiBianca feels there will still be a problem.

Mr. Gallic asked about the trips for residential and felt between 20 and 26 trips.

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Mr. Henry Hinterstein from 71 Den Avenue, Edison came forward as the landscape architect for the applicant. Exhibit A- 3 was referred to with photos from various points showing the existing conditions on the site. There are many trees that provide buffer.

The building that is going to be demolished is back farther than the new building that is proposed and the tall trees will be adjacent to the tall evergreens. The pictures show good buffering. The new building will be 50 ft from the property line and the existing building is about 22 ft from the property line.

Mr. Gallic asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Villani brought up the reports from the Fire Marshall and Mr. Gallic read it. All concerns were addressed with the new revisions. A letter from the police department on May 3, 2019 and they did not have issues with traffic safety.

Mr. Gallic asked about protection of the large evergreens during construction. How would they be replaced (so large). Mr. Hinterstein felt they would be able to be preserved. The building will be at least 12 feet away. There is compacted pavement on the roots now. You can also plant large trees but the trees would be 12 to 14 feet height maximum.

Mr. Sasso asked Mr. Gazzale about the foot bridge on the property heading north. There is an easement on Flag Plaza property for that foot bridge and it leads into the residential subdivision.

Mr. Gallic opened the hearing up to the public. Ms. Qinyin Qiu came forward from 14 Cherry Tree Lane. She pointed to the photos on Exhibit A-3. She was sworn in. The bridge has been there a long time and the walking path goes through her property. They don't know why the bridge is there. It is mostly used for dog walking and maybe 10 people a week use it. She said there was a man riding a bike intoxicated in the morning. He crossed the bridge and broke a bottle on her driveway. She is concerned with more people coming through. She wants security for her property. The bridge is not on Flag Plaza. The bridge was part of the last portion of the residential neighborhood. The planning board had wanted sidewalks and walkability for the town center. The township committee has jurisdiction. The maintenance of the property may have been done by the property owners of Flag Plaza.

Mayor DiNardo discussed the bridge. Mr. Chadwick stated that it is part of an approval by the Planning Board. The Township Committee may be able to release the condition, or it may involve a revised/amended site plan for the approved subdivision. Mayor DiNardo thought they might be able to address at the Township Committee and asked for her information in order to be in contact with her. There was further discussion on the location of the proposed building and better buffering.

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No one else came forward and this portion of the hearing was closed. Mr. Gallic asked for any comments from the township professionals. Mr. Chadwick asked if they approve this to agree to the environmental impact assessment waiver because it has been submitted in separate documents.

Mr. Kastrud asked that the easement to be relocated metes and bounds be sent to him. The applicant agrees to Title 39 for traffic control with the police department.

Mr. Gallic stated that the builder's remedy could have caused many more units and appreciates that the developer worked with the town.

A motion was made by Mr. Lindner, seconded by Mr. DiBianca to approve the application.

**ROLL CALL**

For: Mayor DiNardo, Mr. Lidner, Mr. Argiro, Mr. Toth, Mr. DiBianca, Mr. Scuderi, Mr. Esposito, Mr. Villani, and Mr. Gallic  
Abstain: Mr. Marion, Mr. Pasi

**PB19-05  
Somerset Associates, Block 8, lots 2 and 3**

15 Mountain View—Preliminary and Final Site Plan for Parking garage and additional ground parking

Mr. Barry Mandelbaum came forward for the applicant as their attorney. The property was Chubb's headquarters since 1983. Chubb has vacated the property. The existing surface parking is not adequate for today's use. They seek to enlarge the surface parking area and possibly build a parking garage. The witnesses were sworn in, Mr. Chris Halibi from Somerset Associates spoke about the property. They have owned the property since 1983 and they leased it to Chubb until August 2017. They have done some renovations to bring it up to current standards. There is a new lobby entry, the atrium has been redone. It is about 500,000SF of building. There are not a lot of tenants wanting that much space. They hope to have one tenant. They are being represented by Cushman & Wakefield. They were advised that there are very few properties that has this size of a building with the amount of property. They would accept a tenant for half or more. Large companies are fearful of high taxes.

Large companies expect a higher level of parking than they currently have. They have about 3.2 spaces for every 1000SF of office space. Now with higher density in each building tenants expect more parking. There would be surface parking added and this would be set back quite a bit and all wooded and the contours of the land go up and creates an added barrier. They are also asking to build a parking structure. This will

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help to obtain a tenant. They will wait until a prospective tenant tells them what they need.

Mr. Sony David came forward as the engineer for the applicant. He was accepted by the board as a professional engineer. There are no variances and no waivers. Exhibit A-1 was introduced, a compendium of exhibits, various pictures of the site. The highest elevation of the property is on Mountain View and it goes down about 90 feet towards Route 78. He went over the rendering of the five level parking garage consisting of 1200 parking spaces. There is also at grade parking spaces with the vast majority of them in the southern area. The total of new parking spaces proposed is 1958 spaces and makes the total of the whole property 3588 spaces, with a ratio of 6.5 ratio per 1000SF of office space. The plan complies with zoning, including the 30-foot maximum height requirement for the garage.

Mr. David went over drawing CS-103 (part of submitted plans) that shows the parking garage section view. It is basically 10.5 feet each level. One floor is below grade and one level is on the roof. There is landscaping on the plans with buffer for Mountain View. The existing lighting will remain and they are about 30 feet high and operate only during regular business hours.

They are in compliance with the state stormwater rules. There are two new subsurface basins. They stayed out of wetland and buffer areas. Exhibit A-2, CT-100, overall phasing plan dated January 15, 2019 was discussed. Phase 1 is the expansion of the existing parking area. The second phase would be the existing wooded area with the large parking lot south of the property. Phase 3 would be an extension of phase 2. Phase 4 would be the new parking garage. All phases are based on the tenant's needs.

Exhibit A-3, 15 Mountain View Road, site section A-A, dated May 10, 2019 was submitted. Looking into the property into the southern parking area. There is a mound, there is a heavily wooded area that will be maintained and there will be plantings to buffer. It is less expensive to build ground parking. It might be \$30,000 per space for a garage depending on height. Mr. Chadwick felt they could pick and choose the phasing depending on tenants. If there isn't phasing they have to bond the whole number of spots.

Mr. Gallic asked about the phasing and Mr. Halibi felt there could be an issue with the existing drive and parking near the drive. There was further discussion on phasing.

Mr. Mandelbaum stated they were not there for approval of the phasing. Phasing will split up the bonding so it would need to be phased. Mr. Mandelbaum said the plan did not include phasing.

Exhibit A-4, 15 Mountain view Road is taken from Chesterfield and Mountain View Road towards the site. It is wooded and there is a small sign on the photo. There is a little light square shown in the picture. Exhibit A-5, shows the limit of the evergreen screening. There is a dashed line where the finished grade is proposed. The grade above it shows the trees and it provides significant screening.

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There will be no entrance or exit onto Mountain View Road other than emergency access (one). The applicant is not contemplating residential use at all.

Mr. Chadwick stated the plans have been revised and have addressed his comments. Mr. Kastrud asked about Title 39 for the property and the applicant agreed to it.

Mr. Gallic asked if the board members had questions, comments, etc. Mr. Gallic opened the hearing to the public. Mr. Jack McEvily from 50 Mountain View Road came forward and was sworn in. There are 1630 parking spaces at Chubb and they had 3000 employees, now change it to 3588 with the same 3000 employees he questioned? Or would they expand the building. That's a lot of cars he said. Mr. McEvily feels this would double the number of employees to 6000.

Mr. Mandelbaum said that it is 4 to 5 parking spaces for 1000SF for parking in the ordinance. They may not have to change the parking but they are trying to be ready to attract a good tenant. The plan is compliant with what the township ordinances require.

Parking is very linked to the type of company. The applicant is trying to get the best position into the market place so they can get it occupied and paying taxes. Mr. McEvily is very concerned with possibly seeing the lot and seeing more cars.

Mr. Gallic stated the building is going to be used with the same SF, there is no additional space for the building. There is no phasing although Mr. McEvily believed constructing the garage would be less disruptive.

Mr. Robert Campione from 75 Mountain View Road came forward and was sworn in. Mr. Campione spoke about his home built in 1971, and that there was a serious storm in 1972. Route 78 was closed with water damage. It was a terrible storm. He didn't want anyone to disturb the wetlands or wetland buffer area and the gorge.

Mr. Campione also feels the stop sign should not be on resident's side but should be on the commercial property side. Traffic flow is bias to the commercial property with more cars coming or going.

Mr. Gallic felt there is no data with the traffic stop sign and hope they can address with the tenant coming in.

Office, and research are permitted at the site. If labs were brought in as tenants they would have to come to the board.

Mr. Villani suggested that the stop sign be addressed with the tenant

Mr. Marion asked about the stop sign and if there was no stop sign coming out of the Somerset Associates exit.

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There was discussion about increased traffic on Mountain View and in Warren in general. Mr. Campione feels strongly that there should be some help for the residents and that area with traffic exiting the property.

Mr. Alan W. Lothian came forward as the traffic engineer for the applicant. He was accepted by the board. He completed a traffic impact study. Going into Mountain View he felt there was minimal impact. There is one lane coming out of the property and Mountain View gets their own lane and then they merge. The stop sign is there to make sure they wait for a gap. He determined that the adjacent roadway network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the site-generated trips associated with the re-occupancy and parking expansion with signal timing modifications.

There was a discussion about a speed bump coming out of the property and a yield sign. Mr. Halibi was favorable of that.

Mr. Kastrud does not want the stop sign removed on Mountain View Road.

Mr. Michael Campione came forward from 75 Mountain View Road and asked about where the stormwater from the new impervious coverage will go. Mr. Sony David went over the stormwater plan. Mr. Campione had issues with Mountain View Road and increased runoff. There was water running off onto the roadway and created an ice sheet over 200 ft. long he said.

A resident from 52 Mountain View Road came forward and showed where his house was on the plan. He asked about buffer with trees being planted. There will be trees planted at the corner.

No one else came forward. Mr. Gallic closed the public portion and asked the board members if they had any questions and asked for any last statements from the applicant.

Mr. Chadwick stated there would be a revised landscaping plan subject to the township planner's approval, and a speed control sign added at the exit of the property.

A motion was made by Mr. DiBianca, seconded by Mr. Argiro to approve application.

Roll Call

For: Mayor DiNardo, Committeeman Marion, Mr. Lindner, Mr. Argito, Mr. Toth, Mr. DiBianca, Mr. Scuderi, Mr. Esposito, Mr. Villani, and Mr. Gallic

Abstain: Mr. Pasi

Against: None.

■ **SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING: June 10, 2019**

■ **ADJOURNMENT** Motion was made to adjourn. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.