

BOROUGH OF PARAMUS – BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

APRIL, 27TH 2023

A meeting of the Board of Adjustment in the Auditorium of Paramus High School was called to order at 7:30 pm Chairman Steve Sullivan.

PLEDGE

Led by Mr. Al-Yousefy

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Al-Yousefy, Reda, Mrs. Rizzo, Locicero, Scrivanich, Sullivan

ABSENT: Ricchiuti, McKenna

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Bossong, Board Attorney

Tracy Colasurdo, Secretary

Susan Bischoff, Court Reporter (Covering for Beth Calderone)

Kathryn Gregory, Planner

Peter Ten Kate, Engineer

NOTIFICATION

The Chairman announced that, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice of this meeting was given as follows:

Notice specifying time and place transmitted to The Record

Copy of notice posted on the Borough Website and bulletin board

Copy of same submitted to the Borough Clerk's office.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: COMMERICAL

Docket No. 7191

Block 3312 lot 6, 7, & 8

Swaminarayan Gurukul Cultural Center

195, 199, 205 Spring Valley Road

Mr. Sullivan made an opening statement explaining to the public how the meeting will be conducted.

Carmine Alampi Esquire, representing the applicant.

Mr. Alampi discussed how the applicant will handle the numbers on the doors in reference to the letter that the received from the Office of Emergency Preparedness.

Exhibit A3- architect plan revised 1/23/2023

Exhibit A4- evacuation plan page 10

Advar Patel, architect for the applicant gave testimony on the plans. Mr. Patel discussed male and female spaces being separate from one another in the proposed building. Mr. Patel gave an overview of the various rooms on the plans and stated that the worship area is roughly 650-680 square feet.

Mr. Patel explained the Yagna Room, which is a 12 by 12 ceremonial firepit. It is a steel firepit on legs that uses small special firewood. The room would have a sprinkler and exhaust system.

Mr. Patel stated that members of the congregation would arrive on Sundays around 2:00pm and would stay until roughly 8:00pm. After the prayer service they would all go to the dining hall and have a meal together. Monday through Saturday the proposed schedule for the congregation would be 2-3 prayers depending on the day one typically from 6:00-7:00am and another around 6:00-7:00pm. There are typically 15-20 people max at the center during those days. The Priest lives on site at the center.

Exhibit A3- basement floorplan

The basement floorplan consists of a baby room, 4 classrooms, a girl's wing, activity rooms, toilet, etc. This level is partially above ground. There are kitchens, grocery storage, etc.

Mr. Patel discussed the steps leading into the temple. The reason for the steps is because the "Gods are on a pedestal" so they are walking up into the temple towards them.

The height of the perimeter rooms is roughly 16ft with a drop ceiling of 9ft. The main level ceiling height is 25ft tall to the top of the roof, 21 ft to the finished ceiling.

Mr. Patel discussed the upper floor page A-5. This floor consists of the priests bedroom, library space, storage closets, and bathrooms. There are two priests assigned per temple. The storage closets are for storage of religious holiday décor.

Guest rooms are designated for a specific group of people, special religious ceremony, such as the youth camps. The Youth Camps are typically 1-2 days and are usually 15-20 kids depending on the age group. There are 6 guest rooms with twin beds in each.

10 Minute Break

Mr. Patel continued his explanation of the temple. He discussed the elevations and exterior of the building on page A6. He also discussed the decorative columns, temple detailing, and the design of the outside of the building. The front of the building faces the parking lot.

The parapet wall height wall to wall is 142 ft and the side view of the building is 158 ft.

Mr. Alampi asked if the HVAC/Mechanical units would create noise?

Mr. Patel stated there would be no noise from the units.

Mr. Alampi asked where the loading area would be located?

Mr. Patel stated that the loading area would be behind the wall

Mr. Patel stated that the sign for the building would be facing Spring Valley.

He stated that Page A8 are not scaled drawings, they are just to show the image of the architectural features.

Exhibit A4, A5, and A7 Illustrations of renderings

A4 page A-10 Areal view from the parking lot

A5 page A-11 Realistic site plan with landscaping

A7 page A-12 to respond to OEM Letter

Chairman opens up questions of the Board Members

Mr. Reda asked what the traveling distance is from the 1st and 2nd floor exits, the maximum travel distance.

Mr. Patel responded that it would be under 150 square feet.

Mr. Reda asked about calculations of certain rooms on the plans and stated that the might need to be modified. Mr. Reda requested that the applicant add calculations, egress, corridor, modification to the stairwells, etc.

Mr. Patel stated that with the code change from 2018 to 2021 they will need to update the numbers accordingly. Mr. Patel stated they would give a full egress analysis

Mrs. Rizzo asked what the total occupancy number is

Mr. Patel stated that currently the occupancy is roughly 150-200 people and they are expecting with the proposed expansion to be 350-400 people.

Mrs. Rizzo asked what the total number of people that would be able to occupy the proposed building

Mr. Patel responded with 847 people

Mr. Sullivan questioned the number of people as to if this is for sitting or standing and how long is a prayer service?

Mr. Patel stated that do not stand and that a typical service is 2 hours long

Mr. Sullivan asked if the applicant can guarantee both floors of the building won't be used as the same time?

Mr. Patel stated that there would be 350-400 people for a prayer service.

Mr. Reda questioned the occupancy load as to not the number of people who will attend a prayer service, but to the actual number of people that can be in the building.

Mr. Patel stated that is not the way the congregation operates

Mr. Scrivanich asked about the basement occupancy for dining, 90 seats, 180 total and if there is a fire escape plan for the basement?

Mr. Patel responded that there are three (3) egress staircases

Mr. Sullivan asked about parking, the three (3) residential homes that are in a R-75 zone and how the applicant wants to rezone that area to accommodate the proposed expansion. Mr. Sullivan asked about the potential congestion to that area and the fact that the parking lot is roughly four (4) feet away from the neighbors.

Mr. Alampi stated that there will be a traffic engineer that will address those points and information pertaining to the parking lot.

Mr. Sullivan asked about the monument horse statue and the importance of it. Mr. Sullivan also asked about the 16 ft ceilings in the downstairs and if the applicant was to drop it down wouldn't the building height be less? Mr. Sullivan asked if there was a way to lower the current proposed building height from 54ft?

Mr. Patel stated that they can look into reducing the height.

Mr. Sullivan mentioned reducing the height of the overall building, lowering the basement, sewer and a pump system

Mr. Bossong stated that the parking lot calculations are based on the square footage of the building.

Mr. Locicero asked about page A-4 and the total number of people without it being a fire hazard?

Mr. Patel stated that the space he is questioning is for viewing

Mr. Locicero asked about the first floor viewing area and the number of people (360 ppl) would it leave room for the isles?

Mr. Patel stated yes

Mr. Locicero asked if there is a buffer, the image of the proposed building with the houses around it, what street?

Mr. Sullivan stated that we would wait for Lapaka Associates to explain further.

Mr. Locicero asked about the rear elevation of the building and the rear of the building

Mr. Patel stated that you would not be able to see 100 square feet and the parapet would be 48-50 feet. It is roughly 36 feet from the back of the building to the highest point.

Mr. Locicero asked about the dining area and the number of people being larger than the number of seating

Mr. Patel stated that groups of people would come in and eat then others would leave for everyone to be able to eat.

Mr. Locicero asked if there would be dining outdoors?

Mr. Alampi stated that another person would testify on that

Mr. Sullivan questioned the safety of the people walking around the town

Mr. Locicero stated that there was a letter from the police and if there were still issues

Mr. Alampi stated that an engineer would address it and mentioned maybe a cross walk to help with the concerns

Mr. Locicero asked if there was a parking arrangement with the Paramus Board of Education

Mr. Alampi stated they will look into that further

Mr. Ten Kate talked about the rooftop of the proposed building.

Public portion opened for questions

Eugene Goldenberg asked how many temples Mr. Patel has designed?

Mr. Patel stated that he has worked on two (2) over the last year and they were roughly 85,000 square feet

Mr. Goldenberg asked why Mr. Patel used 2018 code versus 2021 code

Mr. Patel stated the 2018 code does not mean the year it was adopted, the 2021 code was adopted in March of 2023

Mr. Goldenberg asked about the CRY Room

Mr. Patel stated that the room is needed for women on their menstrual cycle

Mr. Goldenberg asked if rooms could be eliminated as there are some labeled "redundant"?

Mr. Patel stated that the word redundant is from the software program that architects use.

Mr. Goldenberg asked if the houses on the plans are to scale to the structure

Mr. Patel said not exactly to scale

Next meeting will begin with questions from the Public.

Meeting Adjourned