

December 13, 2010

A work session of the Allendale Planning Board was held in the Municipal Building on December 13, 2010. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 p.m. by Mr. Quinn, Chairman, who announced that the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act were met by the required posting and notice to publications.

The following members answered roll call: Mr Quinn, Mr. Bernstein, Mr. Fliegel, Mr. Sasso, Ms. Sheehan, Mr. Sirico, Mr. Walters and Mr. Zambrotta. Mr. Barra and Mr. Yevchak were absent. Also present was Mr. Dunn, Board Attorney and Nicole Habeiche-Shapiro from the Borough Engineer's office.

Major Subdivision – Calvary Lutheran Church, Block 910, Lots 2, 17.01 and 17.02

Mr. Quinn said this is before the Board for an informal discussion. Bruce Whitaker was present as attorney representing Calvary Lutheran Church. Mr. Whitaker said the purpose of this evening's meeting is to review this from a conceptual standpoint before it is finalized and submitted for actual application. This is for the purpose of getting input from the Board members. The plans were prepared by Conklin Associates and Angelo Onello from that firm is present this evening.

Mr. Whitaker said the church was considering a subdivision that would permit a residential lot to be at the rear of the property with an extended driveway. Comments from Board members at that time suggested developing this with a roadway for the purposes of servicing that back lot with a standard right of way so it would not have the look of a flag lot. Applicant has come up with a four lot subdivision with a roadway conforming to municipal and residential site improvement standards. It would constitute 3 new building lots and dwelling units are depicted on the plan to show that they will fit on the property. The fourth lot would have the existing bi-level that faces Ivers Rd. remaining. The lots for the residential property will meet all bulk standards. They will meet area and setback requirements from the new roadway. As far as the four lots are concerned it is a proposal in which they are basically conforming from a variance standpoint. The variance that would still exist is that the lot area for the church facility would be less than what is permitted under the code. They wanted to create a residential aspect to this property rather than considering church expansion since the church functions very well in the size and scope that exists presently. He said this is in all respects a major subdivision and it requires soil movement.

Mr. Quinn asked if the structure to remain is the existing parsonage and if it is essentially being untouched except that the road will be cut in around that property. Mr. Onello said that is correct. Mr. Sirico asked if the green depictions on the plan that are outlines are existing wetlands. Mr. Onello said that is correct. In the mid 90's the church had a permit to fill in that isolated wetlands area. He said it was filled in but the work was never done properly. The application to fill in the isolated area will be applied for again with DEP. The construction standards now are a lot more rigorous than they were in the mid 90's.

Mr. Onello said all of the water would be collected and drawn into a centralized bio-retention basin that has to be specifically graded and has low water levels and is full of landscaping,

shrubs and trees. It is a highly vegetated area that is used to filtrate the water that is running off the roadway and the homes. There is space on the church's side of the parking area that is wide enough and big enough to have a shallow vegetated basin to filtrate the water. Ms. Sheehan asked if there is any concrete in the structure. Mr. Onello said there is not other than the structure to let the water out during major storms. He said this is not a typical drainage retention basin. This is specifically designed through DEP standards with sand filters and tons of vegetation.

Mr. Zambrotta asked where the water would flow in a 100 year storm. Mr. Onello said it would flow into the existing drainage network. It would take a major storm to get some serious volume off this site because it is wooded. The water is eventually all going to come out but the rate at which it comes out will be much less. Mr. Zambrotta said based on the regrading going out pitched from north to south is there any concern of water drainage going to surrounding lots on the northeast side. Mr. Onello said this regrading actually benefits lot 4. Lot 4 is in a low lying area and it is right next to wetlands so this would be a concern for the residents at lots 4 and 3.

Mr. Zambrotta asked if Mr. Onello is basically saying that this plan will improve drainage dramatically. Mr. Onello said for lot 4 absolutely. As for the isolated wetlands, it will improve drainage dramatically and the amount of water that is sheeting off the site is going to be a lot less. He said it is a highly controlled drainage plan.

Mr. Walters asked if there is an issue with drainage as to whether or not the homes will have basements. Mr. Onello said sump pumps and foundation drains are standard for any new home. These homes are high enough that the basements will actually drain through gravity. After they do test holes they will have a better idea of what homes will have basements. He is confident that the upland homes will be okay with standard construction because the water sheets off and does not have time to pool into the ground. The low lying area could definitely be a problem. Test holes will be completed in that area. As far as impervious areas are concerned, the existing church and the parking area already have an existing nonconformity of more impervious than allowed. When you make the lot smaller, the impervious area ratio goes up.

Mr. Onello said looking at lot 2.02 under variances required there is a zoning interpretation that needs to be brought to light. The code itself says for single A residential zoning a 50 x 50 ft. area needs to fit within the buildable footprint. It is not part of the bulk zoning requirements but it is a requirement in the code itself. He highlighted the buildable area on lot 2.02 and a 50 x 50 ft. square does not quite fit in the box. Under an interpretation of what is the rear yard and the side yard, the side yard has a 15 ft. setback and the rear yard is 50 ft. It limits what they can build there. He said an option to consider is having a rear, a front and 3 sides. One jogged side yard line would remove a variance. The major variance would be to reduce the size of the church lot so it would be under the 3 acre minimum allowing the impervious to be higher.

Mr. Whitaker said the side yard-rear yard issue is one on which they need comment from the standpoint of submission response from the planner and engineer so we know what we are seeking.

Ms. Habeiche-Shapiro asked that Mr. Onello forward to her a pdf and she will discuss the plan with Mr. Yakimik.

Mr. Walters asked about the area designated as “church activity recreation area”. Mr. Onello said there are picnic tables located there that are used for church functions. He asked if there is any concern about water runoff in that area. Mr. Onello said this is not a typical basin where if it fills up it will be 3 ft. deep. DEP regulations stipulate that 12 inches at the top and 18 inches at the low end is the deepest it could get and a fence can be placed around it if there is a concern. Mr. Quinn said the church used to run a nursery school but they no longer do so. Mr. Whitaker said the requirements under the Department of Community Affairs would require a fenced in area for a play area under their licensing for a day care or nursery school center. Probably this recreation area is only going to be used at a time when the basin is basically dry.

Kathy Peterson, Vice President of the Calgary congregation said the playground area that was used for the nursery school is actually fenced in and is right behind the sanctuary.

A Board member asked if there is concern about soil erosion and what is the preliminary thinking on ground cover replacement to prevent that. Mr. Onello said as soon as the lot is graded the first thing that will be built is the roadway. That impervious area will be controlled immediately as soon as the curbs go in. Bergen County Soil Conservation District requires conservation of soil with filter fences in specific locations and filtration devices over the catch basins so the soil can’t leave the site. As soon as the grading is done seeding of the soil is required. He said there will be plenty of tree replacement on the property as per the developer’s agreement. They will conserve trees wherever possible.

The Board asked if there are certain things that the applicant would require particular feedback on at this point. Mr. Whitaker said the biggest thing will be the lot 2.02 interpretation. Mr. Whitaker said the easements that exist will run with the land in perpetuity. The deeds are recorded in the county and as deeds are conveyed they will say “subject to covenants and restrictions on record”.

Mr. Quinn said his overall view is that he likes this plan a lot better than the previous plan and in concept this plan blends in with the neighborhood. Ms. Habeiche-Shapiro said she saw the original plan and she agrees that this plan makes more sense and she feels that Mr. Yakimik will agree that this is a better concept.

On a motion by Mr. Sirico, seconded by Mr. Walters, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Knapp