

March 14, 2022

Chairman William Duffy
Town of Phillipsburg Planning Board
120 Filmore Street
Phillipsburg, NJ 08865

RE: Riverfront Redevelopment Area Consistency Report
75 & 83 South Main Street
Block 911, Lots 7 & 8
Our Project Number: 9150.001

Dear Chairman Duffy and Board Members:

The purpose of this report is to analyze the Riverfront Redevelopment Area Plan in regards to the proposed improvements associated with the above-referenced lot, also known as the Old Elks Building and to determine whether or not the proposed development is consistent with the goals and objective of the Redevelopment Plan.

This office is in receipt of a letter dated January 19, 2022 from Architecture LLC requesting amendments to the Riverfront Redevelopment Plan for five (5) requirements. We provide the following comments, **bolded**:

1. **Change in density:** Change in Density from 20 units/acre to 28 units/acre.
This office finds 28 units/acre to be acceptable.
2. **Permitted Uses:** Permitted uses from providing only retail on the ground floor to providing retail on the first 38 feet from the street façade and multi-family residential for the balance of the first floor.
This office recommends that the language be updated to allow residential uses on the first floor provided that the majority of first floor building frontage on Main Street is retail/commercial.
3. **Land Use Plan:** Figure 7 “Land Use Plan” to be revised from showing the above-referenced lot as “Red – Commercial” to “Pink – Mixed Use”.
This office finds the requested change from “Commercial” to “Mixed Use” to be acceptable.
4. **Minimum Dwelling Size:** The minimum dwelling size on Table 7: District 2 – Additional Residential Standards Minimum Dwelling Size should be reduced.
This office finds the suggested revision to Table 7 to be acceptable.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

www.vancleefengineering.com

Lebanon, NJ
908-735-9500

Hamilton, NJ
609-689-1100

Toms River, NJ
732-573-0490

Freehold, NJ
732-303-8700

Bethlehem, PA
610-332-1772

Hillsborough, NJ
908-359-8291

Mt. Arlington, NJ
862-284-1100

Phillipsburg, NJ
908-454-3080

Doylestown, PA
215-345-1876

Leesport, PA
610-670-6630

5. **Parking:** Change in Parking requirement to add language allowing “parking deficit” to be assessed each year based upon the actual parking deficit.

This office does not recommend revising the language of the redevelopment plan as requested, however the current language is sufficient for any such agreements between the Phillipsburg Parking Authority and the developer, outside the outlines within the Redevelopment Plan.

Background

The Planning Board received an application for the subject lots and that application was reviewed by our office in a letter dated August 20, 2021. Block 911, Lot 7 is comprised of 1.03 acres and is presently occupied by a vacant office/retail 3-story frame building joined with a 4-story frame building, and a 2½ story frame, multi-family residential dwelling, also known as 75 South Main Street or the Old Elks Building. Block 911, Lot 8 consists of 0.177 acres and is occupied by a 2-story frame dwelling, also known as 83 South Main Street.

The applicant seeks to remove the 2-story frame dwelling on Lot 8 and provide parking for the main structure on Lot 7, which will be renovated into a mixed-use residential complex. The proposed complex will consist of 31 units with 2 retail spaces, and the multi-family residential dwelling with two units shall remain.

Both lots are located within the Riverfront Redevelopment Area 2 – Union Square, sub-area 3, Main Street, and are therefore subject to the requirements laid out in the 2018 Amended Riverfront Redevelopment Area Plan.

Findings

For the purposes of this assessment, the application shall be viewed as a single lot comprised of 1.207 acres with a total of 33 proposed residential units.

Unit Density

As per Table 1, Multi-Family & Attached – Riverfront within the Amended Riverfront Redevelopment Plan, the maximum density allowed by a multi-family structure is 20 units per acre. This table is associated with all sub-areas within District 2 – Union Square. The currently proposed site has a density of approximately 27.3 units per acre, which necessitated this report.

A review of surrounding lots with similar uses was conducted to determine if 27.3 units per acres is reasonable for the local area.

TABLE 1 – LOCAL DENSITY ANALYSIS

Location	Block	Lot	Acres	Units	Density
11 Union Square	903	28	0.293	2	6.83
17 Union Square	903	30	0.272	21*	77.21*
21-27 South Main Street	903	32	0.159	6	37.74
29-37 South Main Street	903	41	0.208	9*	43.27*
39-41 South Main Street	903	48	0.117	1	8.55
43-45 South Main Street	903	47	0.130	0	0.00

*At peak occupancy

As shown in Table 1 and excluding the peak occupancy discrepancies, local densities range from 6.8 units/acre to a maximum of 37.7 units per acre. From this analysis, the 27.3 units per acre that is proposed as part of this application is reasonable.

However, it is worth noting that these lots may have been in use with these densities prior to the establishment of the redevelopment plan. It is possible that these lots with their densities greater than 20 units per acre may be contributing to adverse conditions in the area that brought about the 20 units per acre requirement.

Unit Size Requirements

The applicant is requesting a minimum unit size that is smaller than the permitted minimum unit size in the Riverfront Redevelopment Plan. This office researched various minimum unit size requirements to compare the Riverfront Redevelopment Area to, including New York City (400 SF), the International Residential Code (320 SF) and N.J.A.C. 5:28 Residential Site Improvement Standards (150 SF for the first resident, 100 SF for each thereafter). It is also understood that current housing in the Town of Phillipsburg is experiencing difficulty acquiring new residents. One potential reason is that the current unit sizes are cost-prohibitive. Regardless, all evidence suggests that the previous Riverfront Redevelopment Area District 2 minimum size requirements were substantially higher than necessary, so reductions are reasonable and perhaps warranted.

TABLE 2 – MINIMUM UNIT SIZE REQUIREMENTS

Unit Type	Riverfront Redevelopment Area	Applicant's Requested Revisions
Efficiency	500 SF	--
Studio/1-Bedroom	750 SF	470 SF
2-Bedroom	1,000 SF	615 SF
3-Bedroom	1,250 SF	915 SF

Parking Requirements

The applicant has also requested clarification on the process of purchasing parking spaces to address any parking deficiencies. While the Riverfront Redevelopment Plan clearly states that the deficient spaces may be made up with the Phillipsburg Parking Authority, this office does not

suggest including language that could be conflicting, contradictory, or restrictive of the Town's ability to regulate its parking. That aside, the parking deficiencies within the proposed development should be discussed to better understand how the density of the site compares to the parking requirements.

Generally, this region and the Town of Phillipsburg will benefit from having higher density and an increase of population. However, due to the requirements of N.J.A.C. 7:21, Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS), there are additional restrictions to redevelopment in regards to parking.

TABLE 3 – PARKING CALCUATIONS

Housing Type	Unit Type	Requirement	No. of Units	Required Parking Spaces	Required Parking Spaces (with guest parking*)
Garden Apartment	1 Bedroom	1.8 spaces/unit	4 Units	7 Spaces	9 Spaces
	2 Bedroom	2.0 spaces/unit	24 Units	48 Spaces	60 Spaces
	3 Bedroom	2.1 spaces/unit	3 Units	6 Spaces	8 Spaces
Multi-family Residential	Two-Family (Duplex)	2.0 spaces/unit	2 Units	4 Spaces	5 Spaces
Non-Residential	Retail Stores, Shops, or Similar	1.0 spaces per employee and 2 spaces per 1,000 S.F.	2 employees and 2,250 S.F.	7 Spaces	7 Spaces
Total Required				72 Spaces	89 Spaces
Proposed				59 Spaces	59 Spaces
(Deficient)				(13 Spaces)	(30 Spaces)

*Guest parking is calculated as 0.5 spaces per unit. The spaces may be provided on-site or on the street.

The applicant did not calculate or consider guest parking in their parking evaluation. It is the responsibility of the applicant to account for the parking on-site, or provide evidence demonstrating that there is sufficient local on-street parking for the proposed development. The Planning Board should discuss and decide how the lack of guest parking shall be handled for this application.

It is stated in Section 3.3, Waivers, of the 2018 Riverfront Redevelopment Plan that “variation from the requirements set forth in this redevelopment plan may be necessary in certain unusual circumstances or to meet state or federal permit requirements. In such an instance, the Phillipsburg Land Use Board may waive certain bulk, parking, or design requirements if the designated redeveloper demonstrates that such waiver will not substantially impair the intent of the redevelopment plan, and will not present a substantial detriment to the public health, safety and welfare” which clearly enables the Town of Phillipsburg Planning Board to permit the above

variations to the Riverfront Redevelopment Plan without requiring an amendment of the redevelopment plan. Furthermore, it is stated in “Subarea 3 – Main Street, (2) Parking”, that “where some or all of the requirement parking cannot be provided on-site, parking permits shall be purchased annual from the Phillipsburg Parking Authority equivalent to the parking deficit” which provides a potential path of action for the Town of Phillipsburg to address the issue with the parking without requiring an amendment to the Riverfront Redevelopment Plan.

Additionally, as an aside to the Riverfront Redevelopment Plan, the applicant had requested clarification on the implementation of the requirements associated with the revisions to the Municipal Land Use Law pertaining to electric vehicles, specifically C.40:55D-66.20 “Certain multiple dwellings, preliminary site plan approval” which took effect July 9, 2021. Assuming the parking count does not change from the previously submitted plan:

- Applicant shall prepare 15% of the total required spaces (11 spaces) as “Make Ready” parking spaces.
- Applicant shall install electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) on 1/3 of the required “Make Ready” parking spaces (4 spaces)
- Within three (3) years of certificate of occupancy (CO) issuance, the next 1/3 of the required EVSE parking spaces (4 spaces) shall be installed on the “Make Ready” parking spaces.
- Within six (6) years of the CO issuance, the final 1/3 of the required EVSE parking spaces (3 spaces) shall be installed on the “Make Ready” parking spaces.
- At least 5% of the EVSE spaces (1 space) shall be made accessible for people with disabilities.
- A reduction to the required parking space count is permitted at a rate of 2 parking spaces per EVSE space, provided the total reduction does not exceed 10% of the original required spaces (7 spaces maximum, for a required parking space count of 65 parking spaces.)
- Additionally, for the sake of purchasing parking spaces from the Parking Authority, the parking deficiency should not include the EVSE parking spaces, and be based on the parking requirement with guest parking included (30 spaces, as per Table 3 above).

Master Plan Discussion

It is the findings of this office that the requested Redevelopment Plan Amendment is generally consistent with the Goals and Objectives of the adopted Redevelopment Plan, as well as the Town’s Master Plan and its various elements. Specifically:

- **Riverfront Redevelopment Plan Goals:**
 - Encourage redevelopment in a manner that is compatible with the character of adjacent neighborhoods and land uses; and to minimize negative impacts on new and existing residential neighborhoods.

- To provide for an increase in the economic base by redeveloping underutilized and non-productive properties.
- To create new residential neighborhoods and supporting facilities, which will provide an economic stimulus for existing business and create new opportunities for growth.
- **Housing Plan Element Goals & Objectives:**
 - Review areas along the riverfront to determine appropriate locations for new market rate housing.
 - Continue to provide a variety and mix of housing options for all ages and incomes.
- **Consistency review between 2004 Master Plan and 2017 Riverside Redevelopment**
 - Reduce conflicts between residential and non-residential uses
 - Encourage the development and expansion of businesses and industries that will generate jobs and provide services for local residents.
 - Provide functional, accessible, and cost effective locations within the Town for industrial uses that enhance the economics for the individual uses and the Town as a whole.
 - Encourage and aid incompatible non-residential uses whose current location is or will negative impact the future development/redevelopment of that area to find alternate, more appropriate, and functional locations within the Town.

Recommendations

Given the analysis and research found herein, this office provides the following recommendations to the Riverfront Redevelopment Plan (2018):

1. Regarding unit density, Section 3.4, Table 1: Multi-Family & Attached – Riverfront shall be revised to indicate a maximum density of at least 32, which has been shown to be reasonable and in-character with the local density.
2. Regarding permitted uses, Section 3.4, Table 6: District 2 Permitted Uses shall be revised to indicate that residential units may be located on the ground floor, provided that the commercial uses are the majority percentage fronting on Main Street.
3. Regarding the Land Use Plan, the subject lot shall be identified as Mixed-Use.
4. Regarding the minimum unit size, Section 3.4, Table 7: District 2 – Additional Residential Standards Minimum Dwelling Size shall be revised to 320 SF for “Efficiency” type units, 470 SF for “1-Bedroom” units, 615 SF for “2-Bedroom” units, and 915 SF for “3-Bedroom Units”.
5. Regarding the parking, no changes are required to the language of the Riverfront Development Plan. This office suggests that the Town of Phillipsburg’s Parking Authority require redevelopers to include guest parking per R.S.I.S. when purchasing spaces equivalent to parking deficiencies. The language is already in place within the Riverfront Development Plan

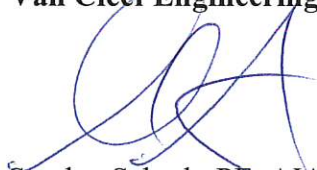
for the Parking Authority to make these arrangements with developers without any amendment, therefore no action is required.

Additionally, our office will revise the Redevelopment Plan to remedy potential mapping errors where subject parcel(s) are shown as "Commercial" and should be permitted as "Mixed Use" and where they are not shown on the map as being within the Main Street Subarea of District 2.

This concludes this office's review of the Block 911, Lots 7 and 8 application and its consistency with the 2018 Riverfront Redevelopment Plan. If there are any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to this office.

Very truly yours,

Van Cleef Engineering Associates



Stanley Schrek, PE, AIA, PP, CME, LEED-AP
Planning Board Planner

cc: All Board Members via Planning Board Technical Assistance
Board Attorney via email

f:\projects\9100 phillipsburg\9150 highlands implementation plan\001 riverfront redevelopment plan\redevelopment plan\2022 redevelopment plan amendment - request (density-parking)\2022.03.14 - redevelopment plan analysis.docx