



**PLANNING BOARD**  
**Monday, October 4, 2016**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**

*You couldn't pick a better place.*

**OPENING:** The meeting was called to order by Acting Chairperson Sam Kates at 7:30 PM.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Led by Mr. Kates.

**OPMA STATEMENT:** Read by Mr. Kates in compliance with the Sunshine Law.

**ROLL CALL**

- **Members in attendance:** Carolyn Jacobs; Steven Sweeney; Sam Kates; Moly Hung; Bill Carter; Marlyn Kalitan; Betty Adler; and Sheila Griffith.
- **Professionals in attendance:** Paul Stridick, AIA, Director; Jacob Richman, PP, AICP, Planner; Stacey Arcari, PE, Board Engineer; and James Burns, Esq., Solicitor.

**Comments from the Public Not Related to Items on Tonight's Agenda:** None.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

*Adoption Meeting Minutes from September 19, 2016.* Marlyn Kalitan made a motion, which was seconded by Carolyn Jacobs, to adopt the Meeting Minutes from September 19, 2016. Affirmative votes by Jacobs, Hung, Kates, Kalitan, and Griffith with Carter abstaining Minutes are approved.

**Agenda Items:** None.

**16-P-0015**

Block(s) 348.01 Lot(s) 29  
Zone: Institutional (IN)

**Sarvon, LLC**

800 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Cherry Hill, NJ

*Relief Requested: A minor site plan with bulk (C) variances to convert a church, school, and rectory into a private elementary and secondary school for students with special needs.*

**Exhibits Submitted:**

- A-1: Site Plan 9/22/16
- A-2: Sign Exhibit

**Discussion:** Applicant Sarvon, LLC, applied for a minor site plan with bulk (C) variances to convert a church, school, and rectory into a private elementary and secondary school for students with special needs; located at 800 Pennsylvania Avenue, Cherry Hill, New Jersey (Block 348.01, Lot 29). The property is owned by First Baptist Church of Cherry Hill.

Application was represented by:

- Rick Goldstein, Esq. – Attorney for the Applicant
- Jess Dougherty, PE – Engineer for the Applicant
- Chris Sarandoulis – Applicant/Director of the Y.A.L.E. School

Mr. Goldstein introduced the applicant for Sarvon, who is the contract purchaser, to convert the former First Baptist Church complex into a Y.A.L.E. school. It was explained that the Y.A.L.E. school is an organization that serves special needs students ages 5 to 21. Previously, the applicant gained Planning Board approval for a Y.A.L.E. school diagonally across from the subject site at the former Queen of Heaven site. The proposal before the Board is to develop a new facility that offers specialty classes for the Y.A.L.E. school student population. The former rectory on the subject site will hold some classes as while but will also be utilized as administrative offices for Y.A.L.E. school staff. The applicant proposes a number of site improvements including lighting, landscaping, parking, and signage. The applicant is also working with the Cherry Hill Police Department to address any street safety issues on the roadways adjacent to the site. With the proposed improvements, the applicant is requesting a few variances all of which are pre-existing nonconforming conditions (related to parking spaces and parking setbacks) except for a new variance to permit a 23.5' residential buffer setback where 25' is required. This variance is triggered as the rectory is turning into a non-residential use. To mitigate this variance, the

applicant is proposed landscaping between the former rectory building and the residence adjacent to the west. The applicant confirmed that there would be no increase in impervious coverage as a result of their application.

Mr. Sarandoulis gave an overview of the Y.A.L.E. school operations. The school helps and educates students with autism and behavioral issues. There will be twelve students per classroom to be supervised by one teacher and up to five aides. He believes the subject site is a good fit for their operation. The former Baptist Church site will be utilized by the Y.A.L.E. school for specialty classes that will be utilized by the Y.A.L.E. school student population. Students will come from the Queen of Heaven site (by walking) and other nearby Y.A.L.E. school sites (by bus). There will be no evening or weekend activities at this location. The former rectory building will be utilized as a 'transitional' service training where students will learn adult responsibilities such as cooking and cleaning. There will be no food prep at this location (meals will not be served) and the hours of operation are from 9am to 2pm. There will be no parent drop-off or pick up at this location and students will come to the site by walking, by van, or by mini bus. The fields in the back of the site will be used for passive recreation such as for soccer, but the fields will not be lighted nor will they be allowed to be leased by third parties. Mr. Sarandoulis briefly discussed some of the proposed interior and exterior modifications and also described the trash pick-up (which will occur one to two times per week) during school hours. The applicant agreed to the comments with the Community Development and ERI review letters. The applicant also plans to install a new monument sign. Exhibit A-1 was submitted to illustrate the proposed site improvements. The applicant proposes fencing around the western property line (6' in height) and around the northern property line (4' in height). A discussion ensued regarding fencing along the eastern property line, Connecticut Avenue.

Mr. Dougherty started by discussing the potential for board-on-board fencing along Connecticut Avenue. Mr. Sarandoulis offered the pros and cons for planting trees or installing fencing along Connecticut Avenue. Mr. Goldstein asked if the Board would allow the applicant to work with Community Development to address landscaping and/or fencing details along Connecticut Avenue. Discussion further ensued regarding aesthetics with regard to landscaping and student security and safety with regard to fencing. Mr. Sarandoulis explained that students don't bolt off when they are outdoors and that their other locations don't have entirely fenced in fields. Mr. Sarandoulis stated that he doesn't much more than fifty students on the site at any one time. Mr. Sarandoulis added that students will be chaperoned from the Queen of Heaven site to the subject site.

Mr. Dougherty gave an overview of the proposed site improvement plan and noted that they are reducing the fifty plus existing parking spaces down to twenty-five parking space (including two ADA spaces) plus another seven bus spaces. Mr. Dougherty affirmed that existing landscaping will be provided along the western property line in order to enhance the residential buffer. Mr. Dougherty submitted Exhibit A-2 to show the proposed monument sign to be located at the corner of Connecticut and Pennsylvania Avenue. The sign is proposed to be six feet in height with an LED changeable copy portion. The existing nonconforming sign will be removed. Following discussion with Board in regard to what signage is necessary, the applicant agreed to remove the changeable copy portion of the sign and agreed to workshop an alternate sign design with Community Development. Mr. Dougherty noted that while impervious coverage is not increasing as a result of the site improvements, the applicant is proposed dry wells to capture stormwater runoff. The parking lot is proposed to keep the same footprint while undergoing a repair and seal coat. In addition, a new trash enclosure is proposed. Mr. Dougherty noted that they will provide a Camden County Soil Conservation District (CCSCD) letter. Mr. Dougherty concluded his presentation by discussing the proposed driveway, drive aisle, and bus circulation improvements as well as how the lighting system and shielding will operate. Lastly, the applicant agreed to shut off their lights (except for security lighting) once staff leaves for the evening and that they agree to conduct a night light function test.

**Public Discussion:** John Higgins of 207 Rhode Island Avenue asked for clarification in regard to the amount of parking spaces to which Mr. Dougherty explained how the parking requirement amounted to needing twenty-five spaces for establishment. Mr. Higgins expressed concern over not having enough parking but Mr. Sarandoulis explained that only six staff members will be there and that the students do not have their own cars (they will arrive by walking, van, or mini bus). Mr. Higgins asked if there would be food prep at the site and Mr. Sarandoulis stated that while there will be no food prep, they may culinary arts classes in the future (but that it requires state licensing). Lastly, Mr. Higgins inquired with the applicant as to whether they plan on acquiring the vacant homes next to the subject site. Mr. Sarandoulis stated they have no plans to purchase homes in the area.

Joshua Schwartz at 119 Connecticut Avenue asked whether the business is a for-profit business to which Mr. Sarandoulis noted that it is a for-profit business. Mr. Schwartz expressed concern over the student population and asked if the students are all from Cherry Hill. Mr. Sarandoulis stated that he didn't have the numbers but that some students do reside in Cherry Hill. Mr. Schwartz stated he has concerns about businesses coming into the neighborhood as well as concerns regarding bus safety. Mr. Sarandoulis noted that they are a receiving school district so they do get students from outside of Cherry Hill. Mr. Sarandoulis added that they aren't proposing a new school and that they are instead just expanding their programs. In regard to bus safety, Mr. Sarandoulis stated that he will contact the bus company if he finds out there are issues with the drivers, idling, and/or the busses themselves. A discussion then ensued regarding students with behavioral issues and with crowds of people gathered on the residential of the Queen of Heaven site.

Karen Iannetta of 11 Georgia Avenue stated that she supports what the Y.A.L.E. school is doing but is concerned with cut through traffic from Route 70 into the Erlton North neighborhood. Members of the Planning Board and Mr. Stridick explained that the Board does not have jurisdiction over the streets; however, Mr. Stridick stated he will contact the Cherry Hill Police Department and the Township Department of Engineering to discuss how to better promote and enforce traffic safety in the area.

Robert Menta of 2 Spring Court commented on the history of the site and some of the issues the neighborhood has faced in regard to safety and security.

David McIntosh of 109 Connecticut Avenue echoed the concerns of previous commenters in regard to traffic safety as well as site circulation.

Michael Iannetta, Jr. of 900 Pennsylvania Avenue also echoed the concerns of previous commenters in regard to traffic safety, specifically at the corner of Connecticut Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue. A discussion then ensued regarding the benefits of a wood fence along Connecticut Avenue versus the benefits of planting trees without a fence. The applicant stated that they will work with Community Development on this concern and will take into consideration the applicant's operation and resident concerns.

Joshua Main of 111 Connecticut Avenue noted his concerns with busses idling. Ms. Arcari stated that there is a State law regarding No Idling but that the police will have to enforce this law. Mr. Main added that he is not in favor of a chain link fence along Connecticut Avenue.

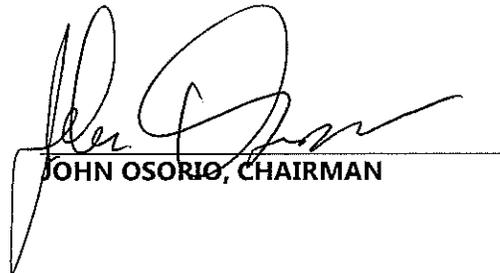
**Motion:** Following the reiteration of the conditions by Solicitor Burns, Carolyn Jacobs made a motion, which was seconded by Marlyn Kalitan, to approve the application with the conditions as stated. Affirmative votes by Jacobs, Sweeney, Kates, Carter, Hung, Adler, Griffith and Kalitan. The application is approved unanimously.

**RESOLUTIONS**

None.

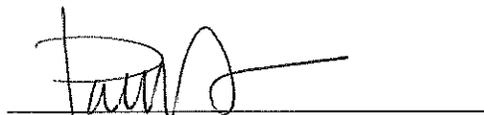
**Meeting Adjourned:** at 9:15 PM.

**ADOPTED:**



JOHN OSORIO, CHAIRMAN

**ATTEST:**



PAUL G. STRIDICK, AIA  
PLANNING BOARD SECRETARY

